

WELS NEWS

June 2019

Welcome Home!

There are approximately 155,000 WELS individuals who come to church only one or two times per year. Some have not set foot in church in years. They are drifting toward becoming what we call a “back-door loss,” members who slip away from churches.

WELS Congregational Services is planning the Welcome Home initiative for this fall. Congregational Services will provide congregations with resources, training, and encouragement to try to regain those people. We want to welcome them back to their church home.

Congregational Services Coordinator Rev. Jonathan Hein describes the effort:

“Congregations are encouraged to pick a date—October 20 or October 27—as Welcome Home Sunday. This Sunday is ‘pitched’ to all members as an ‘everyone in attendance’ type Sunday. ‘We want a service where 100 percent of our members are there! Let’s pack the place.’ That way it does not seem to someone who has been absent that they are being singled out. ‘It’s great to have Joe back! He hasn’t been in church in 14 months!’ This is simply a day for everyone to attend.

“Worship that Sunday will focus on the blessings . . . the need . . . for the Christian family. Christians simply are not wired to exist as rugged individuals. We need one another.

“Resources will suggest ways to make that Sunday special: a fellowship meal, fall festival, activities for kids, etc. The goal is to get 100 percent of your members there, including those who rarely come to church, maybe who have not been in church in years.”

Many features of this initiative will help congregations to plan and carry it out, including online elder training and resources that help congregations track member attendance. There are also plans for a November sermon series in the weeks that follow Welcome Home Sunday. The prayer is that we not only get returning members to come back for Welcome Home Sunday, but through continuing efforts, we retain them in the fold.

You can find additional information about the Welcome Home initiative as well as the “10 for 10” stewardship program also planned for the fall at welscongregationalservices.net. Resources will be available at that site in June.

Serving in Christ,
President Mark Schroeder

Grace—Hmong outreach in Vietnam - Exciting updates!

Dear Brothers in our living Lord,

We have two very exciting updates regarding the “Grace—Hmong outreach in Vietnam” mission opportunity to share with you.

WELS President Mark Schroeder, World Missions Administrator Rev. Larry Schlomer, and Director of Missions Operations Mr. Sean Young have returned from their trip to Hanoi, Vietnam, with exciting news to report: After surveying the land chosen for the theological education center, a memorandum of understanding was signed by WELS and Vietnamese Fellowship Church representatives confirming we can move forward with all land purchase, construction, and training plans!

Praise be to God! This is a huge step forward as we continue to train the leaders of the Hmong Fellowship Church in the truths of the gospel.

We are also pleased to report that WELS members have offered.....to fund the land purchase, building construction, and the first two years of operational costs for the theological education center in Hanoi, Vietnam. Thanks be to our generous Lord!

We thank you for encouraging your members to support this amazing mission opportunity and we praise God for your participation! While the gifts we’ve received to date allow WELS to purchase the land and complete construction, we seek additional offerings.....to furnish the facility and pay for the initial two years of operational costs. To that end, please join us in asking our heavenly Father to graciously provide such resources and encourage the members of your congregation to consider supporting this opportunity with their prayers and gifts.

Remember that worship materials and other promotional resources are available for download on the [WELS Resource Center](#). For instructions on how to remit gifts from your congregation, please review the Congregational Guidelines for “Grace—Hmong outreach in Vietnam” Special Offering in the resource package. To share this news update with your congregation, include [these paragraphs](#) in upcoming church bulletins and newsletters.

To learn more about this mission opportunity, visit wels.net/vietnamhmongoutreach. Feel free to contact us for any assistance by calling 800-827-5482 or e-mailing mcg@wels.net.

Thank you for your partnership in this and all the work we do together in Jesus’ name.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Larry Schlomer
WELS World Missions Administrator
Pastor Kurt Lueneburg
WELS Director of Christian Giving

Women's Ministry Conference Highlights Being "Living Stones"

"You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5).

The focal point of the upcoming 2019 WELS Women's Ministry Conference, being held at Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis., July 18–20, is "living stones" and how Christian women are called to be a part of something bigger.

Mrs. Dawn Schulz, conference coordinator, says the committee chose 1 Peter as the conference's inspiration because it's a great encouragement to women. "A 'living stone' is a woman who uses her God-given talents and gifts to build up God's kingdom and to bless those around her, wherever that may be," Schulz says. "Just like Jesus, we are special to God. We are chosen for a reason."

A range of speakers will discuss the topic of living stones in keynote addresses and breakout sessions. One of the main points of the conference is how Christians fit together, like stones on a building. Each stone possesses unique qualities to serve God's kingdom. To emphasize this point, the speakers have a range of backgrounds, including a lawyer, a pastor, and a ministry coordinator.

"We wanted to provide opportunities for a wide scope of presentations," Schulz says. "The speakers who were chosen are people who have been speaking and researching God's Word and will bring light to the fact that God uses every single person in his kingdom."

The conference also will dive into how Christian women should look at the individuality of each person to more effectively share the gospel. For example, a young adult ministry professional as well as a panel of college students will emphasize how to reach younger generations today.

At the end of the conference, Schulz hopes women walk away feeling more confident in their purpose as a part of God's spiritual house. She says, "This conference is going to nurture women in God's Word, encourage them by bringing them together with other Christian sisters, and equip them with resources."

For more information on the Women's Ministry Conference and to register, visit wels.net/wmconference.

First WELS EdTechLead Conference To Be Held

The 2019 WELS Education, Technology, and Leadership Summit (WELS EdTechLead) will be held June 25–27 at the Kalahari Resort in Wisconsin Dells, Wis.

This new event combines the National School Leadership and the WELSTech conferences into one expanded convention. It offers information and fellowship to those interested in exploring ministry tools, techniques, and best practices in the areas of education, technology, and leadership.

Created to be more sensitive to the time and funds of those who may have been interested in attending both conferences, WELS EdTechLead also aims to draw a broader audience than either conference might be able to alone.

“I think the conference really is for almost anybody in ministry,” said Mr. Martin Spriggs, WELS chief technology officer. “It’s an opportunity to help everyone put a bit more brainpower and a bit more passion into their efforts. It just makes sense to share that knowledge and energy and come up with better ministry plans and strategies together.”

The speakers and sessions offered at WELS EdTechLead are not simply related to one of the three topics of education, technology, and leadership. Many demonstrate the intersections between the topics. For example, teachers will be able to learn about instructional technology at the conference, and school principals and early childhood directors will have opportunities to develop their leadership skills.

The schedule is organized to allow attendees to experience a variety of workshops from each of the three fields. Half-day and full-day preconference sessions are also available to allow visitors to dive deeply into a specific subject.

“It’s to strengthen the network of support we have with one another in ministry,” said Mr. Jim Rademan, director of the Commission on Lutheran Schools. “You are going to learn some tips and some tools, but, in many ways, this conference is to inspire you to move forward in your ministry.”

Registration for WELS EdTechLead is now open, with early bird discounts through May 1. Visit welsedtechlead.com to learn more and register.