

TOGETHER



August 16, 2022

“God’s Beautiful and Balanced Design for Male and Female” released

Biblical doctrines and principles do not change. But there are times when those doctrines and principles need to be understood clearly as new situations arise and are addressed by the church. That is certainly true when it comes to what the Bible tells us about the God-given roles of men and women and the nature of their relationship with one another.


Our synod’s current doctrinal statement on the roles of men and women is called “Scriptural Principles of Man and Woman Roles.” After more than a decade of work and discussion, it was adopted by the 1993 synod convention as a correct explanation of biblical truth and as our synod’s formal doctrinal statement on the issue.

Since the adoption of “Scriptural Principles of Man and Woman Roles,” our synod’s doctrinal position has not changed; the statement still expresses biblical truth. But new questions and issues have arisen regarding the biblical roles of men and women that did not really exist in 1993. Understandably, those questions were not really addressed at the time. In addition, there have been situations in which certain elements of the current statement have been misunderstood or misapplied.

For those reasons, the Conference of Presidents (COP) determined that it would be beneficial for our synod to consider an updated restatement of the scriptural principles outlined in the 1993 document. The new statement is entitled “God’s Beautiful and Balanced Design for Male and Female.”

After three years of work and study, a proposed draft of that statement is now ready. The Conference of Presidents encourages you to read and discuss the statement with your church and district leaders.

Serving together with you in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder

Visit wels.net/doctrinal-statements to read “God’s beautiful and balanced design for male and female.” 

WELS again celebrates blessings in endowments program

Thanks to the generosity of God's people, WELS Foundation was blessed to distribute almost \$1.2 million to gospel ministry in July through the WELS endowment funds. These funds were established by delegates at the 2005 synod convention to provide ongoing support for the Lord's work in WELS Ministerial Education and WELS Home, Joint, and World Missions.

In addition to the WELS endowments, WELS Foundation also manages endowments that are set up by individuals, congregations, and other WELS-affiliated ministries. In total, WELS Foundation distributed \$3.8 million from more than 375 endowments this year, providing ongoing financial support for Christ's gospel work throughout WELS.

Several of the endowments managed by WELS Foundation benefit Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., providing tuition assistance to students training to become pastors.


Seminarian Jacob Borgwardt, a member at Redeemer, Fond du Lac, Wis., shares one of the blessings of the tuition assistance he has received through endowments: "[It] helps me focus on training to be a pastor. Instead of having to work full time to pay off student loans and be a part-time student, it's the other way around. Seminarians can be full-time students, spending the majority of our time studying God's Word."

He continues: "On the spiritual side, I'll never forget something one of

my professors once said in regard to tuition assistance: The people giving generously to these endowments see the support of seminarians as a tangible way to give to the gospel. What a blessing and responsibility!"

Borgwardt extends his gratitude to those who have supported him and his wife through their financial gifts: "We thank God that he has given you such Christlike generosity. You are a help and a blessing to us and to so many of my classmates. Your gifts and prayers are extremely encouraging! Knowing that there are so many people who support us in our pastoral training makes us that much more excited to serve a church someday."

"An endowment is a great way to create a lasting legacy of Christian faith while providing for the Lord's work—like supporting our future pastors," says Mr. Jim Holm, executive director of WELS Foundation.

There are a variety of ways to give to an endowment: cash or appreciated assets; or through a will, trust, beneficiary designation on a retirement account, or insurance proceeds. To learn more about adding to an existing endowment or establishing a new endowment for a ministry close to your heart, contact your local WELS Christian giving counselor at wels.net/giving-counselors or call 800-827-5482. 

2023 WELS VEBA open enrollment and rate updates

The WELS VEBA Commission approved a full open enrollment period this November for new coverage effective Jan. 1, 2023. All eligible workers will have the

opportunity to enroll for new coverage or make changes to their existing WELS VEBA coverage. Sponsoring organizations that do not currently participate in WELS VEBA will have the opportunity to participate by offering WELS VEBA to their eligible workers for 2023. Open enrollment materials will be mailed to eligible workers and sponsoring organizations by the end of October.

The 2023 premium rates for the WELS VEBA Group Health Care Plan will increase by 9.5% over the current 2022 rates. There are three main drivers of the increase:

1. The utilization of health care services has increased as access to providers has improved during the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Inflation has caused the cost of health care services and prescription drugs to increase at a faster pace than in recent previous years.
3. Investment returns achieved by the WELS VEBA medical trust year-to-date through June 30, 2022, are lower than expected.

"Although the 2023 increase is significant, the increase is necessary for the plan to maintain adequate projected long-term reserves and is in line with average expected increases in health insurance premiums nationwide," explains Mr. Joshua Peterman, director of WELS Benefit Plans. "It is also important to remember that over the previous four years the WELS VEBA rates increased by a total of only 4%, and

\$4.2 million in savings was passed on to participating sponsoring organizations during the August 2020 premium holiday."

Visit welsbpo.net to view the rates. 

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