

TOGETHER



February 4, 2020

First WELS Leadership Conference a success

WELS Congregational Services hosted the first ever WELS National Conference on Lutheran Leadership in Chicago, Jan. 21–23, 2020. Approximately 800 people, representing about 350 WELS congregations, met to hear five plenary speakers and attend a selection of breakout sessions.

Rev. Jonathan Hein, coordinator of WELS Congregational Services, says, “The focus of the conference was that we want to do all we can with the gospel to serve Christ’s mission. ‘Doing all we can with the gospel’ requires leaders to focus on two things. First, we look at tactics. Is the way we are carrying out gospel ministry smart?”

He continues, “But underneath tactics is congregational culture. The group—the collective—needs to have the right thought habits and attitudes. That was what the plenaries were all about.”

Attendee Mr. Wes Schappert, a lay leader at Resurrection, Maumee, Ohio, says he appreciated the emphasis on personal evangelism. He says, “The point was simple, people sharing Jesus with others—people free from the curse of sin and Satan, sharing what lives in their heart so that others may know Christ.”

The first day of the conference started with three plenary presentations focusing on how lay leaders and called workers encourage one another for local ministry, finding our voice as a gospel-centered church, and encouraging both men and women to use their gifts to serve God. The evening concluded with an opening worship service with communion, bringing together WELS members from around the country as the embarked on learning and growing together as leaders of the church.

On day two, attendees could attend five breakout sessions, picked from 20 available sessions on a wide variety of topics. Hein said many attendees were interested in workshops that focused on reaching and retaining younger generations as well as personal evangelism. Additional topics ranged from ministry in rural areas to worship to apologetics.


On the second evening, attendees were treated to a preview on the new hymnal, set to be released by Northwestern Publishing House by Advent 2021. The new hymnal will maintain the name *Christian Worship* and comprise a suite of resources including a comprehensive psalter, musical arrangements for various instrumentation, and an easy-to-use service folder builder. Worship services and devotions at the conference included liturgical and hymn arrangements from the upcoming new hymnal. Learn about the new hymnal at christianworship.com.

The final day of the conference concluded with two more plenary speakers. Rev. Dave Rosenau, St. Mark, Leesburg, Fla., spoke about the importance of reaching people one-by-one using God's Word, and Rev. Adam Mueller, Redeemer, Tucson, Ariz., presented on the need to commit to Christ's mission.

Attendee Mr. Scott Krause, a member at St. Luke, Watertown, Wis., says, "I found the conference to be a great boost to my faith in the good Lord and what he has done for me. It was totally Christ-centered. My main takeaway was that I need to focus on a daily basis to love and reach out to my friends, family, and neighbors with the good news of the gospel."

Following the success and overwhelmingly positive feedback from attendees, the conference planning committee is exploring options for a second WELS National Conference on Lutheran Leadership, likely sometime in 2022. Watch for information in upcoming editions of the WELS Together e-newsletter, wels.net, and Forward in Christ.

Registrations exceeded expectations for the first WELS National Conference on Lutheran Leadership. If you didn't make it to Chicago for the conference, all five plenary presentations and many of the breakout sessions will be available to view online over the next few months at lutheranleadership.com.

Serving with you in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder 

Your gifts, God's blessings 2020

"Your gifts, God's blessings: An annual report to our members" is now available online.

"I encourage every WELS member to read the annual report to learn the length, breadth, and depth of the impactful gospel ministries that Jesus graciously allows us to conduct in his name and to his glory through our prayers and offerings," says Rev. Kurt Lueneburg, director of WELS Ministry of Christian Giving.

Read the 2020 report to learn more about

- Samuel Lor, a second-generation Hmong student who is in his first year at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary;
- Qiang Wang, a recent graduate of the Pastoral Studies Institute,


who is serving as a missionary to the Chinese in a suburb outside of Vancouver;

- Pastor Chaplai, a Hmong pastor in Vietnam, who notes, "I want to say thank you to WELS because you have given me peace;" and
- Kyle Opperman, who drifted away from the WELS church of his youth but returned two years ago and now is so grateful to be "home."
- The report includes photos of Christian brothers and sisters around the world, stories of faith, updates on WELS' ministry, and a summary of WELS' financial picture.

"As you review the ministries we support together," says WELS President Rev. Mark Schroeder, "keep our synod and

its work in your prayers, and thank God that he has given you an opportunity to be a part of the soul-saving mission he has placed before us."


Print versions of the report have been sent to every WELS congregation and synod donors. Additional print versions are available from Northwestern Publishing House for free. Visit nph.net or call 800-662-6022.

To view the report online, visit wels.net/annualreport. At this website you can also download a PowerPoint presentation of the report with notes that allow anyone to share the highlights of our synod's work. Alternatively, churches can invite a WELS Christian giving counselor to give the presentation. Contact WELS Ministry of Christian Giving at 800-827-5482 for more information. 

Announcing WELS Night at Miller Park

It's time to mark your calendars for the seventh annual WELS Night at Miller Park. Each year thousands of WELS members gather for an evening of fellowship and fun, and you can join them for the Milwaukee Brewers' game against the Pittsburgh Pirates on Fri., July 24, 2020. Game time is 7:10 p.m.

The Brewers are again offering WELS members up to 50 percent off the price of tickets. The pricing is Field Outfield Box for \$21/ticket, Loge Outfield Box for \$17/ticket, or Terrace Reserved \$9/ticket. The web link to purchase discounted tickets for WELS Night at

Miller Park won't be available until March. A promotional flyer is available at wels.net/event/brewers2020 to download to assist you in organizing your group for the game. 

Evangelism Day at MLC

The annual Evangelism Day at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., in January, brought a break from classes as students attended stellar seminars and got fired up about proclaiming Christ.

"Evangelism Day," says Maddy Leckwee, "is filled with energy and fire for the gospel. It makes you excited for the work you are training to do."

Pastors, teachers, and laypeople presented on topics ranging from youth ministry and social media outreach to the gospel in East Asia and witnessing to Mormons.

Others snagged an opportunity to practice confessing their faith with Praise and Proclaim Ministries' evangelism training. The group looks forward to canvassing later this spring.

Article from Martin Luther College's e-mail newsletter KnightWatch. 



To sign up for the e-mail version, visit wels.net/together.