

**TOGETHER**

December 19, 2023

## Changes in the WELS Commission on Worship

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**R**ev. Bryan Gerlach, director of the WELS Commission on Worship, has announced his intention to retire. He will retire partially this month but continue serving until the planning for next summer's National Conference on Worship, Music, and the Arts is completed. He will fully retire after the conference takes place July 30–Aug. 2. In his partial retirement, he also will continue to focus on two Worship publications—*Preach the Word and Worship the Lord*—and provide ongoing assistance to individuals and congregations on worship issues. While he serves in a part-time capacity, his title will be the associate director of the Commission on Worship.

The Conference of Presidents has asked Rev. Paul Prange to begin serving immediately as the interim director of the Commission on Worship. Prange currently serves as administrator of the Board for Ministerial Education and chairman of the Joint Mission Council. He will retain these responsibilities. Prange will serve as interim director until a staffing review takes place at the end of 2024.

As interim director of the Commission on Worship, Prange will give attention to several important initiatives, including:

- Working on strategic planning with the Commission on Worship chairman Rev. Michael Schultz.
- Serving on a preaching enrichment task force.
- Helping link hymnology with the religion curriculum that is being developed.
- Providing worship enrichment resources for new and existing home mission congregations.
- Offering chapel planning resources for area Lutheran high schools.
- Assisting in the advance planning for “The Foundation” resources for worship and preaching.

Serving with you in Christ,

WELS President Mark Schroeder 

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## Deadline for year-end gifts

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Please note the following deadlines if you'd like your gift to be made in 2023 for tax purposes:

- A gift by check is considered completed when the check is postmarked (USPS) by Dec. 31.
- An online credit card gift must be successfully charged to your account by midnight on Dec. 31. This generally happens immediately when the gift is made.
- An online electronic funds transfer (EFT) gift must be processed by WELS in 2023. The deadline for these gifts is 4:30 p.m. (Central) on Thurs., Dec. 28.
- A gift of stock or mutual funds must be received by Dec. 29. The date of transfer is the date of the gift. Note this may take a few days, so the earlier the better. Please inform WELS Foundation of what you are donating at [wels-foundation@wels.net](mailto:wels-foundation@wels.net) or 414-256-3213.

### Special note for qualified charitable distributions from an IRA

For a qualified charitable distribution, the funds must come out of your IRA generally by Dec. 31. (If a donor writes a check to WELS from an IRA account, WELS must be able to cash the check by Thurs., Dec. 28.) We encourage you to consult your financial and tax professionals before requesting a qualified charitable distribution. ☩

## WELS Center for Mission and Ministry closures

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WELS Center for Mission and Ministry in Waukesha, Wis., will be closed Dec. 25-26 and Jan. 1, 2024.

**NOTE:** The next issue of Together will be published Tues., Jan. 9, 2024. The next Call Report will be published Mon., Jan. 8, 2024. The WELS Communication Services staff wishes you a very blessed celebration of our Savior's birth! ☩

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