

May 16, 2023

Assignment of teachers and staff ministers at Martin Luther College

Last week, the synod's Assignment Committee met at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., to assign this year's teacher and staff ministry candidates. The Conference of Presidents makes up the Assignment Committee. The committee is advised by representatives of Martin Luther College, the WELS Commission on Lutheran Schools, and the presidents of the two synodical prep schools.

This year there were 61 teacher candidates who could go anywhere. All of them were assigned. Forty candidates who were limited geographically as to where they could serve (mostly due to marriage) were assigned. Additional assignments of those limited geographically will be made in the coming weeks and months when it is determined where they will be living. Thirty-seven teacher candidates were assigned to return to their current place of service either for another year or permanently. The total number of candidates assigned was 138.

After the assignments were made, there are still 158 vacancies for teacher-trained workers. Of those, 114 had requested candidates through the assignment process.

Four staff minister candidates were available for assignment; all four were assigned.


In addition, 37 men graduated from the preseminary program, and three men graduated with seminary certification. Most, if not all, of those 40 men will enroll at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., to continue their training for the pastoral ministry.

View the list of assignments online at mlc-wels.edu.

As you view the list, you will see many one-year assignments. Assignments are made for one year for a number of reasons, including marriage plans, candidates assigned to duties outside of their specific training, candidates assigned as tutors or dorm supervisors, service in a foreign mission field, or local circumstances in schools. Many candidates assigned for one year will have their assignment made permanent either during the coming year or at next year's assignments.

We thank God for providing these workers who will go out into God's harvest field. We pray for God's blessing on their ministry.

The Assignment Committee will meet May 23 at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary to assign pastor and vicar candidates. Vicar assignments will be announced Wed., May 24; pastor assignments will be announced Thurs., May 25. The commencement events and call services will be streamed live. Learn more at wisluthsem.org.

Serving with you in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder 

2023 humanitarian aid grants announced

At its May 1, 2023, meeting, WELS Christian Aid and Relief approved humanitarian aid grants totaling \$702,390 for FY 23/24. WELS home missions will receive \$43,498 in assistance; \$658,892 will go to support world mission efforts. These are projects developed by WELS home and world missionaries to reflect Christ's compassion to the people of their communities and build relationships that lead to opportunities to share the gospel.

"Seven hundred thousand dollars is a lot of money, but I believe it is money well spent. These dollars assist our missionaries at home and abroad to reach out in compassion to hurting people and help them. That's reason enough for such an investment!" says Rev. Dan Sims, director of WELS Christian Aid and Relief. "But these acts of kindness help to build trusting relationships and lead to many opportunities to share the good news of our Savior."

Major items include support for health clinics (including the Central Africa Medical Mission), borehole drilling to provide clean water, food for the hungry, warm clothes for widows and orphans, aid for legal immigrants, school supplies for underprivileged kids, education for refugees, scholarships for poor students, smokeless stoves, mosquito nets, vocational training, and many other forms of assistance.

Home missions receiving grants include:

- Foundation, Las Vegas, Nev.
- Hope, Toronto, Ont., Canada
- Shepherd of the Valley, Arvada, Colo.
- Living Hope, Commerce City, Colo.

- Christ, Denver, Colo.
- Carbon Valley, Firestone, Colo.
- The Vine, Hayden, Idaho
- Christ the Rock, Farmington, N.M.
- Living Hope, Chattanooga, Tenn.
- Amazing Grace, Amarillo, Tex.
- The Mission, Conroe, Tex.
- Christ Our Refuge, Hewitt, Tex.
- Christ the Rock, Hutto, Tex.
- Abiding Savior, Killeen, Tex.
- Divine Peace, Rockwall, Tex.
- Faith, Tyler, Tex.
- Our Savior, West San Antonio, Tex.

World Mission fields receiving grants include:

- Africa: Malawi, Zambia, Kenya, Uganda
- Asia: Indonesia, Thailand, and others
- Europe: Albania
- Latin America: Mexico

Learn more about WELS Christian Aid and Relief at wels.net/relief. 

2023 Book of Reports and Memorials available online

The 2023 *Book of Reports and Memorials* is now available online. This book summarizes the activities of each area of ministry over the last year and contains the proposed ministry financial plan for the next biennium. The information in the *Book of Reports and Memorials* will help guide the 400 delegates at WELS' 67th biennial convention, which is being held at Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich., July 31–Aug. 3, under the theme "Embrace the Cross—Anticipate the Crown."

"This theme reflects the biblical truth that Christians in this world live under the cross," says WELS President Rev.

Mark Schroeder. "We live under the cross in the sense that our relationship with God as his people was brought about by the sacrificial death of our Savior on the cross. Living under the cross also means that we recognize, as Jesus himself told us, that in this world God's church will endure difficulties and trials but that all of those difficulties and trials are intended by God for our eternal good. And when we embrace the cross we can look forward with joyful anticipation to when we and all believers will receive the crown of life."

A highlight of this year's synod convention is the anticipated declaration and affirmation of fellowship with two Lutheran church bodies, one in Uganda and the other in Latin America.

Three memorials are also included in the *Book of Reports and Memorials*. A memorial is a formal request to the synod convention for specific action.

One printed copy of the *Book of Reports and Memorials* is being mailed to each delegate, congregation, and male called worker. These printed copies should arrive by the end of May.

To view the online version of the *Book of Reports and Memorials*, visit welsconvention.net/boram. 

Celebration of ministry retreats held

In April, Grow in Grace, the institute for continuing education at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS), Mequon, Wis., hosted about 200 people in San Antonio, Texas, for Celebration of Ministry retreats for pastors celebrating


3, 10, 25, and 35 years since graduating from the seminary.

These retreats build relationships with ministry peers and offer encouragement through worship, Bible studies, workshops, and presentations. Bible study topics covered Psalms, Philippians, Nehemiah, and Colossians. Separate and joint workshops were offered for pastors and wives and covered topics such as time management, caring for others and yourself, focusing on your own gifts, and financial challenges and opportunities.

Though these workshops and Bible studies are a key part of the retreats, fellowship with classmates, worship services, and a beautiful location also play a part in the experience.

When Grow in Grace initially began the Celebration of Ministry retreats in 2013, only pastors and wives celebrating 10 years from graduation attended. In more recent years, the event has extended invitations to pastors and wives celebrating 3 years, 25 years, and 35 years since graduation. This year was the first year where Grow in Grace hosted repeat attendees from the class of 2013. This WLS class was the first class to attend when they were celebrating three years from graduation and were now invited back to celebrate at year 10. As one pastor shares, "San Antonio is a great location, and my wife and I were happy to return there a second time. The hotel is great, and its location is fantastic."

The next Celebration of Ministry retreats are scheduled for April 3–5, 2024.

Learn more about Grow in Grace at wysluthsem.org/grow-in-grace. 



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