


focus on the heart of the Reformation message: We are saved by grace alone through faith in Christ. Another feature highlights comments about being Lutheran from leaders of churches around the world that are in fellowship with WELS.

Monthly columns and features will also have a Reformation theme. The "Confessions of faith" article introduces a woman born in Eisleben, Germany, when it was communist-controlled and tells her journey of faith. The "Heart to heart" parenting column shares perspectives from two dads about ways to teach children about the Reformation.

Besides the normal 36 pages, the issue features an added keepsake pull-out insert that includes a timeline on the development of Lutheranism as well as quotes from FIC readers about what it means to be Lutheran.


"As I read all of these comments, I stand in grateful praise to God for what he has done in bringing these believers to be signposts pointing to Christ," says Braun. "As you read their comments, I suggest you consider how many times they point to the certainty of salvation in Christ. That's a message we strive to share in every issue of *Forward in Christ*."

If you would like to subscribe to *Forward in Christ*, contact Northwestern Publishing House at 1-800-662-6093, ext. 5613; [nphperiodicals@nph.wels.net](mailto:nphperiodicals@nph.wels.net). Or order online at [nph.net](http://nph.net). 

## Seminary to celebrate Reformation

To observe the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., is hosting a Hymn Festival on Oct. 1 at 7:30 p.m. Open to all, the festival will feature 15 of Luther's hymns. Seven will be sung by the congregation; seven will be sung by the Seminary Chorus, the Wisconsin Lutheran College Choir, and the Lutheran Chorale of Milwaukee; one will be featured in an organ solo performed by Rev. Aaron Christie, pastor at Trinity, Waukesha, Wis. A host of accompanying musicians will also be included.

Then, on Oct. 2-3, the seminary will hold its annual symposium for pastors. The symposium on Reformation 500 will include four essays on Luther and the Standards, Luther and the Scriptures, Luther and the Saints, and Luther and the State.

The Hymn Festival and all symposium presentations will be streamed at [livestream.com/WLSLive](http://livestream.com/WLSLive). 

# TOGETHER



September 19, 2017

## Reformation 500 celebrations across the synod

It would be impossible not to have noticed that this October will mark the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation. A variety of special events have been planned throughout the synod: Reformation tours, books and essays, presentations, the Return to Grace Luther movie, and most important of all, special worship services.

Since October is fast approaching, we encourage you to visit the special Reformation section of our synod's website to learn about events taking place near you.

If you are aware of a special event to be held in your area and want it included in the list, you can send the information to [sarah.proeber@wels.net](mailto:sarah.proeber@wels.net).

Serving you in Christ,  
WELS President Mark Schroeder 

## Evaluation of relief opportunities continue

Pastors and leaders from Florida and Texas are continuing to meet and evaluate the needs of their members and communities following Hurricanes Harvey and Irma.

Florida pastors and South Atlantic District President Chuck Westra met with a representative from WELS Christian Aid and Relief Mon., Sept. 18, to assess the needs and discuss opportunities.

Local volunteers have deployed the Christian Aid and Relief trailers, outfitted with tools and supplies for relief work, to the Jacksonville, Fla., area to help with cleanup efforts. A group of Christian Aid and Relief volunteers will be arriving in Florida on Fri., Sept. 22, and staying for a

week to tackle cleanup projects in Merritt Island and West Melbourne, two of the harder hit areas.

So far, reports of damage to WELS churches and members' homes have been minimal from Irma. Minor roof damage and downed trees account for the majority of the reports. Local groups have come together to clean up the most urgent areas, including members from the churches in the Divine Savior school association getting together to help clean up trees and debris around the school.

"It was pretty exciting that as we're starting this new association with one another we see a firsthand account of brothers and sisters in Christ joining together to do a



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bigger, better job than we could've done ourselves," says Rev. John Boggs, Hope, West Palm Beach, Fla.

Rev. David Rosenbaum, Redeemer, Merritt Island, Fla., said that while he and his members were spared major damage, there are several homes in the surrounding community that were destroyed by winds and tornadoes.

In Texas, a representative from WELS Christian Aid and Relief met with Houston-area pastors and lay leaders and South Central District President Rev. Don Patterson on Sept. 6 to assess the situation in that area. The district has established a local committee to continue to assess needs and coordinate relief opportunities.

Patterson reports that many congregations have already been working to help members and friends clean up damage to their properties and homes caused by the flooding. Rev. Matthew Brown from Abiding Word, Houston, Tex., says that more than 40 Abiding Word members mobilized as soon as flood waters receded to help the five member families whose homes were badly damaged in the flood. Other members went door to door in their neighborhoods to see if people needed help. "It was Christians serving and trusting that God provides those opportunities to give the reason for the hope that we have," Brown says.

Several different groups from the area also traveled to Christ our Savior, Angleton, Tex., the last few weekends to help clean out and strip down the parsonage, which was


flooded with eight inches of water that didn't recede for a week.

Along with the relief trailers with tools and supplies, Christian Aid and Relief has provided more than \$65,000 to help address immediate needs of the congregations and members affected by the hurricane and the flooding in Texas. Some of this funding is being used to help congregations and schools reach high deductibles for their insurance as well to provide gift cards for supplies to members and prospects as cleanup efforts continue.

Local district leaders and Builders For Christ are also discussing the possibility of working together on rebuilding homes damaged by the hurricane.

Boggs says, "Hurricane Irma has come and gone, and its affects are being felt everywhere. There are still parts of our state that are without power. There's a lot of devastation and issues that need to be resolved. But, we stand amazed at how the Lord spared our people, how the Lord spared our buildings, how destruction was very minimal to our WELS churches, and how our brothers and sisters in Christ have rallied around each other and their common faith to support one another and help wherever possible."

Christian Aid and Relief Chairman Rev. Bob Hein thanks WELS members for their outpouring of prayers and support, saying it's encouraging for people who have been affected by these storms to know they have brothers and sisters in faith thinking of them.

Learn more at [wels.net/hurricaneupdates](http://wels.net/hurricaneupdates). 

## CEF special rates ending soon

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Earlier this year, the WELS Church Extension Fund (CEF) announced special rates for new investors to help meet the funding needs of new and growing missions in North America. CEF makes loans below or at market rates for WELS churches that are either new missions and building for the first time or established congregations with a new mission-focused initiative.

CEF funds these loans through WELS congregations' and members' investments in CEF products. With the need for funds increasing, CEF has been offering special terms and rates for new investments to raise an additional \$8 to \$12 million in investments.

Members have far exceeded the goal with more than \$18 million in new investments. CEF plans to retire the special rates on Sept. 30, 2017, but there is still time to invest. Investment options include expanded terms for loan certificates and retirement/IRA certificates. One of the features of this special offer includes an annual interest rate that is distributed and compounds quarterly.

"CEF wants to thank everyone who has invested in 2017. If you are not an investor in CEF, this is a great opportunity to support ministry. If you are already an investor, this is a great opportunity to increase your support of ministry by increasing your investments" says Mr. Scott Page, director of WELS CEF. "Congregations are eager to grow, and now's the time to fund that need."

Investing in WELS CEF is not only a smart way to manage personal finances; it also supports the mission of the church. Rev. Keith Free, administrator for WELS Home Missions, says, "The continued investments of more WELS members and congregation gives CEF additional funds to support missions and mission-minded congregations."

Rates vary by the initial investment amount and term length. View rates online at [wels.net/cef](http://wels.net/cef). Plus, investors can manage their accounts and invest online. 

## Special *Forward in Christ* issue celebrates the Reformation

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In celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, the October issue of *Forward in Christ* (FIC), the synod's official publication, will focus on Martin Luther and the biblical teachings he rediscovered—grace alone, faith alone, Scripture alone, in Christ alone.

"This anniversary is not just a review of past events. It's different," says Rev. John Braun, executive editor of *Forward in Christ*. "We thank God for the gospel we still possess today—a power that sustains us just as it sustained others throughout history. It's all about Christ! We still treasure his grace, and we desire to share that grace with the world."

Special features include a look at Luther's far-reaching influence, a history lesson on Katie Luther, and a