



# 175 Years of Change in WELS Worship

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## Introduction

Lutheranism in Germany: Pietism, Rationalism, the Prussian Union, mission societies and mission houses, and a confessional revival

Lutheranism in America: Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, Samuel Simon Schmucker, the challenge of American Protestantism and American Revivalism, and a confessional revival

## Earliest Beginnings

Johannes Muehlhaeuser: his experiences, the founding of Grace in Milwaukee, and the founding of the Wisconsin Synod

The “free-for-all” in worship in early Wisconsin Synod congregations

The influence of Reformed theology on the architecture of the earliest Wisconsin Synod churches

## Turn toward Confessionalism

Johannes Bading: his experiences and his influence

The first Wisconsin Synod hymnal: *Evang.-Lutherisches Gesangbuch* (1870)

The influence of confessional Lutheran theology on the architecture of Wisconsin Synod church buildings, 1870-1900

## Language Struggle and Church Construction

The challenges of the first decades of the twentieth century

*Church Hymnal for Lutheran Services* (1911)

*Book of Hymns* (1916)

Height of church construction in Wisconsin, Michigan, and Minnesota Synods, 1900-1929

## ***The Lutheran Hymnal***

A Synodical Conference project with Wisconsin Synod involvement

Acceptance and use in the Wisconsin Synod

Wisconsin Synod's horizons are expanded

Excursus: Choirs, organs, and instrumental music in WELS

## Rapid Growth of WELS across the Country, 1960s—1980s

Coincided with a cultural shift in America

Impact on church architecture in Midwest congregations and on the mission fields

Impact on worship life in WELS

## The Wide Influence of *Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal* (1993)

Key leaders in the development of *Christian Worship*

Almost universal acceptance across WELS

A renewed interest in liturgy and hymnody

Impact on worship life

The WELS National Conference on Worship, Music, and the Arts

## **Retaining Our Past and Looking to the Future**

WELS church architecture in the new millennium

*Christian Worship: Supplement* (2008) and *Christian Worship: Hymnal* (2021), *Christian Worship: Psalter*, and the importance of providing musical resources

Ongoing challenges in our American context

## **Conclusion**

Where are we now?

Where do we go from here?



**FOR  
175 YEARS**