

and plan to join thousands of WELS members for the Milwaukee Brewers' game against the Pittsburgh Pirates. Game time is 7:10 p.m.

The Brewers are again offering WELS members 50 percent off the price of tickets. Seating will be in a block for WELS members. The pricing is Field Outfield Box for \$21/ticket, Loge Outfield Box for \$17/ticket or Terrace Reserved for \$9/ticket. The web link to purchase discounted tickets for WELS Night at Miller Park will be available in March.

Last year more than 3,400 members enjoyed an evening of baseball and fellowship together as they watched the Brewers defeat the Philadelphia Phillies.

Look for further details in the March 15 issue of *Together*. 

### Did you know...

#### WELS has a Facebook page?

[www.facebook.com/welslutherans](http://www.facebook.com/welslutherans)

#### WELS has Twitter?

[www.twitter.com/welstweets](http://www.twitter.com/welstweets)

#### WELS has Instagram?

[instagram.com/welslutherans](http://instagram.com/welslutherans)

#### WELS is mobile?

WELS offers a mobile application for the iOS and Android cell phone platforms. Get the app at [www.wels.net/mobile](http://www.wels.net/mobile)

# TOGETHER



February 2, 2016

## Conference of Presidents holds its winter meeting

The Conference of Presidents (COP) met for its winter meeting on Jan. 11-15. Here are some of the highlights:

- The COP said farewell to Nebraska District President Rev. Earle Treptow, who was attending his last meeting before beginning his work as a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Rev. Phil Hirsch is serving as the interim district president. Rev. Joel Zank, president of the Northern Wisconsin District, was appointed to replace Treptow as a COP representative on the Synodical Council.
- With five months remaining in the One in Christ debt retirement effort, \$1.4 million had been received from congregations and individuals (the total is now above \$1.5 million). The district presidents will continue to encourage congregations to continue this effort through the end of June.
- The COP authorized the appointment of a special committee to discuss the work of the Ministry of Christian Giving and to bring recommendations for any changes to the COP. The review is not in response to any problem but is simply an effort to be sure that the Ministry of Christian Giving is functioning in the most beneficial way.
- The COP resolved that a special committee will review the staff ministry program, especially with the purpose of clarifying definitions and policies and ensuring consistency throughout the synod in how staff ministers are trained, called, and utilized.
- The COP has asked the synod president to bring recommendations for ways to improve the preparation of delegates for synod conventions.
- The COP adopted "364 Days of Thanksgiving" (developed by Rev. Andrew Schroer) as the synod's stewardship emphasis for 2016.
- There are 81 vacancies for full-time pastor positions, with 71 of those in congregations. The remaining 10 are vacant missionary, professor, or other pastor-trained positions. This number of vacant pastor positions is still well below the level at which it would become a concern.
- The 2015 synod convention passed a resolution asking the Synodical Council to give high priority to the calling of a director for Youth and Family Ministry. After consultation with the Commission on Youth and Family Ministry



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and the Commission on Adult Discipleship, the COP was convinced that a director should be called to serve as director of both commissions. The COP is asking that the Synodical Council give this position high priority on the list of unfunded programs.

Serving in Christ,  
President Mark Schroeder 

## Fifty speakers fire up MLC students at Evangelism Day

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**Y**our Kingdom Come” was the theme of Martin Luther College’s 11th annual Evangelism Day on Jan. 20.

The day opened with worship led by Rev. Mark Jeske, pastor at St. Marcus, Milwaukee, Wis., and Time of Grace Ministries. Then about 50 pastors, teachers, missionaries, staff ministers, and lay leaders addressed students about what’s happening out there and how students can further prepare themselves to share the gospel: with Mormons, with the poor, in Spanish, in urban centers, on digital platforms, through early childhood ministries—the list goes on and on.

One highlight this year was a presentation by an MLC student on the persecution of Christians in Syria. This student, a Syrian Christian himself, has taken Bible classes and joined our fellowship. His family remains in Syria—and we pray for them.

Another highlight was a presentation by Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Professor Daniel Leyrer, who spoke specifically to junior and senior men in pre-seminary studies about how they can equip their future congregations for evangelism.

MLC conducts its annual Evangelism Day in conjunction with the WELS

Commission on Evangelism and Commission on Lutheran Schools. All students attend a blend of required and elective workshops.

“It’s a day set aside so that the Spirit can fill the hearts of both faculty and students with excitement and gratitude,” said MLC President Mark Zarling. “Excitement as we learn more about the amazing things the Lord Jesus is doing through the gospel. Gratitude as we think of almost 50 people who come to New Ulm and share with us the good news about the power of the Good News.”

Students responded enthusiastically to the day, each with their own memories of the speaker who brought them to tears, the ministry opportunity they’d never considered before, the “aha moment.”

“This day not only motivates us all,” Zarling continued, “but it keeps us grounded in our mission as a college and our connection to the Great Commission.” 

## WELS School Accreditation grows

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**T**he WELS Commission on Lutheran Schools accreditation

process for WELS early childhood schools, grade schools, and high schools is seeing significant growth.

WELS School Accreditation (WELSSA) evaluates a school’s ministry based on Scripture and sound educational principles.

Mr. Tom Plitzuweit, associate director of the WELS Commission on Lutheran Schools, explains that schools are evaluated on 15 different standards during a three-day visit at the school. The standards center around all WELS schools’ core mission—to share God’s Word. Both strengths and weaknesses are evaluated, and after the visit, the school develops an improvement plan to maintain strengths and improve weaknesses that correlates with the five-year accreditation cycle.

Mr. Mark Otte, principal at Nebraska Evangelical Lutheran High School, Waco, Neb., says, “There are many benefits to going through the accreditation process as any time you take an in-depth look at everything you do you are bound to find reasons to rejoice and thank God for the blessings that he has bestowed on your school. Accreditation also will cause you to question and perhaps improve your school in ways that you might not consider. The single greatest benefit to the accreditation process is it focuses you back on the fundamental reasons why your school exists, which is to share the gospel with families and children.”

Currently, 118 early childhood centers, grade schools, and high

schools are WELSSA accredited, with projections reaching 130 accredited schools by the end of 2017.

“We want to do our best with what God has given us, and we want to share God’s Word with the next generation. In order to do that, schools can compare the quality of their programs against nationally recognized standards in a yearlong self-study process,” says Plitzuweit. “As WELSSA continues to grow, we have a need for more people to serve on site teams. This year we had over 100 captains, consultants, and team members, and as it grows we will need even more. We already have 36 site visits scheduled for 2016-2017, which is the highest year we have ever had.”

While WELSSA is a synod accreditation, it is also recognized nationally as part of the National Council for Private School Accreditation as well as many smaller private accreditation agencies and state accreditation agencies.

Mr. Matthew Bauer, principal at St. Mark’s Lutheran School, Citrus Heights, Calif., says, “Being accredited is an easy way to communicate to current and prospective families that we take our mission of ‘serving families with excellence in Christian education’ very seriously.” 

## Play ball!

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**T**he third annual WELS Night at Miller Park will be held Fri., July 29, 2016. Mark your calendars