

WELS NEWS

October 2018

WELS Ministerial Education Schools Begin Another Year

The four WELS ministerial education schools opened their years with blessings and good news.

While class sizes remain in the 20s and 30s for the next two years at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., projections based upon planned graduates from Martin Luther College indicate an upward trend toward the mid-30s in the following years. The Lord is answering the need for more workers in his harvest field.

Preliminary undergraduate opening enrollment at Martin Luther College (MLC), New Ulm, Minn., as of mid-August, is 768 compared to 756 last year. (Official enrollment is finalized at the end of August.) About 200 of the undergraduates are preseminary students, 70 of which are freshmen. Total enrollment in the various educational tracks is 547. Eleven students are enrolled in the staff ministry program.

Luther Preparatory School (LPS), Watertown, Wis., opened the school year with a total enrollment of 420, up from 416 last year. Enrollment has been steady over the last five years, significantly larger than the low of 333 ten years ago. Last year LPS sent the largest number of its graduates to MLC to train for the pastoral ministry (38) in its 153-year history. Seventy percent of the class of 2018 has enrolled at Martin Luther College.

Michigan Lutheran Seminary (MLS), Saginaw, Mich., begins the school year under the leadership of its new president, Rev. Mark Luetzow. Opening enrollment is 192, slightly lower than last year's 195. MLS has 14 international students from five countries (Canada, South Korea, China, Germany, and Mexico). Thirty-three percent of the MLS faculty (including dormitory staff) is new since the end of last school year.

We thank God for these schools and for their students who are preparing to serve the Lord in the public ministry.

Serving in Christ,

President Mark Schroeder

New WELS High School Opens

On Aug. 8, a new WELS high school began its first school year. Kingdom Prep Lutheran High School (KPLHS) is serving young men from Milwaukee County, most of whom qualify for the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, a government school voucher system.

"There is a huge mission field right here in Milwaukee," says Mr. Kevin Festerling, the school's founder and principal. "Hundreds of students graduating from WELS grade schools in the area could not pursue

Christian secondary education due to the scarcity of voucher seats available in the existing area Lutheran high schools. I felt like we as a church were turning our back on the Great Commission by turning students away who wanted a Christian education."

Festerling recognized that building a Lutheran high school to serve this new group of students' needs wouldn't be easy. The school has deliberately focused on providing young men with a kingdom-first mindset. The statistics are grim for boys who are raised in urban areas in the United States, and Milwaukee's statistics are even worse than most. According to Festerling, many young men in today's families are navigating the most critical years of their lives without active fathers. To help reverse that trend and build Christian leaders, Kingdom Prep's vision is for "young men to develop their God-given gifts to lead in the home, serve in the church, engage in meaningful work, and transform community."

Daily small-group Bible studies focus on what it means for a man to seek God's heart with his whole life. Assigned projects help the young men solve real community problems with godly solutions. School decisions are placed in the hands of student leaders. Each facet of the school is focused on helping it accomplish its mission of "building a brotherhood in Christ for lives of purpose."

Rev. Dr. Paul Steinberg, executive director of Chaplains in Schools and one of Kingdom Prep's spiritual advisors, is helping the school's leadership maintain its focus on its mission to disciple the next generation of Christian male leaders. He says, "My work will be to spiritually assess each of the freshmen and connect them with a strong Christian mentor. Kingdom Prep students and their mentors will aim to meet weekly for spiritual check-ins, prayer, and Bible study."

In 2018-19, Kingdom Prep is serving 60 freshmen boys. Each school year, a grade will be added, along with space for 60 more boys. Each Kingdom Prep student is invited to commit to the school's mission, carrying the KPLHS vision through brotherhood in Christ and hard work.

"We are there to walk alongside the brothers as they grow," says Festerling, "celebrating the way each takes responsibility for his own growth."

Mr. Jim Rademan, director of the Commission on Lutheran Schools, notes, "The Christian love and commitment of the called teachers and staff, led by founding principal Kevin Festerling, is clear. The teachers are sharing with the students the power of the Holy Spirit and the opportunity they have to learn the skills to be leaders in their homes and community."

For more information on Kingdom Prep Lutheran High School, visit kplhs.org. The October issue of *Forward in Christ* magazine will also share comments from students in Kingdom Prep's first freshman class.

Disasters Provide Opportunity To Show Christian Love

Storm damage in Wisconsin has given WELS members the opportunity to show Christ's love in their communities.

On Aug. 20-21, more than 11 inches of rain fell in a 24-hour time period

in Dane County. In some areas, residents were evacuated to higher ground. Homes and vehicles were flooded.

St. Andrew, Middleton, Wis., worked with WELS Christian Aid and Relief to provide help to their neighbors. On Aug. 25, more than 200 volunteers coordinated by St. Andrew helped their community members clean up following the storm.

"As Christians, all our earthly possessions may be swept away in 35 minutes or less," says Elizabeth Zambo of Christian Aid and Relief, "but our faith, that is anchored to the Rock, will remain secure. These people that have experienced flooding are now being emotionally, physically, and spiritually challenged. I am always amazed when I see the people soon after the disaster strikes and then witness the changes that occur in their faith and attitude over the days, weeks, and months after the disaster. Not only do the people suffering from the flooding grow in their faith, but those who are assisting those in need realize they too are growing in their faith."

In a report to his members following the clean-up effort, Rev. Kelly Huet, a pastor at St. Andrew, noted, "Lives and communities were impacted today because of your love for Jesus." St. Andrew is continuing to offer help as homes are now being rebuilt.

On Aug. 28, 17 tornadoes touched down in Wisconsin, including one F2 tornado outside of Brownsville in Dodge County. The church property and parsonage of St. Paul, Brownsville, sustained damage from the high winds and downed trees, but no one was injured.

On Sept. 1, the congregation coordinated an effort with Christian Aid and Relief to offer aid to its neighbors who suffered damage from the storm and to help clear its property. The effort brought together 85 WELS members, including many from surrounding areas. Community members also joined in, as well as a group from Stillwater, Minn., who brought one of Christian Aid and Relief's trailers. These trailers are stocked with items such as chainsaws, generators, rakes, brooms, ropes, buckets, helmets, and gloves.

The Brownsville community was grateful for the volunteers' help. Many were overwhelmed by the number of trees that needed to be cleared from their property.

To learn more about WELS Christian Aid and Relief and to support their work, visit wels.net/relief. To see more photos and videos from these relief efforts, visit facebook.com/WELSC

Reaching One Million Souls With The Gospel

According to Rev. Jonathan Hein, coordinator of WELS Congregational Services, Christmas Eve is the #1 worship service that unchurched and dechurched people are willing to attend. A new synodwide outreach campaign called C18 is now available from WELS Congregational Services to help congregations and individuals with this huge outreach opportunity.

The campaign's theme, "A Light in the darkness," is based on Isaiah 9:2:

"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light." The overarching goal of the program? To reach one million people with the gospel message during the Christmas season.

In order to reach one million people, Hein says congregations and their members need to work together synodwide. "Our job is to simply share the gospel as zealously as we can. We leave the results up to the Holy Spirit," he says. "However, if together we would achieve the goal of reaching one million souls, and if the Holy Spirit would bless that effort at a similar rate he has for past programs, it would mean about 1,500 people and their families would join a WELS congregation as a result of the C18 program."

Every commission from Congregational Services is providing royalty-free resources to help congregations and members with this effort:

The Commission on Evangelism is developing promotional materials such as postcards, banners, and Facebook posts. Congregations can order customizable postcards with the C18 theme from Echt Printing. WELS Congregational Services is offering an outreach grant of up to \$150 off the postcard order to the first 200 congregations that participate. The deadline to order is Oct. 21.

The Commission on Evangelism is also providing a Bible study related to the new outreach movie *To the Ends of the Earth*. The study, which will discuss how to witness and share your faith, can help prepare members to invite their unchurched friends, relatives, acquaintances, and neighbors to Christmas Eve services.

- The Commission on Worship is providing worship resources, including worship plans, several liturgy options, sermon helps, service folders, and newly commissioned music. The commission is not just providing materials for Christmas Eve; it also has produced a series for Advent called *He Comes, Bearing Gifts*.
- The Commission on Discipleship is producing family Advent devotions, with a special emphasis on training and encouraging families to reach out to the unchurched during the holiday season.
- The Commission on Lutheran Schools is providing WELS schools with evangelism training materials for children and teens.
- The Commission on Special Ministries is developing supplementary materials for the Christmas for Kids program developed by Northwestern Publishing House to allow congregations to offer a service for children with special needs.
- The Commission on Congregational Counseling is providing materials to help congregations coordinate this outreach effort as well as helps for following up on contacts after the holiday season.

Almost all of the materials will be offered as free downloads from the WELS Congregational Services website, welscongregationalservices.net/c18. Some materials are available now; others will be provided in the coming weeks. Pastors and interested laypeople should sign up now to receive updates, which will include notices when new materials are posted online as well as planning tips and timelines to carry out the program successfully.