

Committee No. 10  
CONGREGATION AND  
DISTRICT MINISTRY

Reference: RTD, pp. 1-24  
Entities Overseen by the Conference of Presidents

Report No. 1 - Conference of Presidents

The Conference of Presidents is responsible for promoting the general welfare of the synod in maintaining biblical doctrine and practice, providing and caring for called workers, and encouraging the financial support of the synod's work. We give thanks to the Lord for the faithful service of these men. We especially support the COP's efforts to encourage every WELS congregation and member to recruit young men and women to prepare for the public ministry.

Report No. 2 - WELS Support Committee

The WELS Support Committee provides retired called workers and surviving spouses with financial assistance, for adequately meeting everyday living expenses where such resources are lacking. We give thanks to the Lord for this opportunity to show respect and loving care to those who have given their lives to the Lord's service.

Report No. 3 - Continuing Education for Called Workers Committee

The Continuing Education for Called Workers Committee works with our Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Martin Luther College and other entities to provide continuing education for the called workers of our synod. The CECW strives to promote among synodical leaders and calling bodies an understanding of the wisdom of such investment, with the goal that our called workers may grow in the Gospel and become better presenters of God's mercy. We give thanks to the Lord for the efforts of many who are involved in preparing and presenting these opportunities.

We especially take note of the Pastor Partners Program, through which God is blessing us with a retention of new pastors greater than we have seen since the 1980s.

We especially note that Christian Family Solutions stands ready to help with counseling for mental health concerns stemming from the recent pandemic. We encourage our churches and schools to make use of these resources as needed.

#### Report No. 4 - Commission on Inter-Church Relations

The Commission on Inter-Church Relations represents the synod in doctrinal discussions with church bodies who are, or are not, in fellowship with the WELS, with the objective of extending and conserving the true doctrine and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. We give thanks to the Lord for the leadership of these men, especially as they assist individuals and churches around the world who are seeking to take confessional Lutheran stances.

We note with thanksgiving the 150th anniversary of our fellowship with the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and its parent church body. We encourage the CICR to find ways to share information with the general membership of the WELS, that we may have a pastorate and laity that is better informed of continuing differences with the LCMS and CLC.

#### Report No. 5 - Ministry of Christian Giving

The Ministry of Christian Giving assists and encourages congregations and individuals in providing funding for the Lord's work carried on by the synod as a whole. We thank the Lord for the efforts of the Ministry of Christian Giving, especially as they balance the responsibility to fund the synod's work with the privilege of helping God's people offer gifts to Jesus for his work in congregations, synod, and WELS-affiliated ministries.

We commend the hiring of a prospect analyst and a database specialist and pray that it will benefit the work of the MCG.

We give thanks to God for moving the congregations of WELS to a 98% participation rate in mission offering subscriptions and for record mission offerings in 2021.

We give thanks to God for the work of Pastor Rich Kogler, who retired at the end of 2021, and of Pastor Phil Gieschen and Pastor Phil Spaude, who will retire at the end of June 2022.

#### Report No. 6 - Communication Services

Communication Services is responsible for communicating the synod's mission to the members of the synod. It reviews and authorizes all new communication that originates from the synod's national office. It explores and implements various means of communication in print, video and online, in order to disseminate information in support of the synod's mission. We especially commend the efforts to reach more and younger readers through the use of social media. We further thank the Lord for the benefits that effective communication brings to our WELS gospel work.

## Report No. 7 - Congregational Services

WELS Congregational Services assists and encourages congregations in faithful and fruitful gospel ministry. Through its six commissions - Congregational Counseling, Discipleship, Evangelism, Lutheran Schools, Special Ministries, and Worship - it offers focused attention to specific areas of congregational life. By serving local congregations, Congregational Services assists in the worldwide gospel efforts of WELS. We thank the Lord for the wide range of innovative and practical support that WELS Congregational Services provides to the congregations of our synod.

Thomas Hartwig, Chairman

Paul Kelm, Secretary

Jonathan Ladner

Daniel Balge

Peter Markgraf

Joel Westenberg

Ryan Obry

Brian Gephart

Daniel Kell

Scott Luepke

Jared Christensen

Mark Renner

Kyle Seim

David Zabel

Steven Biedenbender

Michael Plocher

Kevin Smith

Ron Kasten

Bernhar Pieper

Terry Stremcha

Ardin Bendix

Jim Lippert

Bruce Rigge

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