

2024 Conference Bios

1) Vocation: Masks of God

Michael Berg

Rev. Dr. Michael Berg is an associate professor of theology at Wisconsin Lutheran College. He is the author of Vocation: the Setting for Human Flourishing (1517), The Baptismal Life (Northwestern), On Any Given Sunday (1517) and an upcoming book on the Theology of the Cross (Northwestern). He is also co-host of the podcast "Let the Bird Fly". He is married to Amanda, a teacher at St. Philip's Lutheran in Milwaukee. They have three daughters ages 20, 18, & 15.

2) Built to Help Those who Grieve

Kurt Ebert

Kurt Ebert has been a WELS parish pastor for 38 years and currently serves at Christ Alone Lutheran Church in Mequon/Thiensville. He is married to Connie and was blessed with four children and five granddaughters.

3) Toward a Biblical Gender Identification

E Allen Sorum

Currently teaching at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, a member of the Pastoral Studies Institute team, and outreach pastor at Christ Lutheran Church in Big Bend, Wisconsin.

4) Built to Serve as God's Manager

Thomas Mielke

Pastor Mielke served in the parish ministry for 25 years in various parts of the country, until 2019, when he accepted the call to serve as a WELS Christian Giving Counselor. He assists WELS members in their Christian giving goals, with an emphasis on estate planning. His work allows him to daily assist people in the area of Christian stewardship. He also assists his home congregation with their annual stewardship efforts to encourage members in using God's gifts of time, talents and treasure in their lives. He and his wife Laura live in Appleton, WI and attend St. Matthew Lutheran Church there.

5) The Importance of Christian Mentoring

Tad Schubring

Tad Schubring - Beloved child of God, USN Navy Desert Storm Veteran, Married to Jenni for 24 + years, 5 children (Silas, Micah, Sylvia, Abel, and Keeron), BS Education, MA Educational Leadership, Teacher for 12 years, Youth Minister for 10 years, Owner/Operator Dad's Handyman Services LLC for 5 + years, Mentored Youth and Adults for 15 + years, Wrote a Mentor Volunteer Handbook for St. Mark Lutheran Church, Green Bay, WI.

6) From Pastor's Kid to Police Officer - Built to Serve as a Public Servant

Jeff Engelbrecht

Jeff is a former adjunct faculty member at Northeast Wisconsin Technical College in Green Bay, WI, where he taught classes in the following areas: Defensive and Arrest Tactics, Firearms, Vehicle Contacts, and Professional Communication Skills. Jeff previously worked as a consultant and trainer for Blauer Tactical Systems. He was a member of the company's Mobile Training team and conducted training in the United States and Europe. He has been a speaker at the Wisconsin Department of Justice Unified Tactical Instructor Updates and has been a presenter at the National Association of Field Training Officers Conference.

Additionally, Jeff is a consultant / trainer with Mighty Oak Active Threat Solutions where he presents on the topics of civilian active threat response, situational awareness & de-escalation strategies, and house of worship safety & security. He has provided this training to organizations in Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Indiana and Virginia. Jeff can be reached at jengelbrecht@mightyoaksolution.com.

7) Built to Serve . . . with a Healthy Habit Foundation

Greg Schmill

Greg Schmill has served as a teacher and principal in WELS elementary and high schools in Minnesota, Florida, and Wisconsin. He has also served as the synod's Forward with Lutheran Schools (FWLS) educational consultant and as the director of the WELS Commission on Lutheran Schools (CLS). He now lives out his passion for supporting and encouraging WELS school and church leaders as a facilitator and leadership coach with Grace in Action. In this role, he partners with others to develop and deliver leadership training and coaching support for WELS and ELS ministry leaders and teams. Greg's blessings of family include his wife Renee and four daughters and four sons-in-law – and four grandchildren.

8) Biblical Manhood: Built by the Father, Called by Christ

Luke Thompson

Luke Thompson (M.Div theology, M.A. philosophy) taught philosophy courses at Wisconsin Lutheran College and Bethany Lutheran College before becoming a pastor in WELS. He served eight years in Ottawa, ON, Canada, at St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran, where he ministered to government workers, South Sudanese immigrants and the university students of University of Ottawa and Carleton University. For over twenty years, he has worked with and help start campus ministries, presenting internationally on apologetics, philosophy, and pop culture. His most recent divine call is to Martin Luther College, where he teaches theology, history, and philosophy and leads a "film and philosophy" club and a Great Books club. He is author of *Your Life Has Meaning* (a study on Ecclesiastes and philosophy) (NPH) and co-author of *Quick to Listen* (NPH).

9) Love Your Neighbor

Ryan Kolander

Before graduating from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Pastor Kolander lived and served in Mexico and in various other parts of the world. He was assigned in 2016 to serve as a mission pastor in Detroit, where he worked to raise up a multicultural, bilingual congregation for seven years. These experiences have forced him to find unique ways to connect with many "neighbors" that do not share a common culture with him.

10) Youth group: do or do not resuscitate

Pastor Clark Schultz

My ministry included vicaring in the shadows of Lambeau field at St. Mark Green Bay. I then supervised the dorms for two years at Luther Prep, was missionary pastor at Risen Savior Cedar Grove, and then I traveled the globe as the Luther Prep recruiter. Having finished my 14th year teaching at Lakeside Lutheran High School in Lake Mills, Wisconsin, I taught 10th grade religion, coached boy's soccer and directed the spring drama productions. One of my biggest joys was to be able to encourage teens to consider ministry and MLC. I currently serve as an associate Pastor at Shepherd of the hills West Bend and partner with Good Shepherd to run the youth group together.

I love spending time with my wife Kristin and our three young boys; Ian, Lincoln and Nolan. Batman is my hero of choice because he uses his God given talents to make a difference, that and he's a millionaire too. My teams are all things Wisconsin, Packers, Badgers, Brewers, Marquette and the Bad News Bears.

I am also blessed to be the author of a teen devotional book <https://online.nph.net/5-minute-bible-studies-for-teens.html>

11) Every Member Evangelism: how to encourage and equip people in the pews to reach the lost

Eric Roecker

Pastor Eric Roecker is a 1998 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Upon graduation, he was assigned to Resurrection Lutheran Church in Virginia Beach, Virginia, where he served until 2013. In 2013 he moved to Menomonee Falls, WI to serve as the pastor of Pilgrim Lutheran Church. In August 2018, he began serving as the Director for the WELS Commission on Evangelism. He lives in Menomonee Falls, WI with his wife, Mary, son Rees and daughter Riley.

12) Send Us Your Nuns???

Blain Parsons, Scott Krause, Bill Neubauer

Scott, Blain & Bill are 3 average laymen of varying backgrounds from Watertown who became good friends over the years. All 3 have been involved in various committees, boards, councils, school functions and the like within their congregations. They all have a strong desire to spread and share God's Word within their community.

13) More Than a Movement

Greg Lyon

Pastor Greg Lyon has been serving as a campus pastor at Wisconsin Lutheran College since 2015. In his role at WLC, he spends a good portion of his time offering pastoral care to individual students. He earned a masters of sacred theology from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary with an emphasis on pastoral care and is pursuing a masters of counseling through Bethany Lutheran College. He has completed a certificate in trauma counseling through the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. In addition to pastoral counseling, Pastor Lyon has been involved in writing statements and has assisted in crafting policies specifically related to LGBTQIA+ challenges. He is the chairman of the WELS Committee on Identity, Gender, and Sexuality. He is also a contributing author for Forward in Christ and an Everyone Outreach facilitator.

He is a 2010 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and has been happily married to Amy (Moll) since 2006. Together they have three children: Samuel (2011), Elliana (2012) and Addison (2016).

14) Built to Serve as Family Shepherd**Ben Berger**

Ben is married to Heather and father of Eliana and Andrew, a junior and freshman at Fox Valley Lutheran High School. Ben has also served as pastor at St. Paul's in Winneconne since July 2014. In addition, he serves on the Northern WI District Commission on Discipleship.