

2024 MOHW Session Descriptions

1. Biblical Encouragement: the Power of Words - Mark Paustian

Speaking words can be an act of profound service to one another. How, then, do men after God's heart break "the silence of Adam" who stood wordlessly by while his bride was assaulted by lies? How can we speak with purpose into the lives of the people around us? How can we design messages that have a disproportionate influence in our communities? Mark will begin with examples from research into a phenomenon known as "Memorable Messages." Scholars have looked at the things people report being told that were the reason they: were the first in their family to go to college, why they stayed in a marriage, why did not end their life, and so on. Armed with the Word of Christ, we can do far better than the best of secular scholars can imagine. We will ground our session in the wisdom of Solomon, of the Apostle Paul, and, preeminently, of Christ himself. Our time together will include an interactive case study approach involving situations that will challenge us to together design messages of wisdom, grace, and power.

About Mark Paustian: Mark graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1988. He was called from there to an exploration mission start in Rockford, IL where he served until 2001 through the building of a gorgeous sanctuary for New Life Lutheran Church. He has been teaching at Martin Luther College in New Ulm, MN since then, and currently specializes in the areas of interpersonal communication, Old Testament Hebrew, apologetics, and homiletics. Mark holds two Masters degrees and a PhD in Communications. He has written books on witnessing: Prepared to Answer and MORE Prepared to Answer. More recently, he published a book on worship, Our Worth to Him. His podcast is called, "Where Two or Three: Christian Conversation at the Table of Communication Scholarship." Mark enjoys world travel, music, and the outdoors. Mostly, he is a family man. He has been married to Constance (Kroll) for 33 years. They have two daughters (Abby and Hannah) and two sons-in-law (Keenan Smart and Joe Rodewald).

2. Built to Serve in Every Walk of Life - Mark Neumann

Opportunities to serve abound in all walks of life. Usually, one does not even have to go looking as God simply drops them in front of us.

Whether in Congress holding our ground on bills relating to biblical principles, or on a construction site asking the workers to not take the name of the Lord in vain, or any of the many other walks of life we and others like us have been through, the opportunity to serve is always present.

This session will be devoted to specific examples of service opportunities in various walks of life.

About Mark Neumann: Mark and Sue met in fourth grade Sunday school, dated in high school, and married young. Starting with faith in God and each other, we've had successful careers in teaching, coaching, real estate sales, residential construction, solar developments, financial planning, stockbroking, Christian education, and a stint in the U.S. House of Representatives. Throughout, we've believed: To God be the glory!

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3. What does the Bible say about Wokeness and DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion)? - John Bilitz

Does it seem to you that you woke up one morning and overnight the world had turned upside down? We live in a time when definitions of life and its most basic elements have changed and continued to evolve. Truth has become a personal opinion or preference, and long-agreed upon truths are now negotiable, relative, or discarded because they are despised. How does our Christian worldview assess these changes? How can we live our faith and witness to our Savior's love? How are we uniquely positioned to present the rock-solid message of God's Word? In this session, we will discuss these questions and look to be lights in a world growing dim.

About John Bilitz: Jon currently serves as the Campus Pastor at Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel and Student Center in Madison, WI, on the campus of the University of Wisconsin. He has served as a pastor for 28 years, the last 16 of which have included campus ministry. He and his wife Mary have been blessed with three children, now grown and out of the house. In working with college students on a secular campus, Jon sees the impact of the woke movement and is eternally grateful to have the truth of God's Word for himself and to share with others.

4. Every Member Evangelism - Eric Roecker

More congregational members witnessing to the unchurched means more souls being reached with the gospel of Jesus Christ. It's simple math. Twenty witnesses will reach more than ten. A hundred will reach more than twenty. A thousand will reach more than a hundred. But how do we mobilize the vast army of witnesses sitting in WELS pews each week? More specifically, how can your congregation encourage and equip your members to be ambassadors for Christ? Pastor Eric Roecker, the WELS Director for the Commission on Evangelism, will lead a discussion to help you shape a congregational culture that fosters an evangelistic attitude among your members.

About Eric Roecker: Eric is a 1998 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Upon graduation, he was assigned to Resurrection Lutheran Church in Virginia Beach, Virginia, where he served as Pastor 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.

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5. Rules of Brotherhood - Kevin Festerling

The power of authentic brotherhood is on display when we take a look at the relationship of David and Jonathan from the Old Testament. Do you have the brotherhood, friendship or camaraderie that holds up against the trials and challenges of this life? Difficult to know the answer to that question if you don't know the qualities of this type of relationship. Join us for a conversation that centers around observing and developing the qualities of a Godly friendship or brotherhood, as modeled by David and Jonathan.

About Kevin Festerling: Kevin Festerling is the founding principal of Kingdom Prep Lutheran High School. Kevin has over 25 years of experience in urban education in Milwaukee. Over his career he has served as teacher, principal and teacher coach/trainer at numerous Milwaukee institutions including St. Marcus Schools, Center for Urban Teaching and Hmong American Peace Academy. Kevin holds a B.A. in Education from Valparaiso University and is narrowing in on an M.A. in Educational Leadership from Wisconsin Lutheran College. Kevin is married to Lisa, has two children, Morgan and Sawyer and lives in Wauwatosa. In his spare time he enjoys snowboarding, supporting his kids' athletic endeavors and building and fixing things with his hands!

6. More Than a Movement - Greg Lyon

The LGBTQ movement causes fears for many churches and schools. But while we work to address the movement and safeguard our churches and schools, sometimes we fail to see the souls right in front of us. With Christlike love and truth, we will consider not just the LGBTQ movement but the struggling individuals we walk with every day.

About Greg Lyon: Greg 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).

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7. **Biblical Manhood: Built by the Father, Called by Christ - Luke Thompson**

Our culture tells us a lot about what it means to be a man, from the woke deconstruction of gender to red-pill reactions. But how does the Bible define manhood, and what practices does the Bible give us for encouraging Biblically manly behaviour? Join us as we develop a biblical philosophy of manhood, and see how God turns our expectations upside and gives us more than we could ever ask for.

About Luke Thompson: Luke (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).

8. **What are Young People Looking for from Church? - Dustin Sievert**

(A Youth Panel Discussion)

Young people are leaving the church in growing numbers. They are influenced by liberal ideology in college, by social mores that run contrary to God's commands and by acquaintances that ridicule Christian values. Additionally, they are dealing with personal conflicts and struggles with depression, relationships, addictions, and life-changes. What are they dealing with? How can we help? What are they looking for from the church? Does the message of Christ's love hit home with the current service format and program offerings? Lots of questions to address ... who better to give us some insight but the same young people we're trying keep in the church!

About Dustin Sievert: Pastor Sievert serves at St. Croix Lutheran Academy in West St. Paul, MN as campus pastor, instructor and basketball coach. In the classroom, he has two goals for his students: to grow devotionally and prepare intentionally. And on the court, he seeks to develop servant-leaders who display humility and joy. Prior to SCLA, Dustin's ministry was shaped by stops at MLC (Admissions Counselor) and St. Peter/The CORE in Appleton (Family & Outreach Pastor). Outside of SCLA, his four sons keep him busy and his wife (Katie) keeps him grounded.