

Minnesota District Worship Committee Report

District Pastors Conference – April 14-16, 2026

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. Please reach out with worship-related questions and feedback.

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Activity in the Past Year

- Worship planning and execution for pastoral conferences, District Leadership Workshop, and District Convention.
- Support for congregations for introducing resources, demonstrate flexible use of resources, answer questions, and assist with worship planning.
- Leadership Workshop presentation by Craig Engel on Worship Education in the parish.
- District Easter Vigil service held on Easter Eve in the Chapel at St. Croix Lutheran Academy. This worship event included singers, musicians, and attendees from three conferences in the District. The intent is to host the Vigil once again in 2027. #1 feedback: This is the best kept secret. Promotional help by District pastors is appreciated. You are the information gatekeepers between enriching events like these and your congregation.

Christian Worship Hymnal Suite

- *CW: Guidebook* is in final editing phase. This volume will help worship leaders make the most of CW21 “suite of resources” available at christianworship.com and online.nph.net/church-supplies/categories/hymnals-songbooks/christian-worship-suite.
- *Musician’s Resource* (downloadable choral alternates, lead sheets, modulations, and instrumental packs (SATB voices of pew edition settings in a variety of transpositions for instruments. New materials are added regularly at: online.nph.net/musicians-resource. Some of these resources will be used during the conference.

A Look Ahead for the Commission on Worship

- In cooperation with Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, C/W will be developing materials for pastors who want to improve their preaching. This may include resources like refresher materials for those who have found themselves drifting when it comes to purpose statements, or good Lutheran video examples of alternate preaching styles.
- In cooperation with Lutheran Schools, C/W plans to work with the content development team for the new theology curriculum, incorporating resources for teaching Lutheran hymnody at all age levels. This collaboration began in 2025. The hymnology instructional materials published by NPH are available to congregations and schools who want to

include hymnody instruction even before development on the new theology instructional resources begin.

- C/W plans to publish online Hymnal and Psalter Handbook resources, including the history and common usage of all hymns and psalm settings, and one-sentence descriptions of hymns for use in bulletins. These resources are currently linked through *The Foundation* ([The Foundation – Year A 2025-2026 – CongServe](#))
- In cooperation with worship planners at WELS area Lutheran high schools, C/W plans to supply resources that will allow and encourage high schools to make the best use of the treasures old and new available in the new hymnal suite. Similarly, C/W will work with Home Mission personnel to discover which of the new hymnal resources work best in unique Home Mission settings.
- *WELS National Conference on Worship, Music, and the Arts* will be held June 15-18, 2027, at Martin Luther College. The conference will have a “Christmas in June” theme to include resources for use in December 2027.

Respectfully submitted,
Joel J. Gawrisch