

WELS NEWS

August 2019

Assignments At Martin Luther College And Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

In May the synod's Assignment Committee met in New Ulm, Minn., to assign teacher and staff ministry candidates. The Assignment Committee is comprised of the Conference of Presidents and is assisted by various advisors.

One hundred forty candidates were assigned to the teaching ministry. All candidates who were able to go anywhere were assigned. Many candidates that could be assigned to limited geographical areas (due to marriage or other circumstances) were assigned, and more of those will be assigned in the coming weeks.

Two staff minister candidates who could go anywhere were assigned; two that were limited by geography were not yet assigned but could be assigned in the future if calls become available.

The complete list of assignments can be found at mlc-wels.edu.

The following week the Assignment Committee moved to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon, Wis. There the committee assigned vicars and pastoral candidates. Our gracious God has provided candidates to serve in the public ministry, and he has moved them to say, "Here am I; send me!" We thank God for these gifts to his church and pray for his blessings on their service.

Serving in Christ,

President Mark Schroeder

New President At Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

At the end of June, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., experienced a change in leadership. Seminary President Rev. Paul Wendland stepped down as president and moved back into the role of full-time classroom professor. Seminary Vice President Rev. Earle Treptow accepted the call to serve as the seminary president and officially began his duties on July 1, 2019.

The role of the seminary president is an important one. It's been said that "as the seminary goes, so goes the synod." The seminary is the place where nearly all WELS pastors are trained, so it goes without saying that for the synod to remain faithful to God's Word, the seminary will need to remain faithful to the doctrines of Scripture. It is the responsibility of the seminary president to ensure that the seminary carries out that responsibility.

The seminary president is also the spokesman for the seminary. Our synod looks to the seminary faculty to provide guidance and input on doctrinal matters. The Conference of Presidents often consults with the seminary faculty when discussing doctrinal issues. It is the role of the seminary president to speak for the faculty when discussions on doctrinal matters take place.

President Wendland first joined the seminary faculty in 2001 after serving in both world and home mission settings, in an established congregation, and as a professor at Northwestern College and Martin Luther College. He has served as seminary president since 2004. We are thankful for the years in which President Wendland has faithfully carried out these important responsibilities and pray for God's continued blessings on his new role in the classroom.

Prior to coming to the seminary in 2016, President-elect Treptow served as a pastoral recruiter at Martin Luther College, as a pastor in British Columbia and Denver, Colorado, and as the president of the Nebraska District. As Treptow begins his role as seminary president, we can be thankful that God has blessed our seminary in the past and that those blessings will continue under the leadership of President Treptow.

Serving in Christ,

President Mark Schroeder

Home Missions Approves New Projects

The Executive Committee of WELS Board for Home Missions met on May 9 and authorized financial support for one new mission congregation and one ministry enhancement.

"Even though there was limited funding this spring, we are excited about the new mission start in Houston, Texas," says Rev. Wayne Uhlhorn, chairman of WELS Board for Home Missions. "The work the core group has already done and the demographics have us feeling this is the right place and the right time."

A dedicated group of core members from other WELS churches in the area has been meeting monthly for Bible study since 2015. Rev. Keith Free, administrator of WELS Home Missions, credits these monthly meetings as a strength of this mission.

"They have put in the time so that now as friends in Christ they are 'all in' to start a mission," says Free.

The new mission will be located in an urban neighborhood that is seeing a resurgence in popularity as people strive to be closer to the city center. Sixty-five percent of those living in the target area are not involved in a religious congregation or community.

Home Missions is also supporting a ministry enhancement to the campus ministry at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh. For more than 35 years, Martin Luther, Oshkosh, Wis., and other local congregations have supported a campus ministry at this university alongside WELS Campus

Ministry. Known as Rising Son Ministry Center, this campus ministry has a house just a couple blocks off campus that is used for fellowship, Bible study, and worship. Currently, though, activities are only taking place one night per week because there isn't a dedicated staff member to oversee the ministry.

The financial support from Home Missions will allow Martin Luther to call a pastor whose job will be to serve half-time at Martin Luther and half-time at Rising Son Ministry Center.

Rev. Nathan Ericson, who currently serves at Martin Luther and works with Rising Son Ministry Center, notes, "A city of Oshkosh study has shown how the UW-Oshkosh campus neighborhood has gone from being 50 percent renter-occupied to more than 90 percent renter-occupied in the years 2000 through 2016 and will approach 100 percent in coming years. Most of the 15,000 residents of this area are juniors, seniors, or recent graduates. There are essentially no churches in this area except Rising Son Ministry Center. With increased staffing we can attempt to reach this field that is ripe for harvest."

WELS Board for Home Missions also approved two other new starts whose financial support is coming from outside the budget of WELS Home Missions for the next two fiscal years. These unsubsidized missions are opening in Folsom, Calif., and Wesley Chapel, Fla. The board also changed the status of the mission in Killeen, Texas, from "subsidized" to "unsubsidized" since it is now receiving financial support outside Home Missions' budget. Home Missions provides assistance to unsubsidized mission congregations through its district missions boards, mission counselors, and synodical support staff.

To learn more about WELS Home Missions, visit wels.net/homemissions.

Serving The Military Personnel Of WELS

Through WELS Military Services, numerous resources are available to support the faith of those who serve and have served in the United States Armed Forces. This committee operates through a national civilian chaplain and liaison to the military, a full-time civilian chaplain in Europe, and many WELS pastors who serve those stationed stateside.

Two recent events represent how WELS aims to meet the spiritual needs of both active and retired members of the military.

April 30--May 2, the WELS Military Services Committee held its annual Military Contact Pastors Retreat at Risen Savior, Chula Vista, Calif., near Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton.

When a WELS congregation is located near a military installation like Camp Pendleton, the pastor serving that congregation may be asked to serve as a military contact pastor. Currently more than 100 WELS pastors are serving WELS military personnel in this capacity.

This year, 22 WELS military contact pastors, five Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) pastors, six WELS Military Services Committee members, and three special speakers were in attendance at the Military Contact

Pastors Retreat under the theme "Serving Those Who Serve Our Country." The retreat's presentations provided the attendees with insights into the unique challenges of the military lifestyle during and after deployment. Attendees were also able to visit Camp Pendleton. There, they spoke to the camp's chaplain who explained how WELS pastors and certified lay leaders can serve certain spiritual needs of WELS military personnel.

Then, May 3–5, the Lutheran Military Support Group hosted its second annual Veteran Spiritual R&R at Camp Phillip, Wautoma, Wis. The retreat was open to all WELS and ELS veterans who live with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Attendees gathered from across the United States. Over the three days, they encouraged one another through their shared experiences in military service and shared faith in Jesus Christ. They bonded through team activities and topical workshops.

"I am so amazed at how people who have never known each other can connect so quickly and offer such meaningful support to each other," says Rev. Jason Hacker, Grace, Waukesha, Wis. "What a blessing it was to witness it!" Hacker is also a member of the Board of Directors for the Lutheran Military Support Group and a WELS civilian chaplain.

Rev. Paul Horn, chairman of the WELS Military Services Committee, notes that the key to serving more WELS members in the military is through referrals from their loved ones.

"The best thing civilian laypeople can do to help is to refer their troops, whether they are family members or friends," Horn explains. "They should go to wels.net/refer to enter military members' information so we can serve them with Word and Sacraments."

To learn more about WELS Military Services, visit wels.net/military.

For more information about the Lutheran Military Support Group, visit lutheranmilitary.org.