

The mission of the district discipleship committee is "to provide resources, encouragement and training to assist congregations as they seek to strengthen individuals and families in their connection to Christ and their ongoing walk of faith."

DISTRICT UPDATE

MN District Workshop – March 9, 2024

This annual workshop is designed to be a gathering space for church workers (called, paid, and volunteer) to have conversations around specific areas of ministry. A keynote address is followed up by various breakout workshops that participants can choose from.

This year's District Workshop will be on Saturday, March 9, at St. Croix Lutheran High School. Details will be posted at mnworkshop.com and emailed out to the district as soon as they are available. Last year we welcomed about 150 people to this event, most of whom were lay members who were excited to learn and grow.

WELS UPDATE

Online Resources

WELS Discipleship produces a variety of resources to help churches in their gospel efforts to encourage their people's walk of faith at every stage of life. Most of these are disseminated at welscongregationalervices.net and are free. Some examples:

The Foundation:

The Foundation is a suite of resources that attempts build upon the importance of public worship both on Sunday morning and throughout the week. WELS Discipleship produces **family devotions** (w/ age-appropriate discussion questions) and **teen devotions** (w/ facilitator guides). All the devotions capture the worship themes from the previous Sunday.

Women's Ministry Resources:

Through online webinars, bible studies, devotionals, and programs like Advent/Lent by Candlelight, Women's Ministry seeks to nurture, encourage, and equip the women of our congregations to faithfully use their gifts for service in God's kingdom. <https://wels.net/serving-you/christian-life/womens-ministry/>

Marriage Enrichment Resources:

In addition to weekly marriage enrichment videos, *Marriage Moments*, and marriage bible studies, *Marriage Maintenance*, two added resources are now or will soon be available: **Marriage Keys** is an entry-level 3-part series with leader guides for congregations to strengthen the bond between husbands and wives with Christ. **Marriage for Life** (scheduled for upload May 2023) is a pre-marital course to provide a core for a congregation's pre-marriage counseling.

Youth Ministry Resources:

- **"WELS Youth Night"** provides a series of youth-focused events, three times a year (fall, winter, post-Easter), to gather youth from area congregations for fun fellowship and connecting with each other through Scripture. This kit provides all the pieces needed to plan, train, promote, and host a Youth Night

event. The spring Youth Night topic is “Dealing with Anxiety.” Resources include keynote video, small group discussion guide, and event planning guide.

“*Who Am I?*” - a video-based topic series to equip youth leaders to engage teens in a timely discussion on teen identity.

A look ahead

WELS Discipleship will continue to identify common needs within our congregations and produce the resources or programs that help meet those needs. Here are some upcoming efforts, events, and resources.

- **“A Time for Everything” stewardship resource** – Stewardship is the lifelong management of all the resources God has given us ... including a quickly depleting resource called “time.” So much competes for our time. How we manage the time we have left has huge implications on what we as individuals and as a church do for the rest of our lives ... beginning today. “A Time for Everything” provides four weeks of worship, sermon, bible studies, and devotional resources as congregations consider these important times: A Time to PRIORITIZE, A Time for PERSPECTIVE, A Time to PLAN, and A Time to PAUSE.
- **Small Group Ministry** – This online module will share various ways to approach using small groups and step-by-step instructions how churches can arrange for small groups in their ministry setting to build better connects for members to care for each other and serve in their church.
- **Identity, Gender and Human Sexuality** – Every generation has identified and grappled with the issues of their time. Gender and human sexuality have become the issue of our time and one of the reasons our church body is losing people. Churches and schools are asking, “What do we do? How do we handle this?” A gender/ human sexuality task force has been working to better understand and respond to this ideology with its cultural implications. Here are three things this group is working on: 1. **Development of a website** (devotionals, bible studies, educational resources) that comes at the issue from a confessional Lutheran perspective to help struggling individuals and families, 2. A **speakers bureau** who can present on the issues to congregations, and 3. **Church/school resources** to give guidance to handbooks, policies, statements, etc. Target date: *late summer/fall 2023.*
- **Sunday School** – This module will help congregations assess a struggling or declining Sunday school ministry and provide healthy approaches that build on a needed commitment of parents as partners in Sunday School ministry. Target date: *September 2023.*
- Multiple video-based topic series like “*Defending the Faith*” (May 2023), “*Never Too Young to Talk*” (June 2023) **about Jesus**” and “*Everything LGBTQIA+*” (August 2023) equip youth leaders to engage teens in timely discussion on the issues of apologetics, sharing their faith, and a Christian approach to gender and sexual orientation.

Respectfully Submitted,



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