



Our God is...Faithful

The headline read: "Faithful guard dog unfaithful." The story provided the details. A store owner was robbed. The wily thief tested the guard dog's faithfulness with a juicy steak, and the dog failed the test.

Faithfulness is questionable in pets and humans. "Dog bites child." "Spouse deserts partner." "Employee accepts rival company offer." "Cat destroys owner's furniture."

Is anyone trustworthy? Is anyone ever completely faithful to his word?

The Bible says, "God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Corinthians 1:9).

God's faithfulness can be seen in his daily preservation of the world. He makes grass grow and trees bud. He sends sunshine and rain. He provides plants and animals as food to keep us alive. He even does all this without our asking.

God is faithful to his promise: "As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease" (Genesis 8:22).

God's faithfulness is what comforts us when we are feeling guilty. He promises that he forgives us because of what Jesus did to rescue us from our sins.

God's faithfulness is what comforts us when we are afraid of death. He promises us eternal life because Jesus defeated death when he rose from the grave.

Whatever you are facing or afraid of, you can take comfort in God's promises because he is always faithful.

WELS NEWS July, 2021

Teachers and staff ministers assigned at Martin Luther College

The synod Assignment Committee met last week to assign teacher and staff minister candidates from Martin Luther College (MLC), New Ulm, Minn., to the places where they will serve. Assignments included first-time calls, calls made permanent, and re-assignments to those called to serve an additional year.

About 160 assignments were announced at the call service at MLC on Sat., May 15. Assignments will continue next week and in the weeks to follow for candidates who are limited to a specific location, such as those female candidates whose spouses will be assigned this week as vicars or pastors at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary's graduation and call service.

If you look at the list of assignments, you will notice quite a large number of candidates who have been assigned for one year. One-year assignments include those who have been assigned as dormitory supervisors, those who are assigned to a position where the grade levels or duties are somewhat outside of what was recommended for the candidate, and those who are assigned to a location where the needs of the calling body are uncertain for the following year. As you will see from this year's assignments, many, if not most, of those assigned to one-year calls will be assigned permanently next year.

Even though many teaching vacancies remain, we are thankful that the Lord of the church has provided another group of well-trained and willing workers who will soon begin their ministry in God's harvest field.

Serving together with you in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder

Commencement 2021

On Saturday, May 15, 170 students earned degrees marking the completion of their ministerial training at Martin Luther College. This included 32 preseminary Bachelor of Arts degrees, 110 Bachelor of Science in Education degrees (including 18 early childhood education), nine Bachelor of Science degrees, (including one staff ministry degree, six educational studies

degrees and two theological studies degrees), two seminary certifications and one staff ministry certification.

In addition, 10 students received their Master of Science in Education degrees, and five students earned their Master of Science in Educational Administration degrees and one received a Master of Arts in Theological Studies.

The Commencement Service in the MLC gymnasium was conducted by presiding minister Rev. James Pope. MLC President Rich Gurgel presented the commencement sermon on the theme, "You Are Servants By and Of Boundless Grace," and Dr. Jeff Wiechman, vice president for academics, assisted with the distribution of diplomas. The sermon text chosen by the class, Ephesians 3:7-9, states: "I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things."

Gurgel commended the graduates on their graduation theme. "I am so happy for the verse you chose as your class verse. The right people are listening to the right message. Your passage reminds you that the public ministry for which you have all studied, and into which many of you are about to be called, is a great privilege of grace to those who serve in it."

Gurgel went on to explain why God would want the graduates to face this reality of ministry. "He [God] wants you to grasp, as did Paul, the astounding difference between the depth of the sin of your heart and the depth of the grace in the heart of your Savior! All of which will lead you also to marvel with Paul, as you find yourself called into public ministry, what an astounding gift of grace that is! Though with Paul we must confess ourselves to be less than least of God's people." That understanding, Gurgel pointed out, will clarify the importance of sharing Paul's perspective through ministry. "When we recognize that we are servants of the gospel by boundless grace to us, we learn what it means to be servants of boundless grace to others."

Gurgel assured the graduates, as they apply this grace of God's word in their classrooms and congregations, ". . . you will know why God has placed you there with them! You who are a servant by boundless grace get to be a servant of boundless grace as you amaze the hearts of those you serve by showing them that where sin abounds, there grace always abounds more. Such is the boundless nature of the gospel of which you are a servant!

Synod Convention Update

You're probably aware that the synod convention is scheduled to meet at Luther Preparatory School in Watertown, Wis., on July 26-28. What you may not know is that the convention business has already begun.

Last January, because of the many unknowns caused by COVID-19, the Conference of Presidents changed the location and the format of the convention. The location was changed to Watertown from Michigan Lutheran Seminary in Saginaw, Mich. (since Michigan restrictions were tighter at the time and anticipated to be tighter in July). Instead of the normal 400 delegates attending in person, the Conference of Presidents decided that about 100 delegates would attend in person, and the remaining delegates would attend virtually. A plan is in place to enable remote delegates to vote on reports and resolutions that come before the convention.

This means that floor committees, which address all of the various areas of the synod's work, would need to do their work virtually in advance of the convention. Many of those committees have already begun their work, and all committee work will be done by July 3. The committee resolutions will then be presented to the convention in July for discussion and action.

In addition to committee work, elections for various synodical positions will also be done electronically in advance of the convention. All delegates will participate in these elections, scheduled to begin on Monday, June 21, and conclude on Tuesday, July 13.

Even though the format is different, the Conference of Presidents has worked hard to make both the election process and the convention business process as normal as possible.

You are welcome to review convention information, including the *Book of Reports and Memorials*, the slate of candidates for elections, and delegate information, at wels.net/2021synodconvention.

Serving together with you in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder