



Our God is...Good

Have you ever felt like the guy in the cartoon with a rain cloud over his head? Wherever he goes, the rain cloud follows, but he's the only one getting wet.

When your relationships are stressed, your 401(k) tanks or your job is on the line, it feels like that rain cloud is following wherever you go. You see your friends or neighbors and you wonder, "Why am I the only one getting wet?"

At times like that, it's easy to wonder if God is good. It may feel as if God is good to some people, but right now he's skipping you. Sometimes it seems as if God plays favorites.

We can learn about God when we look at the way this world works. Aside from cartoons, the rain never falls on just one person. If God really played favorites, only the people of his choosing would be blessed with sun, rain, and the bounty of the earth.

Look outside. It is spring! Good people and those not so good can enjoy the freshness.

God doesn't play favorites with sunshine and rain. That gives us insight into the way that he acts. The Bible says, "The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made" (Psalm 145:9).

Just as God sends rain and sunshine on people who believe in him and on people who don't, he sent his Son, Jesus, for every man, woman, and child on this earth. It doesn't matter whether people believe in him or not, he still sent Jesus here to save them.

Look outside again. Whether you know it or not, spring has come. The sunshine and rain tell us that God is good.

Whether you know it or not, God cares for you. Jesus' life and death tell us that God is good.

Come and hear about it. Through faith, you will learn that no matter what rainstorms come your way, the Son will still shine in your life.

WELS NEWS May, 2021

2021 Synod Convention Preparations

The 66th biennial synod convention will be held at Luther Preparatory School in Watertown, Wis., July 26-28. The theme of the convention is "Here We Stand," echoing Martin Luther's bold stand on the Word of God at the Diet of Worms in 1521.

The location of the convention was changed from Michigan Lutheran Seminary in Saginaw, Mich., to Luther Prep because of the uncertainties of gathering restrictions in Michigan.

Another change that was made due to those same uncertainties was to hold a "mini-convention." Instead of the usual 400 delegates, only about 75 delegates will attend the convention in person. Those delegates will include floor committee chairmen and secretaries, along with two lay delegates from each floor committee. (Floor committees are each assigned an area of the synod's work to discuss and to bring reports and resolutions to the convention for consideration.) The remaining delegates will participate electronically in elections and floor committee work in advance of the convention. The convention will also be livestreamed to enable all virtual delegates to observe.

Important items of business to be considered by the convention will be the approval of the Ministry Financial Plan (budget) for the next two years; the proposal to change the current pension plan for WELS workers to a defined contribution plan (similar to a 401(k) plan); and the elections for various synodical positions, including the First Vice President and synod secretary. The convention will also consider a number of "memorials," which are requests for the synod to take specific actions.

The convention website, which will house all convention information and documents, including election information and memorials, is now live at wels.net/2021synodconvention.

All delegates have received, or will soon be receiving, convention information and registration instructions via U.S. mail.

Serving with you in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder

60 Years Of Blessings And Progress

The WELS Central Africa Medical Mission (CAMM) is marking 60 years of service to people in Malawi and Zambia. The first clinic began operating in Zambia in 1961; in 1970, CAMM started a clinic in Malawi as well. By meeting the physical needs of the people they serve, the door opens to share the good news of Jesus.

Over the past 60 years, God has given CAMM the opportunity to provide people with physical care in the name of Jesus approximately three million times. The CAMM clinics in Malawi and Zambia serve all the medical needs short of hospitalization for close to 50,000 people, including:

- Routine child health and nutrition services
- Delivery of babies in Zambia (mandated by the government)
- Pre- and post-delivery care
- Comprehensive HIV/AIDS health services
- Outpatient medical services
- Chronic disease monitoring
- Making sure villages have safe water supplies and adequate sanitation
- Teaching on topics such as general health and how to plant and care for nutrition gardens
- Integrating COVID-19 management strategies to both provide care for and minimize possible infection transmission

Shelly Sievert, chair of the CAMM stateside committee, says, "As we approach our 60th anniversary in Zambia, we reflect on God's continued grace to our clinic and our staff, which includes ten nationals in Zambia. Our Zambia clinic has been operating with little oversight from the stateside committee for close to 15 years and thrives!"

Now, the Malawi clinic will also shift to operate with a fully national staff. "Although 2020 was a tough year for the world, it gave us time and the opportunity to look at our clinic procedures in Malawi, which have been operational for over 50 years. We currently employ 11 nationals, 1 of whom is a registered nurse," says Sievert. "After 50 years, our CAMM stateside committee, with guidance from the Administration Committee for Africa, and with prayerful consideration, has decided that the time is right. God has provided us the right staff, the right expatriates to train the staff, and the right support to do this."

Sievert says, "We thank God for the opportunity he allows every day for our clinics to operate, for the staff to care for the patients, for the chances our staff is given to share their faith, and for his continued generosity."

To learn more about the work of CAMM and find out how you can help, visit wels.net/camm.

New Virtual Academy Offers Opportunities

The Association of Lutheran High Schools Online (ALHS Online) has a new name and an expanded mission.

For the past ten years, ALHS Online has been offering high-quality online courses to supplement the class offerings of WELS high schools and elementary schools. Beginning this next school year (2021–22), it now also will offer a fully online curriculum—starting with ninth grade

and adding a grade level every year—that can lead to a high school diploma.

To highlight this expansion, the school has been renamed Amazing Grace Virtual Academy. "We have been truly blessed over the last ten years and have really seen God's amazing grace in all that he has done to allow us to expand and be of service to WELS schools," says Dr. James Grunwald, superintendent of the academy.

Grunwald says that over the last few years the organization has been receiving more inquiries about expanding its offerings from WELS and Evangelical Lutheran Synod families who don't have the opportunity to send their children to one of WELS' 26 Lutheran high schools. Several grants and gifts plus recent accreditation as an online learning service provider by the Middle States Association helped push this decision forward.

Amazing Grace Virtual Academy will continue to provide courses for part-time students as well. During the 2020–21 school year, about 320 students took courses each semester. It also offers a four-year high school religion curriculum and foreign language and mathematics courses for seventh and eighth graders.

Learn more at amazinggraceva.org.

LWMS Announces Plans For 2021 Convention

The Lutheran Women's Missionary Society (LWMS) announced via Facebook Live on March 7 that its 2021 convention, originally planned for June 24–27, 2021, in Sharonville, Ohio, will be virtual again this year.

"We've been doing a lot of praying and brainstorming, and we came up with a solution for this year," said LWMS President Cynthia Natsis. "We have decided as a board that our 2021 convention will have to be virtual again this year. We came to that decision because of many different circumstances, COVID-19 being the biggest one, of course." She continues to say that, at the time of the announcement, Ohio had gathering restrictions limited to 300 people and it's uncertain how that would change by June.

"We are excited to try our hand at another virtual convention. We have some exciting speakers," says Natsis. From Home Missions, Rev. Allen Kirschbaum, Spirit of Life, Caledonia, Mich., and Rev. Ryan Kolander, Palabra de Vida, Detroit, Mich., will be presenting. Gary and Beth Evans from the Central Africa Medical Mission, which is marking 60 years of service this year, will be talking about their work in Africa. From World Missions, Rev. Stephen Wiesenauer will share about the gospel work in East Asia. Additional workshops are also planned.

All videos will be posted June 24–27, 2021, on the LWMS convention website, which can be found by visiting wms.org. View the entire announcement at fb.com/LWMS.WELS.