



## **National Worship Conference**

The sixth WELS National Conference on Worship, Music, and the Arts was held last summer on July 19-22, 2011 on the campus of Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota. Even though WELS is only the third-largest Lutheran denomination in the United States, the WELS worship conference is the largest Lutheran worship conference held in North America. Gustavus Adolphus College is able to provide air conditioned dormitories with enough space for on-campus registrants, and its chapel is spacious enough to host the large crowds that attend the conference's opening and closing concerts. On July 21, worship and workshops were held at Martin Luther College in nearby New Ulm. Conference participants were able to experience worship in the new Chapel of the Christ and to visit the campus of our synod's ministerial education college.

Among the nearly 60 presentations that participants could attend were several related to the intersection of worship and outreach, led by pastors representing the new Institute for Worship and Outreach (see [www.WorshipAndOutreach.org](http://www.WorshipAndOutreach.org)), moderated by Pastor Jonathan Schroeder of Sharpsburg, Georgia. Several conference presentations were offered by members of the Arizona-California district, including pastors Caleb Bassett, Jon Buchholz, Johann Caauwe, and Johnold Strey, and teacher Kurt Cereske. A 2-CD set of musical highlights from the concerts and services of the conference is available from Northwestern Publishing House. The national worship conference has been held every three years since the first conference in 1996; the next conference is scheduled for 2014.

## **School of Worship Enrichment**

Last fall marked the tenth anniversary of the WELS School of Worship Enrichment (SoWE). The SoWE is a weekend worship seminar for pastors, musicians, teachers, and lay leaders. The agenda, presentations, and sample services were revised this year to respond to feedback from participants and to help maintain excellence and interest in these events.

By 2011, SoWEs had served 256 WELS congregations with a baptized membership of nearly 115,000 souls—30 percent of WELS. The first SoWE in 2001 was held in our district at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Citrus Heights, California. St. Mark's hosted another SoWE on Reformation weekend 2011 to mark the SoWE's ten-year anniversary, with six area congregations participating. Eight SoWEs have been held in our district since they began in 2001: three in Northern California, three in Southern California, and two in the Phoenix area. Possible future sites in our district include Tucson, where a SoWE scheduled in 2010 was postponed, and Las Vegas. To inquire about a SoWE in your area, please speak to the district worship coordinator or contact the WELS Commission on Worship office.

## Resources from the Commission on Worship

### Current Resources

- ***Christian Worship: Supplement*** has sold over 45,000 copies of the pew edition (regular and spiral binding) and over 1,700 copies of the accompaniment edition. Other available editions include the electronic edition, the guitar edition, and a 2-CD set of 36 hymns from the supplement.
- An **electronic edition of *Christian Worship*** is now available through Northwestern Publishing House. This resource provides digital files (RTF, PDF, and TIFF) that allow congregations who have secured proper copyright permissions to reprint material from the hymnal in their weekly service booklets.
- ***Preach the Word*** and ***Worship the Lord*** are two bimonthly **newsletters** published by the Commission on Worship. *Preach the Word* is nearing the end of a two-year series of articles by WLS Prof. Richard Gurgel on key preaching issues. After this series concludes, retired MLC Prof. Daniel Deutschlander will serve as the next editor and plans a series of articles on model text studies. *Worship the Lord* currently features a series of choir-related articles planned by Pastor Jonathan Bauer from our district and choir director Kathryn Tiefel of Houston, Texas. The next series of articles is planned by Pastor Stephen Valleskey and will consider worship in light of our Lutheran Confessions.
- ***Planning Christian Worship*** is available through the Commission on Worship's section on "Connect," the WELS Intranet ([connect.wels.net](http://connect.wels.net)). The new version incorporates the supplement's many resources into the worship planning guides for each Sunday and festival of the church year.
- Pastor Michael Schulz has prepared a **new musical setting of the Lutheran liturgy** for piano and guitar accompaniment. The music is available through his website, [www.ForTheDirectorOfMusic.com](http://www.ForTheDirectorOfMusic.com).

### Future Resources

- A revision of **Hymnsoft**, a program that provides accompaniment for services when an accompanist is not available, has been more complicated and time-consuming than originally anticipated. The wait should be worth it, as the new and improved Hymnsoft will not only contain MIDI files but also recorded performances of hymns that will sound more natural to worshippers than the strict tempos of MIDI files. There is not a firm release date for the new Hymnsoft, although the Commission on Worship anticipates its release before the end of the year.
- The last **curriculum for worship education**, *Come, Worship Christ*, was published in 1996. Due to lack of funding, new worship education projects have been postponed. Future plans may include a new worship curriculum and a professional volume on the theology of worship.
- To mark the five hundredth anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation in 2017, the Commission on Worship is exploring **new English translations of historic Lutheran hymns**. Two such translations by Pastor Michael Schulz—"Jesus, Priceless Treasure" (CW 349) and "Where Wilt Thou Go?" (TLH 197)—were used at the 2011 worship conference. In some cases, new music may also be prepared—such as the new tune composed by MLC Prof. Kermit Moldenhauer for "Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands" (CWS 720).

- The 2011 synod convention adopted a long-range plan that included the production of a **new hymnal** slated for 2024; this planned publication date marks the five hundredth anniversary of the first Lutheran hymnal published in 1524. Thirty years is the typical shelf-life of a denominational hymnal. At the publication of *Christian Worship* in 1993, the Commission on Worship suggested that a replacement be provided sooner than the 52-year span that *The Lutheran Hymnal* (1941) served our synod. The publication of a new hymnal after 30 years would allow our synod's congregations to better utilize the excellent new hymns that have been produced recently (and continue to be produced), to address beneficial worship trends, and to consolidate our synod's primary worship resources into one book. The Commission on Worship also intends to produce the new hymnal's accompanying resources (e.g. altar book, occasional services book, etc.) within the first two years of the hymnal's publication, rather than the long span (1993-2004) over which *Christian Worship*-related materials were produced.

Respectfully Submitted,

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**AZ-CA District Worship Committee**

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