

## **WELS NEWS**

**August, 2017**

### **Updated Tool To find WELS Churches**

The WELS Locator tool has received a makeover. The trusted online tool that helps WELS members find churches when they travel the country or recommend churches to friends and acquaintances has new and updated functions.

The previous WELS Locator application was rewritten and enveloped into the existing WELS Online Yearbook. Now, with the Locator integrated into the Online Yearbook, you can now find a church or school by proximity or criteria you enter. You can enter an address, city, state, or zip code and find all organizations within a radius of miles you determine.

Also available within the Locator is a function to filter your search results by special criteria, including church, pre-school, elementary school, high school, counseling center, and care facility. Other filters—like signed services, hearing loop, personal sound equipment, livestreaming, and languages offered—relate specifically to worship.

In the Online Yearbook you can search for a called worker's name or city and receive a listing of those that match. Clicking on a called worker will reveal a profile that shows contact information, year graduated, and what organization they work for.

There are a number of ways to find the Yearbook/Locator. You can simply visit the synod's website at [wels.net](http://wels.net) and click on the "Find a Church/School" (formerly "WELS Locator") at the top of the page. This will take the visitor directly to the "Organization" tab of the Online Yearbook. You may also visit the Yearbook site directly at [yearbook.wels.net](http://yearbook.wels.net), or the Locator portion at [locator.wels.net](http://locator.wels.net). Finally, if you use the WELS Mobile app, you can find a link to the Locator in the side menu or the Yearbook itself under the Synod Reports area. Download WELS Mobile at [m.wels.net](http://m.wels.net).

To learn more about the new Locator and Yearbook or to view a video demonstration, view the WELS Technology blog at [wels.net/blogs](http://wels.net/blogs).

A printed version of the Yearbook is available for purchase from Northwestern Publishing House. Order online at [nph.net](http://nph.net).

### **Rev. Jon Hein Accepts Call**

Rev. Jon Hein recently announced that he has accepted the divine call to serve full time as the director of the Commission on Congregational Counseling (CCC). Hein will be relocating to the Milwaukee area later this summer and will be based at the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry in Waukesha, Wis.

Hein has served as the first director of the Commission on Congregational Counseling while also serving in a part-time role at Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church in Summerville, S.C. In his new call he will serve full time in his position as director for the commission; he will also replace Rev. Bryan Gerlach as the coordinator for all of the commissions that comprise Congregational Services (Evangelism, Worship, Adult Discipleship, Youth and Family Ministry, Christian Schools, Special Ministries). Additionally, he will serve as an advisory member of the Synodical Council.

The CCC was formed to assist congregations in the evaluation of their ministry programs. As a part of that process, the CCC is able to direct congregations to resources that will help to address needs in their congregations and to plan future ministry efforts.

In addition to building a network of counselors in every district and overseeing their work, Hein also has spent two years conducting a detailed study of demographic trends and ministry issues. The study has looked at the challenges facing our synod posed by demographic changes and cultural shifts. Hein's study, his evaluation, and the CCC's recommendations for addressing these challenges will be highlighted at this summer's synod convention.

We thank God for leading Hein to accept this new call and pray for God's blessings on the efforts of Hein and on all of the commissions of Congregational Services as they help strengthen and equip congregations throughout the synod.

Serving in Christ,

President Mark Schroeder

### **Worship Conference Celebrates Lutheran Worship**

The WELS Commission on Worship hosted the 2017 National Conference on Worship Music and the Arts June 13–16 at Carthage College in Kenosha, Wis. More than 1,000 people attended the conference, which included a focus on Martin Luther's contributions to worship as part of the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

Rachel Crites, the sole organist/pianist at Shepherd of the Hills, Anchorage, Alaska, is grateful that her congregation sponsored her conference registration and travel. She notes, “Being around other musicians is really a boost for me. I’ve attended the last four conferences. The last two have had a lot of sessions about the new hymnal, which have helped me understand how it will—or won’t, in some cases—work for our small congregation so far away from the epicenter of WELS.”

Rev. Bryan Gerlach, director of WELS Commission on Worship, says that the conference is planned with attendees like Crites in mind. “Attendees will gain some practical ideas and be challenged by fresh insights. But perhaps for most of us the conference is a triennial battery charge—an inspirational encouragement to return to parishes of any size and do our best.”

This particular conference included:

- morning and evening worship services;
- a plenary address by Rev. Michael Schultz, the director of the WELS Hymnal Project, who offered a Reformation perspective on worship;
- more than 50 breakout sessions;
- performances by WELS musicians in a wide variety of styles;
- a children’s choir and high school honor choir;
- a collaborative art project that was displayed at the closing service; and
- a juried art exhibit.

For Dawn Torth, though, the highlight is always the same. “I love the worship services and to see the variety of things that can be done to praise God,” says Torth, a choir director at St. John, Mukwonago, Wis., who attended her third worship conference this year. “At this conference, I particularly liked the chanting in worship, including the lessons. It really gave me new perspective on familiar verses.”

Funding from Thrivent Financial made it possible for leadership teams from around the country to attend the conference.

To view the conference’s opening festival concert or closing worship service, visit [livestream.com/welslive](http://livestream.com/welslive).

View photos from the conference.

## **Choosing Hymns For The Next Hymnal**

The WELS Hymnal Project wants your feedback as it works on finalizing which of the more than 700 hymns from *Christian Worship* (CW) and *Christian Worship: Supplement* (CWS) will be included in the new hymnal.

Every month the WELS Hymnal Project will post a selection of hymns online, indicating which hymns are slated to be kept and which are slated to be cut. You can view the monthly list at [welshymnal.com](http://welshymnal.com) and, if you want, choose up to 10 hymns from the cut list that you would like to see kept in the new hymnal.

Currently, the Hymnody Committee has slated 470 hymns from CW and CWS to be included in the next hymnal. These selections will account for about two-thirds of the approximately 650 total hymns, with the remaining one-third consisting of hymns or hymn settings new to WELS.

According to Rev. Michael Schultz, director of the WELS Hymnal Project, one of the most important criteria used for selecting hymns to be included in the next hymnal is the text. “There is one changeless truth that drives everything about our hymnal project, including the selection of hymns: letting God’s forgiving love in Christ be proclaimed, heard, and sung,” he says.

Since the Hymnody Committee first started meeting four years ago, committee members have reviewed words and music from all existing CW and CWS hymns, are going through hymns from dozens of other hymnals and online resources, and have received hundreds of submissions for new hymns. The 12-member committee also has reviewed usage statistics, conducted a “favorite hymns” survey, and worked with more than 125 congregations to field test an array of musical resources for six current *Christian Worship* hymns as well as six new hymns not currently found in WELS’ published resources.

Schultz says the targeted release date for the pew edition of the new hymnal is Advent 2021.

A new nine-part series about hymns and their use in our congregations is starting with the July issue of *Forward in Christ*. Read the first article.

Learn more about the WELS Hymnal Project and review this month’s list of hymns at [welshymnal.com](http://welshymnal.com).