



Thank you for your interest in requesting a candidate through the Assignment Committee of the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod. Your request for a graduate from our WELS college of ministry speaks to your confidence in the excellence of our ministerial training system.

The candidates who have come through Martin Luther College are presenting themselves for service in the church. They are well-trained in different disciplines, have earned various degrees, and are gifted by the Lord of the Church with talents and abilities that will serve well in different ministry settings. They offer themselves in service to the Lord Jesus and his Church, saying, “Here am I. Send me!”

Not every candidate is a fit for every call, and not every call is a fit for a given candidate. The Assignment Committee works together harmoniously, seeking to match the unique gifts of each candidate with the needs of the calling bodies requesting candidates. The Assignment Committee takes this responsibility very seriously and implores the aid and guidance of the Holy Spirit in carrying out this task. Calls may be left unfilled because suitable candidates are unavailable to fill them. Candidates may remain unassigned because there are no calls that fit their unique gifts and abilities. This may occur regardless of the number of candidates and calls available.

In today’s calling environment, the number of call requests surpasses the number of candidates available to fill them. This inevitably means that some requests will go unfilled. Calling bodies requesting candidates should be aware of the strong possibility that their request might not result in a candidate being assigned. Calling bodies should be prepared with backup plans in place to cover ministry needs, in the event that they do not receive a graduate.

Salary and benefits

As congregations come to the assignment committee for a teacher or staff minister, the Conference of Presidents wishes to underscore that it considers synod code to be a reasonable wage. This includes benefits such as VEBA (medical and disability insurance), pension, housing, half of Social Security, and mileage. Calling bodies not presently at code should present a plan to the district president that will bring the salary to the level of synod code within three years and provide an annual report regarding their progress.

Please use the online compensation calculation tool at www.wels.net/cwcompcalc to calculate the annual salary for your new teacher or staff minister. The online calculator is self-explanatory, and most questions are answered by clicking the information icon next to each field.

Moving costs

Moving costs should be included in the congregation’s planning. Under the provisions of the tax bill passed by Congress in 2017, moving expenses are typically no longer tax deductible. This means that any payment from the congregation either to or on behalf of an employee to cover moving expenses is counted as taxable income. In order to help called workers absorb this tax hit, synod compensation now calls for a one-time addendum to the called worker’s compensation. The add-on amount is a percentage of the moving cost and is calculated at 27.3% for ministers of the gospel. The amount is paid to the called worker as compensation in the year the tax liability is incurred.

Teacher mentoring

We are strongly committed to the success of our graduates, so a new graduate from Martin Luther College will be assigned a mentor. The cost for the teacher mentor program is charged to the congregation at the rate of \$1,500 per year for two years. The WELS Commission on Lutheran Schools (CLS) invoices Congregations for Principal and ECM Director Mentoring. Martin Luther College invoices congregations for all other new teachers through the New Teacher Induction Program.

Your next steps (Please note that to open the linked documents, you may need to press “Ctrl” when hovering over the link.)

- 1) Complete an assignment request online at www.wels.net/callrequest (blue button: “Fill out the form”). **All applicants, including those who have previously been calling from the field, are required to complete this step.** A WELS Cloud account is needed for this; if you need help accessing your or your congregation’s account, please follow this [WELS Cloud link](#). District President Zank will receive notification of your request; he may contact you for additional information. (Note: To ensure that your submitted form has been correctly processed, it would be good to notify President Zank through an email, indicating that you have submitted a request for a graduate assignment.)
 - a. There are six tabs to complete – all fields marked with a red asterisk are required.
 - b. Calling and serving body: Sometimes the calling and serving body will be the same, however, if the call is to a school, generally the school will be the serving body, but the associated church will be the calling body.
 - c. For the “Type of Call” field, use Assignment.
 - d. **In the “Call meeting date” field, enter 5/16/2026.**
 - e. Compensation using the [compensation calculator](#) is a critical component of your request.
 - f. If you begin work on a graduate assignment request, you can save it and return to finish it later. To save your request so that you can return and complete it later, click on the “Save” button in the upper right on the form. To return to your form go [here](#).
 - g. To finalize your request and notify your district president, click on the “Submit” button in the upper right of the form. This will save your request and send an automatic notification your district president.
- 2) Complete a call form, filling in all fields EXCEPT the candidate’s name. (Pastor Zank will complete that field in the event a candidate is assigned.) **Please be sure to sign your call document.** Assignments will not be made without a signed call document in hand. Download call forms [here](#).
- 3) Write a cover letter to the candidate, including details about your congregation, your community, special opportunities, and so on. Make sure the letter includes contact information for key individuals in the congregation. Sample letters are available [here](#).
- 4) Complete this [form](#) to provide guidance to the assignment committee.

You may prepare a call packet with additional information of interest about your congregation and community, but this is not required. The four items discussed above are required.

Final thoughts

If your congregation is presently calling from the field and you would like to request a graduate should a call not be accepted, please submit a request on time. It is preferred to have you withdraw a request from consideration should a call be accepted, rather than have you submit a late request.

If one of your teachers or staff ministers receives a call by mid-April, and if you would consider seeking a graduate to replace them if they should accept that call, be aware of the possible need to call for a voters’ meeting to approve a request for a graduate. It is recommended that you complete a request for a graduate and withdraw that request if your teacher or staff minister declines the call. If you do not think you would apply for a graduate, then there is no need to do this.

Assignment schedule

This year's assignment schedule is as follows:

- **Tuesday, April 28, 2026 – Deadline for submitting teacher/staff minister assignment requests.** Changes to the deadline may only be accommodated through consultation with your district president.
- **Friday, May 8, 2026** – Deadline for physical or digital teacher/staff minister call packets to reach your district president. (See corresponding mailing addresses below.)
- **Thursday, May 14, 2026** – The Assignment Committee meets to assign teacher and staff minister candidates.

Please have your primary point of contact remain close to his cell phone on this day in case your district president needs additional information regarding your request.

If your assignment request cannot be filled, your district president will contact you no later than Friday evening to inform you that you will not be receiving a candidate.

- **Saturday, May 16, 2026**
 - **10:00 a.m. CDT** – The Martin Luther College graduation service will be held in the gymnasium. Visit the website www.mlc-wels.edu for more information and to watch the livestream.
 - **2:30 p.m. CDT** – The Martin Luther College call service will be held in the gymnasium and livestreamed.

Following the call services, candidates assigned into ministry will meet with the president of the district into which they are assigned to receive call packets and have a brief orientation to prepare them to transition into their ministry.

Please send your call packet to your district president via the method below so that it arrives **by May 8, 2026.**

Electronic packets *preferred*; send to: nwdp@wels.net (please copy carissa.priewe@wels.net)

If you choose to send a physical call packet, please send it to:

Mount Olive Lutheran Church
ATTN: Rev Joel Zank
930 E Florida Ave
Appleton, WI 54911

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me or my administrative assistant, Carissa Priewe, with any questions; we are happy to assist.

In our Lenten Lord Jesus,

Pastor Joel Zank