



Northern Wisconsin District Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

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Dear Brothers in Christ,

On behalf of your fellow servants in the Northern Wisconsin District, receive our greetings and prayers for the important work you will be doing in your District Convention.

This year the Lutheran Church remembers the 350th anniversary of the death of Paul Gerhardt, one of her greatest hymn writers. His life was marked by many sorrows: the devastations of the Thirty Years' War, the loss of his pastoral call for the sake of confession, and the deaths of his beloved wife and most of his children. Yet out of this crucible came hymns of enduring beauty, filled not with despair but with joy, joy that is born from the wounds of Christ and sustained by his promises.

Gerhardt's witness embodies the theology of the cross: in weakness, the Lord shows his strength; in sorrow, he gives his peace; in death, he proclaims resurrection. For Gerhardt and for all Christians, joy is not fragile cheerfulness nor denial of suffering, but confidence in the Lord who has conquered sin, death, and the devil. That joy is strong because it rests not in us, but in Christ.

The Northern Wisconsin District is meeting at Fox Valley Lutheran High School in Appleton, WI on June 9-10, 2026 with the convention theme, *Joy Made Strong*, (based on Nehemiah 8:10 "*The joy of the LORD is your strength.*"). We look forward to receiving again the consolation and courage that flow from Christ through his Word and sacraments. As we remember Gerhardt's life and sing his hymns, we will be reminded that the Lord who was faithful to him is faithful also to us.

Our prayer is that as your District gathers around Word and sacraments in Convention, the faithful Lord would grant you the same consolation and courage for your ministries.

Your fellow servant in Christ,

Rev. Darin Aden*, Secretary
WELS Northern Wisconsin District

*Full disclosure: most of this is taken from our theme description written by Rev. Jon Zabell