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TOGETHER



August 22, 2023

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Welcome visitors from Uganda

One of the highlights of the recent synod convention was the declaration of fellowship between WELS and Obadiah Lutheran Synod of Uganda. The president of Obadiah Lutheran Synod, Rev. Maksimu Musa, had planned to attend the convention in person, but he was unable to receive a visa in time. Instead, he was encouraged to visit as soon as he was able to obtain a visa as a way for him to become personally familiar with our synod.

Those plans became a reality last week when Pastor Musa, along with his wife, Mary, and infant son Nathanael, arrived in the United States for a visit. Pastor Musa and his family were able to visit the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry (CMM) in Waukesha, Wis. While there he was able to meet with various WELS leaders and also had the opportunity to make a presentation about Obadiah Lutheran Synod to the workers at the CMM.


While in the United States, Pastor Musa will preach at several congregations in the Midwest and at two of our Apache mission congregations. He will also visit Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis.

Obadiah Lutheran Synod was established in 2008. From a single congregation, it has grown to a church body of 28 congregations and a membership of more than 5,000 souls. Those congregations are served by seven pastors and six evangelists. It also carries out mission work among South Sudanese refugees in the Kiryandango refugee camp.

WELS first had contact with Obadiah Lutheran Synod in December 2017. Soon after that, WELS missionaries Rev. John Hartmann and Rev. John Holtz, along with Rev. Bright Pembeleka from the Lutheran Church of Central Africa–Malawi Synod, traveled to Uganda to meet with Pastor Musa. After several years of doctrinal discussions, it was determined that WELS and Obadiah Lutheran Synod were united in doctrine, resulting in the declaration of fellowship at the convention this summer.

We are grateful for the way in which God has enabled this new Lutheran church body to thrive and grow and for the fellowship that he has enabled us to celebrate. Please keep our brothers and sisters in Uganda in your prayers.

Serving with you in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder

Learn more about Pastor Musa and Obadiah Lutheran Synod at forwardinchrist.net. 



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

Two new chaplains for WELS Military Services

WELS Military Services commissioned two new chaplains this summer to serve WELS members in the military and their families. Rev. Robert Weiss was commissioned Aug. 6 as the new European civilian chaplain, replacing Rev. John Hartwig, who retired. Rev. Paul Horn was commissioned Aug. 19 as the new WELS national civilian chaplain, replacing Rev. Paul Ziemer, who also retired.

Weiss and his wife, Rachel, will be moving this week to Germany, where the European civilian chaplain is based. From this central location, he will be able to serve members of the military, their families, and other ex-pats living abroad with God's Word. He was commissioned at St. Peter, Chilton, Wis., where he has served as pastor since 2014. Prior to serving at St. Peter, he served at King of Kings, Little Rock, Ark., where he was assigned in 2004 after graduating Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis. While in Arkansas, Weiss served as a military contact pastor to nearby military installations. And, it's where he studied German at the University of Arkansas. Weiss also has a little experience as the European chaplain, as he filled in for a couple months when his predecessor was on furlough.


"The number one thing I'm looking forward to is being able to focus very intensely on a specific area of ministry. Military ministry is a specific demographic of people within the synod who are in a specific situation that's not normal," says Weiss. "Being able to serve WELS members in the military and have that be my complete focus—I'm very much looking forward to that."

Rev. Joel Gaertner, director of WELS Special Ministries which oversees WELS Military Services, presided over the commissioning service. Gaertner says, "Rob Weiss is ideally suited for serving as our next European civilian chaplain. With his German-speaking skills and experience in serving our military members with the gospel, he is perfectly suited to take on this role. We pray for God's richest blessings for Chaplain Weiss and his wife, Rachel, as they move to Germany."

Horn was commissioned at Grace, Milwaukee, Wis. Rev. Brian Pechman, a military contact pastor serving at Risen Savior, Savannah, Ga., preached. Horn has been involved with military ministry for 19 years, beginning with his first assignment after graduation to Faith in Radcliff, Ky., where he served as a military contact pastor. He has served on the WELS Military Services Committee since 2013. Horn and his wife, Rebecca, are in the process of moving from Lafayette, Ind., where he served as pastor at Lamb of God, to San Diego, Calif. He expects to begin his call as national civilian chaplain in San Diego in September, where he will not only serve as the liaison to the military, but also orient, train, and mentor WELS military contact pastors around the country.

Horn's call is a change for WELS Military Services. It is the first time the call will be full time and the first time it will be based in San Diego, home to nearly all the branches of the U.S. Armed Forces and in close proximity to the Pacific fleet. "The pivot to a full-time national chaplain is necessary because ministry to our military is too important to do part time," says Horn. "The military mindset and culture is often misunderstood by civilians and because

of that we often miss opportunities for meaningful outreach and gospel ministry and we miss opportunities to engage military families in meaningful service in our congregations."

If you, or someone you know, is in the military, Weiss and Horn want to know who you are and serve you with the Word and sacrament. Visit wels.net/refer to sign up with WELS Military Services to get connected with them or a military contact pastor. 

WELS endowments help support tuition assistance

Thanks to the generosity of God's people, WELS Foundation distributed \$1.3 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, dependable support for the Lord's work in WELS Ministerial Education and WELS Home, World, and Joint 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 \$4.1 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 Martin Luther College (MLC), New Ulm, Minn., providing tuition assistance to students training to become teachers.

Katie Rosenau, a member at St. Mark, Leesburg, Fla., is entering her second year at MLC in the Elementary

Education and Communication Arts and Literature program. Katie feels blessed to have received crucial financial support through endowments. "The academic scholarships I have received through the endowment funds have certainly been a blessing," she says. "More traditional tuition assistance was not available to me, making the academic scholarships all the more important. It is a gift that my efforts in studying and focusing on classes are being rewarded."

To Rosenau, the support she has received is more than just a financial blessing: "In working hard to achieve academic excellence, I often end up spending more time in God's Word. Being blessed through my studies allows me to dedicate even more time to growing spiritually in my faith."

Rosenau extends her thanks to those who have generously supported her through their financial gifts. "Knowing there is support for my academic achievements helps encourage me to strive for my very best," she says. "I am grateful for all the people behind the gifts who are helping those who might not qualify for other types of assistance. Your gifts are received with appreciation!"

"Providing tuition assistance for those wanting to serve in the teaching ministry is a goal everyone can support," says Mr. Jim Holm, executive director of WELS Foundation. "An endowment fund can provide a source of stable financial support for these young men and women."

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