

District Worship Committee Report

April 2022

Who We Are

Rev. Craig Engel, Prof. Craig Hirschmann and Teacher Mike Marquardt serve as members of Minnesota District Worship Committee. Pastor Joel Gawrisch has served as the coordinator for the committee since 2021, filling out the term initially held by Teacher Mike Marquardt.

Our Current Status

The WELS Commission on Worship and MN DWC has been fairly quiet as time and energy have been directed over the past years towards the development and introduction of *Christian Worship Hymnal*.

More recently, members of the committee worked with Bryan Gerlach, Administrator for WELS Commission on Worship, presenting a workshop on implementation of the new hymnal suite at the March District Leadership Workshop. A presentation called *Well-Planned Worship: Christian Worship Hymnal Resources* was presented by Joel Gawrisch to the St. Croix Pastoral Conference.

Several presentations for hymnal introduction and promotion are in the works for a handful of individual congregations by request.

Christian Worship <https://www.christianworship.com/>

- As of the end of February 2022, more than half of WELS congregations had begun using new hymnal resources, and more than 375 congregations had subscribed to the *Service Builder* program. For a variety of reasons adoption of the new hymnal was not expected to be as rapid as adoption of the 1993 hymnal. But thus far adoption of both the hymnal and *Service Builder* are well above projections.
- A soft launch of *Musician's Resource* is planned for spring of 2022. This initial release focuses on public domain materials, providing a wide variety of musical scores.
- Among other resources available at www.welscongregationalervices.net/hymnal-introduction-resources is "Hymnal Highlights." These provide commentary and recordings of new hymns that congregations may share by email or social media. The goal is to boost familiarity with and appreciation of the new hymns. The hymns selected are chosen from suggestions in the Year C Planner (available at "[The Foundation](#)").
- Two different full compilation versions of The Seven Words videos will be posted in Holy Week – all seven stanzas in sequence in one video (<https://forwardinchrist.net/videos/>).
- Beginning in spring of 2022 both *Preach the Word* and *Worship the Lord* will focus on a variety of outreach themes—preaching that raises outreach culture and encourages personal witnessing, and “worship and outreach” stories from a variety of congregations.
- In the works: “Easy hymn accompaniments” – simplified settings both for lesser skilled organists and for pianists. Availability has yet to be determined.
- “Just Starting to Explore the New Hymnal” (<https://welscongregationalervices.net/hymnal-introduction-resources/#toggle-id-5>) connects helpful resources across three websites: www.christianworship.com, www.welscongregationalervices.net, and www.online.nph.net.

Respectfully submitted by District Worship Committee Chair Joel Gawrisch