

WELS NEWS

November 2018

Fellowship Established With A Lutheran Church Body In Kenya

On Sept. 14–15, 2018, our sister synod the Lutheran Church of Central Africa–Zambia Synod (LCCA-ZS) met in convention for the 31st time in its history. The LCCA-ZS, along with the Lutheran Church of Central Africa–Malawi Synod, was established as a mission by WELS and has since become a fully independent church body in fellowship with WELS.

Delegates at that convention approved the recommendation of the LCCA-ZS Synodical Council to declare full fellowship with a Lutheran church body located in Kenya.

Swedish missionaries brought Lutheranism to Kenya in 1948, and in 1963 the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya (ELCK) became an independent church body. Over time, however, the ELCK began to tolerate false teachings in its fellowship, and a group of Kenyan pastors broke away and began searching for a confessional Lutheran church body. In 2015, Rev. Mark Onunda of the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC)–Kenya met with the Doctrinal Committee of the LCCA-ZS and with WELS representatives in Zambia and presented a formal request for fellowship.

Over the past three years, the LCCA-ZS Doctrinal Committee carefully examined the constitution of the LCMC–Kenya and identified key doctrinal areas to be discussed with their leaders. Representatives of the LCCA-ZS, WELS Pastoral Studies Institute, and WELS missionaries from the One Africa Team made multiple trips to Kenya to study issues like the roles of men and women, Pentecostalism, and the doctrine of the Call. After all these issues were thoroughly discussed, the Doctrinal Committee of the LCCA-ZS gave a recommendation for a full declaration of fellowship with the LCMC–Kenya, which was endorsed by the LCCA-ZS Synodical Council in July. Last month, delegates to the LCCA-ZS synod convention ratified this recommendation.

The next step will be a formal recommendation by the LCCA-ZS to accept the LCMC–Kenya into the fellowship of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference, of which WELS is a member. WELS anticipates declaring formal fellowship with the LCMC–Kenya at its 2019 convention.

Read more about the LCCA-ZS synod convention. Learn more about WELS mission work in Africa at wels.net/missions.

Serving in Christ,

President Mark Schroeder

Treptow Accepts Call To Be Seminary President

On Monday, Oct. 1, Prof. Earle Treptow accepted the call to succeed Prof. Paul Wendland as president of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., at the end of the 2018–19 school year. Treptow, the seminary's vice president, joined the faculty in 2016. He teaches systematic theology and Old Testament.

"Prof. Earle Treptow is an experienced leader, an excellent scholar, and a gospel-hearted and humble man. He will make an outstanding president," says Wendland.

Wendland, who joined the faculty in 2001 and has been serving as president since 2004, will remain at the seminary and transition to a teaching-only role.

"I'm grateful for this transition time," notes Treptow. "I will have time to observe a bit more carefully what the president is asked to do and to talk with him about why we do what we do. I have been trying to remind myself, though, that I have not been asked to replace Paul Wendland but to take over the duties he has carried out. There is only one Paul Wendland. The combination of his love for the gospel, his intellect, his passion, and his zeal for missions have been a great blessing for the seminary and our synod."

Rev. Jonathan Scharf, chairman of the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Governing Board, agrees. "We thank President Wendland for his work leading the seminary," says Scharf. "He has kept the seminary focused on its mission of preparing workers to serve God's kingdom in the pastoral ministry. We're also thankful to the Lord of the church that he's given the seminary a man such as Prof. Treptow, whose many gifts will be a blessing to our church body as he serves as seminary president."

For more information on Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, visit wls.wels.net.

One Hundred Twenty-Five Years Of God's Grace

This year marks the 125th anniversary of WELS World Missions work on the Apache reservation in Arizona.

A special anniversary celebration will be held Oct. 26–28 on the Apache reservation to celebrate its history and God's blessings over the years.

On Oct. 26, visitors can take self-guided tours of the reservation. A celebration event has been planned for Saturday, Oct. 27, at Peridot Lutheran Church and School, Peridot, Ariz. Special activities include two historical presentations by Rev. Dr. William Kessel and Rev. Eric Hartzell, crafts, music, food, and a celebration worship service. Finally, WELS congregations throughout the reservation are holding special Rally Day worship services on Sunday, Oct. 28.

"The Spirit-led drive of these pioneer missionaries amazes us today. In the face of humanly insurmountable barriers, they carried on. Language, travel, living conditions, and a culture rooted in animism couldn't stop God's plan. Even as those missionaries trusted in the power of the gospel,

I wonder if our first Christian witnesses could have dreamed what the Lord would do with the work they started," says Rev. Larry Schlomer, administrator of WELS World Missions. "One hundred twenty-five years later we are amazed at what the Lord has done and give God the glory. May God continue to give WELS that same boldness as we continue to carry his Word to the world."

The Native American mission is also looking forward with boldness to how it can share the gospel message in the future.

"Our past is amazing," says Rev. Dan Rautenberg, the Native American mission field coordinator. "We honor that, but at the same time we're not just looking back at the amazing things people did long ago. Our people have the same potential now, and we have new opportunities."

The mission has its eyes on the 500-plus other reservations throughout the United States. Rautenberg says 95 percent of the Native Americans on these reservations aren't Christian.

While the mission has some contacts on other reservations, it is hoping to broaden its reach through its website, nativechristians.org. Developed as part of the anniversary celebration, the website is working to establish an identity that's wider than just the two current reservations. The site currently shares 125th anniversary plans and historical articles about the field, but future plans call for making the site an evangelism tool that Native Christians can use to share the gospel with their friends, family, and acquaintances—no matter where they're located.

Learn more about the Native American mission as well as find anniversary resources and a full schedule of anniversary activities at nativechristians.org. Follow the [WELS Missions Facebook page](#) for live updates and posts during the celebration Oct. 26-28.

New Edition Of Catechism Impacts Homes, Churches, And Schools

In June 2017, Northwestern Publishing House (NPH) released a new edition of Luther's Small Catechism. Since then, this version has had an impact in thousands of homes, churches, and schools.

First published in 1529, Luther's Small Catechism has served as a powerful resource for Lutheran students and families. Its lessons consist of a series of questions and answers based on the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, Baptism, the Keys and Confession, and the Lord's Supper.

Developed in collaboration with Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, NPH's 2017 version of Luther's Small Catechism retains the signature question-and-answer style and lesson topics. New additions include enhanced diagrams of important concepts, information on historical Bible accounts, suggestions for applying Lutheran beliefs practically, and more.

In a February issue of *Together*, WELS President Mark Schroeder commented on the 2017 catechism's potential for lifelong devotional use in the home.

"Luther often encouraged faithful Christians to study and review the catechism as a part of their daily devotional lives," he said. "With that in mind, the newly revised WELS catechism is formatted in such a way to encourage our members to use the catechism on a daily basis, long after they have been confirmed."

Congregation members at Grace, Milwaukee, Wis., share their thoughts on their weekly household use of the new catechism in the church's blog series called "As for Me and My House."

"As someone who grew up on the catechism in school, I have greatly appreciated the refreshed format of the new catechism," Grace's church councilman Jared Greanya said. "After reading a chapter together, my wife and I pick out the specific content that is easily understood by our children and then study that content with them the following evening."

New teaching resources from NPH support the 2017 catechism. *Growing in the Word* is a new curriculum designed to teach Bible history to catechism students who may be unfamiliar with the historical accounts recorded in God's Word.

"Some kids down here don't know Bible history the same way many kids in Lutheran elementary schools do up north," says Rev. John Boggs, pastor at Divine Savior, West Palm Beach, Fla. "I've been searching for a good way to incorporate that into my catechism teaching, and this seems like an awesome opportunity for us."

Growing in Grace is another new curriculum from NPH. Focusing on the six chief parts of Luther's Small Catechism, it serves as a complement to *Growing in the Word*.

To learn more about the 2017 edition of Luther's Small Catechism and its related teaching resources from NPH, visit www.nph.net/catechism.