

THE MINNESOTA DISTRICT UPDATE - AUGUST 26, 2025



Rev. Dennis C. Klatt, President
4332 Gettysburg Ave. N., New Hope, MN 55428
Fax: (763) 533-3680 | Cell: (763) 777-2085
MNDP@wels.net

The Need to See Jesus

“Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the festival. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. “Sir,” they said, “we would like to see Jesus.” Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus. (John 12:20-22)

If you would were to travel to Paris, what location would you like to tour? Perhaps the Eiffel Tower or the Louvre. Upon arriving in Nashville, Tennessee, who would you like to see? Garth Brooks or Dolly Parton in concert might be high on your list.

During the week in which Jesus died, the Passover was being celebrated in Jerusalem. Jews and converts to Judaism had come from near and far to celebrate God's deliverance of his people from slavery in Egypt. A number of Greeks were also among the throng of pilgrims in the city. There was much to see in Jerusalem. The temple itself consisted of massive stones, some weighing 90 tons. The Gihon Spring may have been another local attraction. During David's rule his commander, Joab, secretly sent men through the spring's natural shaft into Jerusalem to capture it. These and other sights would have been wonderful to behold. Yet, these were not the local attractions they desired to visit. They approached the apostle Philip with a request. “We would like to see Jesus.”

As converts to Judaism, they would have heard the Scriptures read in their local synagogue. God's creating work, mankind's rebellion in Eden, the Creator's image shattered in humanity, and all the terrible ongoing consequences would have been revealed to them. They would have also heard God's gracious promises read. The Seed of the Woman would crush the serpent's head. The Root of Jesse would deliver the world from sin by bearing our sin and becoming our righteousness. This is who they wanted and needed to see. All their hopes hung on him. Jesus did not disappoint. Just as foretold, like a sheep before its shearers he did not open his mouth to protest when arrested. He did not exercise his authority to call upon a legion of angels to come to his defense. Carrying his cross to calvary, he laid down his life as an atoning sacrifice for them and all people of all time.

What do students gather at our schools and others gather in our churches to see? Yes, some come for a quality education with traditional morals and values. Yes, there are those seeking others they can lean in their time of need. They may come to us only with such perceived needs. Like Andrew and Philip, we know who they NEED to see. Like us, above all they need to see Jesus on the cross as a consequence for their sin. Its wage really is death. On that tree they also meet the unfathomable love of God for us. There Jesus owned our guilt. There the Father poured out

all his anger against sinners on his beloved Son with whom he was well pleased. There, sin's curse was cancelled and the gate to paradise opened to all who believe. Seeing Jesus consciences are soothed. Witnessing the depth and power of his love once fear-filled hearts can face the future with confidence. "If God is for us, who can be against us" (Romans 8:31).

The world has many attractions in many places calling out for attention. There is value in seeing many of them, but that value is limited and certainly not essential. But there is one person and one performance that are a must see—Jesus and his redeeming work for you, me, and the world. May the Lord bless us as we daily carry out our glorious calling to lead people to Jesus!

In Him,

Pastor Dennis Klatt

MN District Installations

There are currently 25 congregations in the MN District with vacant pastor positions who are actively calling. Six other congregations are vacant but pursuing other ministry arrangements (merger, dual parish, closure). MN District K-8 schools and area Lutheran high schools are currently fully staff for the 2025-2026 school year. However, three early childhood programs are currently experiencing teacher vacancies. While the number of current vacancies present ministry challenges, we give thanks and praise to God for each of the Martin Luther College and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary graduates assigned to serve in our district, WELS members trained outside of our ministerial education system who have enrolled in WELS ministry certification and are serving provisional calls, as well as the active teachers and pastors who accepted calls into the MN District since January 1, 2025.

Below is the listing of the teacher and pastor installations within MN District thus far in 2025. God be praised for providing these gifts to his Church.

Name	School/Congregation	Position
Andrew Danner	Bloomington/Living Hope, Bloomington/Shakopee, MN	Principal
Anna Gartner	West Lutheran High School, Plymouth, MN	English
Hayden Miller	St. John, Redwood Falls, MN	Grade 7
Andrew Kramer	St. Croix Lutheran Academy, West St. Paul, MN	Band/Yearbook
Rebecca Gervais	Christ, North St. Paul, MN	Grade 1
Justin Hansen	St. Paul's, New Ulm, MN	Grade 6/Vice Principal
Rachel Hansen	St. Paul's, New Ulm, MN	Piano/Science
Johanna Fischer	MLC Early Learning Center, New Ulm, MN	ECM-2 Year Old
Elijah Dorn	Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School, New Ulm, MN	Science/Physics/Coaching
Lisa Hoffer	Holy Trinity, New Hope, MN	Grades 3-4
Joshua Wong	West Lutheran High School, Plymouth, MN	Math

Mandy Elseth	Salem, Woodbury, MN	ECM Director/Teacher
Robert Cahow	Holy Trinity, New Hope, MN	Grades 7-8
Heidi Kutz	St. John, Dakota, MN	Grades 3-4
Karis Jensen	Christ, Baxter, MN	ECM Teacher
Sarah Vidrio	St. John, Redwood Falls, MN	Grade 2
Timothy Voigt	Crown of Life, West St. Paul, MN	Grade 6/AD/Science
Matthew Doering	Martin Luther College, New Ulm, MN	Prof. of History/Social Science/Social Studies
Rachel Markgraf	Immanuel/Grace, Hutchinson, MN	Grades 1-2
Darla Mandel	Children of Faith Preschool, River Falls, WI	ECM Director/Teacher
Naomi Johnson	God's Treasures Preschool, Winthrop, MN	ECM 4 Year Old
Ryan Randall	Holy Trinity, New Hope, MN	Principal
Jody Bitter	St. John, Goodhue, MN	Grades 3-5
Elizabeth Jensen	Christ, North St. Paul, MN	ECM Director/Teacher
Dyllan Jensen	Christ, North St. Paul, MN	Grades 5-6
Carolyn Kelly	Trinity, Nicollet, MN	ECM Director/Teacher
Sarah Strackbein	St. Paul's, New Ulm, MN	Lower Grades Math/5-6
Micah Degner	Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School, New Ulm, MN	Math/Coaching
Colin Krueger	Bloomington/Living Hope, Bloomington/Shakopee, MN	Grade 6
Emmaline Hagedorn	St. John, Caledonia, MN	Grades 7-8
Meg Stangl	St. Paul's, Cannon Falls, MN	Grades K-3
Hope Sulzle	Immanuel/Grace, Hutchinson, MN	Grades 3-5
Kylie Wolf	St. John, Lake City, MN	Grades 6-8
Alexander Ritter	Trinity, Nicollet, MN	Upper Grades
Emma Dorn	St. Paul's, New Ulm, MN	Grades 3-4
Corey Deyo	Christ (Samuel), Marshall, MN	Grades 6-8
Grace Seim	Trinity, Belle Plaine, MN	Grades 1-2
Anastasia Thomas	St. Paul, Arlington, MN	Grades K, Upper
Angela Pittman	Anchored In Christ, Greenfield, MN	Grades 1-2
Dawn Harting	St. Peter, St. Peter, MN	Grades 7-8
Courtney Wegwerth	Good Shepherd, Burnsville, MN	Grade 4
Clara Handy	God's Treasures Preschool, Winthrop, MN	ECM Teacher
Zachary Flunker	Mt. Olive, Delano, MN	Pastor
Christopher Gorr	Shepherd of the Lakes, Fairmont, MN	Pastor
JonAlden Pedersen	Salem, Stillwater, MN	Associate Pastor
Matthew Nowak	Anchored In Christ, Greenfield, MN	Associate Pastor
Brian Weinkauff	Petra, Sauk Rapids, MN	Pastor

Teacher Call Requests

The active teacher call window will open October 15th. Teachers planning to leave ministry for retirement, family, or other personal reasons during or at the end of this school should inform their school leaders by September or early October. Doing so will allow your calling body to begin the calling process when or shortly after the calling window opens. Notice of planned retirements and resignations should be given in written form your calling body and District President.

To request a teacher candidate list, calling bodies are directed to the Commission On Lutheran Schools (CLS) online request page: [Assignment and Call Request – SYNODADMIN](#). After the request information has been submitted, CLS and your district president will be notified. You will also receive automatic notification that your request has been received. Please reach out to District President Klatt or CLS with any questions you may have.

Provisionally Called Teachers & Ministry Certification Enrollment

Teachers who have received provisional calls are encouraged to enroll as soon as possible in the WELS Ministry Certification Program provided by Martin Luther College. While provisionally called teachers have two years to enroll in the program and six years to complete it, they are not eligible for Minister of the Gospel tax status with the IRS if they are not enrolled in the Ministry Certification Program. Minister of the Gospel tax status permits qualifying individuals to utilize significant tax deductions. FICA withhold will also need to be done on behalf of the provisionally called teachers who have not enrolled in Ministry Certification. The WELS Ministry Certification Enrollment webpage can be found via this [LINK](#).

Update Your WELSource Biography!

With the active teacher call window opening October 15th, it is important for all teachers to update their biographical information in the WELSource database. Doing so provides calling bodies with accurate information regarding your ministry gifts and family circumstances. It also aides the Commission on Lutheran Schools and district presidents in preparing lists of candidates whose abilities and special circumstances match specific ministry positions and settings. To update your biography login to: cloud.wels.net/me.

Mental health affects everyone.

1 in 5 adults struggle with mental illness

LIFE CAN BE HARD,
BUT THERE IS HELP.

SCAN THIS CODE
TO BEGIN



WELS Minnesota District Called Worker and Family Assistance Program

AVAILABLE SERVICES

ChristianFamily Solutions and the **WELS Minnesota District** are partnering to offer a Called Worker and Family Assistance Program, which will supply **3 hours of counseling sessions** each calendar year at no cost for called workers, their spouses, and dependents in the district. These services are available either in person at a Christian Family Solutions clinic, or via a secure, online video connection. Day, evening, and weekend times are available.

For a list of Christian Family Solutions counseling clinics near you, please call **800-438-1772** or visit **ChristianFamilySolutions.org**. You can find information about the counselors and their specialty areas on the website as well.

The counselors at Christian Family Solutions can help you and your family through a variety of challenges such as depression, trauma, stress/anxiety, marital discord, children's behavior issues, anger, grief, conflict, relationship issues, and many other areas of concern.

GETTING STARTED

To access the free counseling services or for more information, please complete an online request here: <https://mapintake.christianfamilysolutions.org/> or call **800-438-1772** and select option 5 for the Member Assistance Program.

Christian Family Solutions looks forward to bringing you & your family the best in Christian care!



Counseling Care & Services

800-438-1772 • e-mail:
map@wlcfs.org

ChristianFamilySolutions.org