

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. This year's event was hosted by St. Croix Lutheran Academy with over 140 people in attendance. Pastor Jonathan Hein delivered a keynote presentation on church partnerships, and five workshop presenters spoke on specific ministry areas.

SYNOD UPDATE

Marriage Resources

1. *Marriage Moments* - Every marriage has its "moments." That's why marriages need moments of encouragement and refreshment. *Marriage Moments* are two-minute weekly videos providing a focused marriage thought to deepen a marital relationship.
2. *Marriage for Life* is a five-session course on the topics of forgiveness, marital essence, role of man/woman, love, and communication. Resources include an overview guide, handouts, leader guides, and links to "Marriage Moment" videos to view that supplement each topic.
3. *Marriage Maintenance* and *Marriage Keys* are marriage-based resources designed for flexible usage at the local congregational level. They incorporate videos and discussion handouts and include leader guides.
4. Marriage enrichment retreats (offered upon request)

<https://welscongregationalservices.net/ministry-resources/wels-marriages/>

"Stewardship Legacy" - Every congregation possesses a rich legacy of resources given by God to carry out his ministry and to be used for Christian living. It is also our responsibility to pass this legacy on to the next generation. The "Stewardship Legacy" series teaches and encourages faithful management of Time, Talent, Treasure, Truth, and Temple. The first set is uploaded entitled, "*A Time for Everything.*" Called workers and church leaders will find worship ideas, sample sermons, and Bible study resources. The *Truth* set will be available in the Fall of 2024.

<https://welscongregationalservices.net/stewardship-legacy/>

The **WELS Committee on Identity, Gender, and Sexuality** is developing "**Made.Known.**" - a website to provide compassionate truth especially for those who are struggling with or how to think through LGBTQ

issues through FAQs, spiritual devotions, contact support, and other helpful sources. The site will go live in time for the WELS International Youth Rally in June.

Apologetics: Defending the Faith Bible Study - Instead of arguing, *Defending the Faith* is a six-part video series that shows how apologetics is really a ministry of caring. We care about skeptics and what they think. When we think clearly, we will speak clearly. All this is with the goal of love towards neighbor. Find resources at: <https://welscongregationalservices.net/apologetics-defending-the-faith/>

Youth Ministry - a menu of youth ministry resources continues to be offered to congregations, including the following:

1. **An Honest Conversation: Faith and LGBTQ Topics** – This five-session series is based upon the questions frequently asked and how attitudes and mindsets can color our conversations. After a panel of WELS college students share their real-life experiences when faith intersects LGBTQ culture. Each video dives deeper into the challenges that will lead teens to engage with each other in honest conversation. (June 2024 upload to the WELS Congregational Resources website.)
2. **WELS Youth Night (YN)** is a youth-focused event to gather youth together from area congregations to connect in fun fellowship with each other and spiritual growth. The YN kit provides resources to plan, train, promote, and host a Youth Night event. Each event includes a keynote video, small group discussion guide, and event planning guide. <https://welscongregationalservices.net/wels-youth-night/>
3. **WELS National Teen Online Bible Study** - It's easy for teens to become disconnected from church and feel isolated in faith. But what if there was a way to connect with other teens spiritually and build relationships ... online? Beginning this fall, teens will be invited to join in a pastor-led virtual bible study that gathers teens from across the country.
4. **INTERNATIONAL YOUTH RALLY** – 1670+ attendees have already saved a spot. Registration is still open through May! Go to www.welsyouthrally.net

Welcome Home - Every congregation has drifting members slipping away from their church. What if there was a way to welcome them back with them feeling singled out? “Welcome Home” is a congregational initiative to encourage everyone that is part of our Christian family to come together. Worship and bible study resources for a special “Welcome” emphasizes invites every Christian to say, “Welcome home.” (Resource available by July 2024.)

Women's Ministry - Women are invited to the WELS Women's Ministry Conference, July 28-30, 2024 at The Ingleside Hotel, Pewaukee, WI to be encouraged and equipped to faithfully use their gifts for services in God's kingdom <https://welswmconference.net/>.

You are also invited to explore the many resources available through WELS Women's Ministry on their website - <https://wels.net/serving-you/christian-life/womens-ministry/>. Regular webinars, online Bible studies, devotions, training resources and more are available.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt Ewart". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "M" and "E".

Pastor Matthew Ewart, Chairman
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