

NORTH WISCONSIN DISTRICT PASTORS CONFERENCE SURVEY

COMPILED INFORMATION.

There was a total of 77 surveys filled out, however, 8 of those were individuals who filled out the survey more than once. So, for those who filled out the survey more than once, their most recent survey reply was kept and the older one was disregarded. The reason for keeping the most recent reply to the survey was that it was most likely their most recent thoughts on the matter.

While we are aware that the way the North Wisconsin Pastor Conference has done things in various ways through the years, and there are still some who remember how it was done 10 years ago, 15 years ago, and so forth. We have had a lot of new guys move into the district in the last 10 years who come with different experiences from previous districts, and we have had gentlemen move onto other Districts, retired, or join the Lord awaiting the resurrection.

Therefore, this survey was compiled to help the current committee and any future committees in planning the North Wisconsin District Pastors Conferences Fall & Spring Rally. We are aware that information may change in the future, and such details may not be valid at that time. However, this gives the committee some much needed feedback in planning each conference.

The best feedback though comes from personal one-on-one conversations that are uplifting and building up of the body of Christ and not one of criticism or false witness that destroys those for whom our Lord has died, redeemed, and calls His beloved Child. If you are unhappy with these results or desire to see change in the Pastor's Conference that reflect our theology, confessions, and practices then please volunteer to serve on the planning committee.

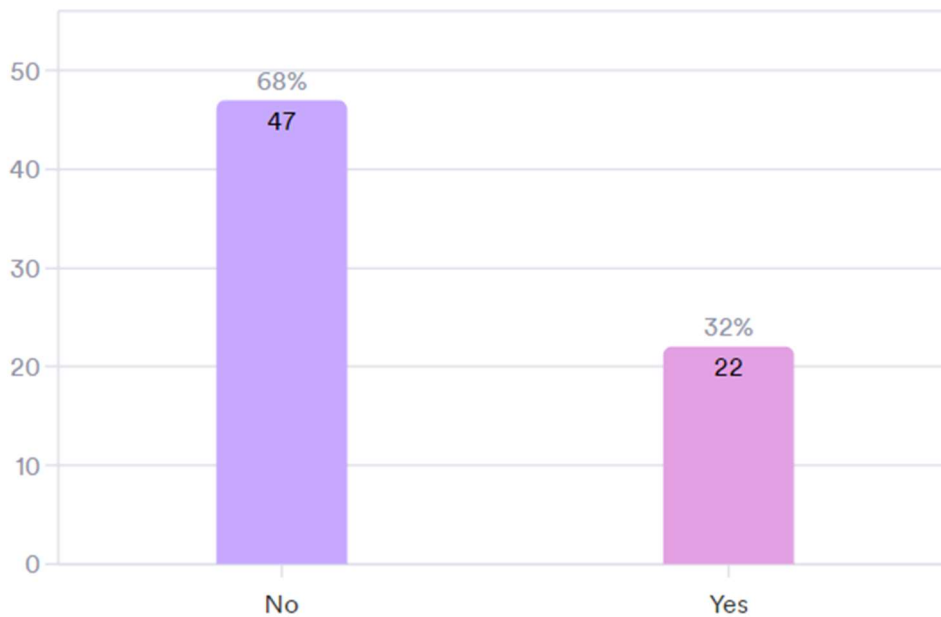
So, as of the distribution of this survey the following examples have been the most recent practice for the North Wisconsin District Pastors Conferences over the last couple of years. These examples are not meant to serve as a standard or hard rule of how things are to be done. But sampling a guideline / reference point for what has been done more recently.

I hope this information compiled below will enlighten and help both the planning committee and the pastors and church workers of the NWD in coming together for the edification of our hearts, souls, and minds as we gather together as God's people.

Does your congregation have fellowship or gym space to host 150-200 pastors & guests?

69 Responses

Data	Response	%
No	47	68%
Yes	22	32%



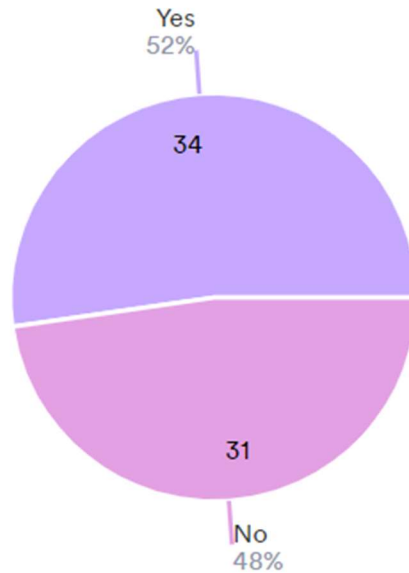
Most Current Practice:

As of recently we have had Fall Conference at a Hotel that is able to house both participants and provide a room for meeting. Hosting at a hotel there are additional costs that come with using their facilities. Some of these extras may require food charges, use of A/V, etc. We have hosted at a church in the Fall, but with their school there is concern about interfering with their daily schedule.

The Spring Conference has taken place at Camp Luther, and at some churches who are able to host us. Hosting at a local church is significantly cheaper and does cut down the overhead cost when then passes along a savings to our local churches / participants.

Is your sanctuary big enough to hold over 200 people for worship?

65 Responses- 4 Empty



Data	Response	%
Yes	34	52%
No	31	48%

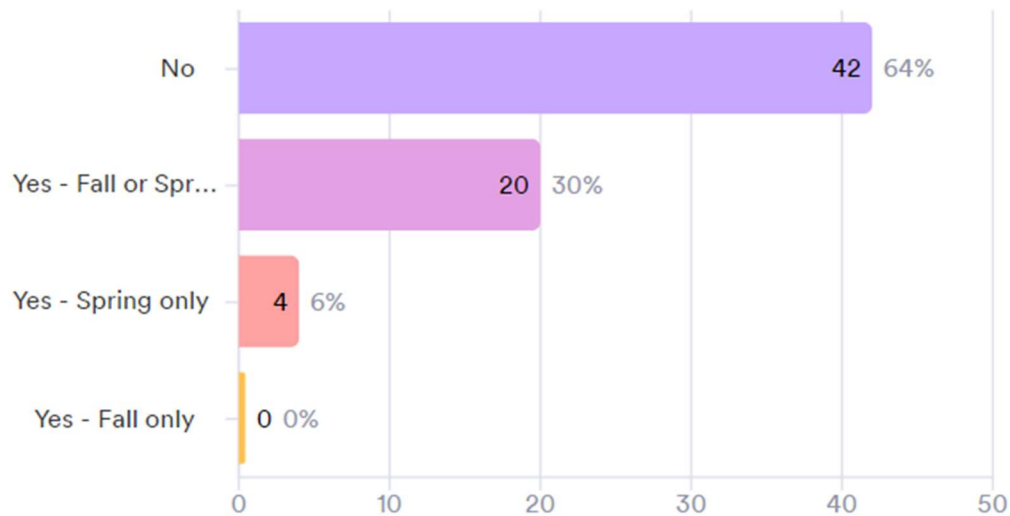
Most Recent Practice:

The Psalmist says, *“I rejoiced with those who said to me, ‘Let’s go to the house of the Lord’”* (122:1). Gathering together as brothers and sisters in Christ around the Word of God and His Sacrament is key to our identity as Lutheran Christians. We have sought out and continue to seek out churches that are able and willing to host the worship service for those in attendance and guest.

Ideally it makes things easier if we do have a congregation that is able to host the conference and worship, as some congregations in the past have done such as Mt. Olive Weston, Trinity Wausau, & St. Jakobi Shawano. This allows us to focus less on travel and more on the sessions and worship.

Is your congregation willing to host a Pastor's Conference?

66 Responses- 3 Empty



Data	Response	%
No	42	64%
Yes - Fall or Spring	20	30%
Yes - Spring only	4	6%
Yes - Fall only	0	0%

Most recent Practice:

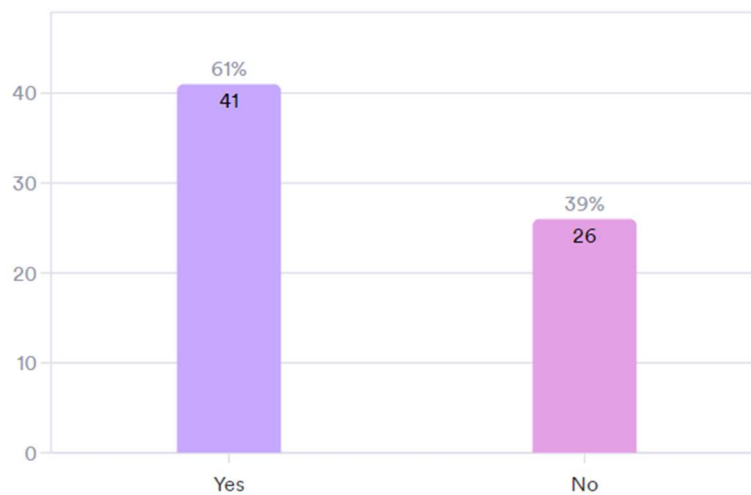
As stated above we have recently had congregations that have been willing to host pastor's conferences which is a cost savings over being at a conference center of some sort. However, we are unaware of which congregations are able and willing to host the conference. So, while we may have congregations that have significant space to host a conference, they may for various reasons be unable or unwilling to host a conference.

Instead of insisting that a congregation host a conference we thought the best place to begin is to ask about willingness to host. Just because a congregation may be willing / able to host does not mean that they will be selected to host a conference, as there are numerous factors that go into consideration such as the congregation's leadership willingness to host a conference.

We also need to consider the availability of local housing for those traveling to the conference, and enough hotel / lodging for 200+ people. As well as restaurants that can feed those who are in attendance.

Are there adequate hotel / housing options within 10 miles from your congregation?

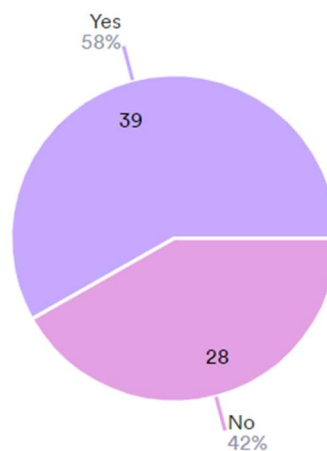
67 Responses- 2 Empty



Data	Response	%
Yes	41	61%
No	26	39%

Are there sufficient food options within a reasonable distant of the church?

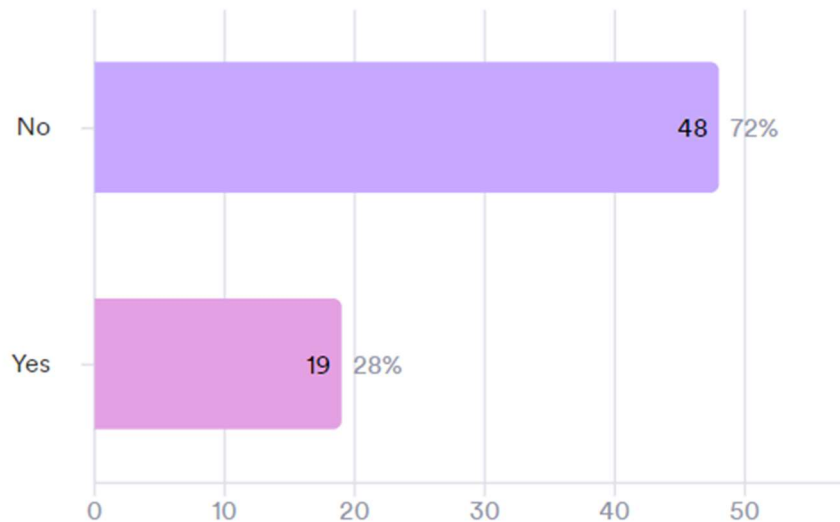
67 Responses- 2 Empty



Data	Response	%
Yes	39	58%
No	28	42%

Does your congregation have a pre-school, 4K, or day school?
(This is asked for planning around schedules, and preparing for
any obstacles that could arise with numerous people on the
grounds at the same time as the conference.)

67 Responses- 2 Empty



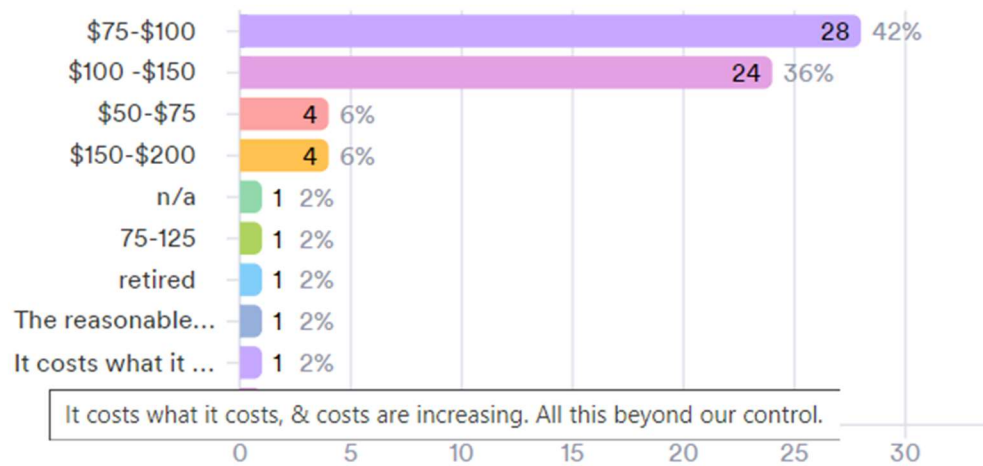
Data	Response	%
No	48	72%
Yes	19	28%

Most recent Practice:

While we have held a conference at Trinity in Wausau who has a day school – we are aware that hosting a conference when you have any sort of daycare, pre-school, or school adds another dynamic to planning the conference. While we will not turn away a church willing to host, we realize that it makes scheduling tricky for all parties involved and helps in deciding on locations, times, etc.

What is a reasonable rate to charge for Pastors Conferences?

66 Responses- 3 Empty



Data	Response	%
\$75-\$100	28	42%
\$100-\$150	24	36%
\$50-\$75	4	6%
\$150-\$200	4	6%
n/a	1	2%

Most recent Practice:

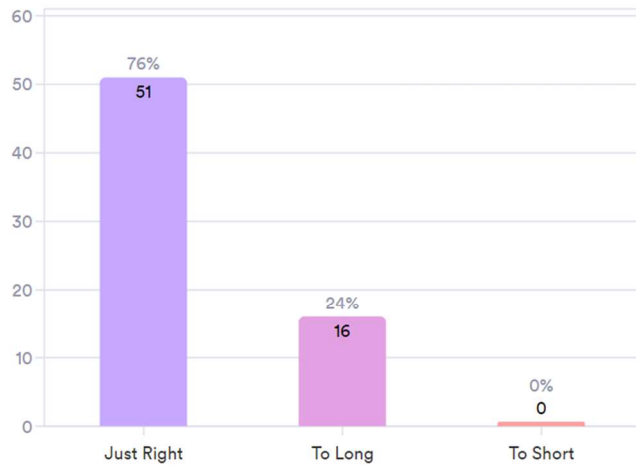
Over the last couple of years, the cost of the conference has ranged from \$80 to \$145, plus additional charges for spouses and kids. We have done all we can and will continue to try to do so, offering the conference for FREE to all retired pastors. The range in cost for the conference varies due to things on location of having in a church vs. a conference center and any extra fees that are required from our host. There are also additional cost to be able to bring in more prominent speakers to address the conference.

It should be noted that we do not annually or in anyway receive money from the North Wisconsin District Office for Pastors conference. The conferences are the responsibility of the pastors in our District. So all funds brought in cover the cost of the conference, any extra funds we have go into the Pastors Conference Checking account, giving seed money for future conferences.

We are still really cheap compared to other Districts who charge well over \$150+ in addition to the cost of hotel cost, travel, and meals.

Is the length of the Fall Conference (typically 3 days) . . .

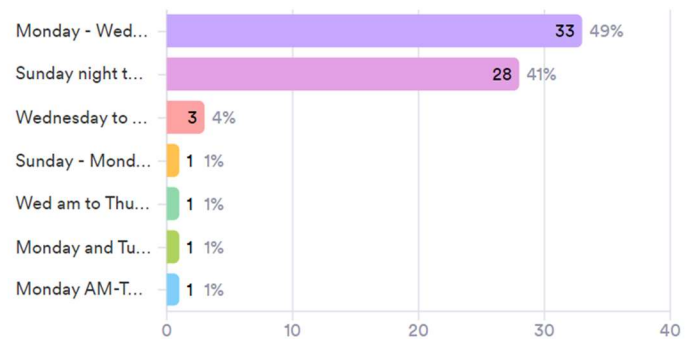
67 Responses- 2 Empty



Data	Response	%
Just Right	51	76%
To Long	16	24%
To Short	0	0%

What is your preference for the Fall Conference? (Typically a 3 day event)

68 Responses- 1 Empty



Data	Response	%
Monday - Wednesday afternoon	33	49%
Sunday night to Tuesday	28	41%
Wednesday to Friday afternoon	3	4%
Sunday - Monday (1 night)	1	1%
Wed am to Thu afternoon	1	1%
Monday and Tuesday	1	1%
Monday AM-Tuesday PM	1	1%

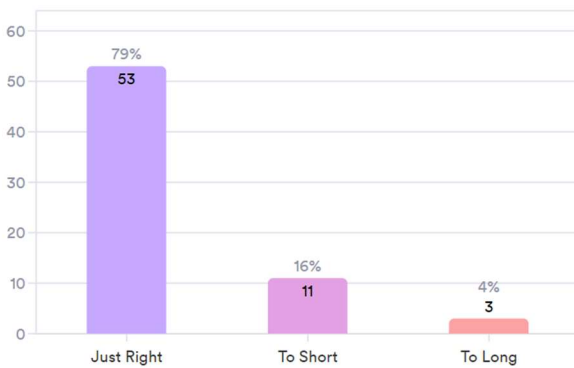
Most recent Practice:

We have a total of 215 congregations and roughly 170 pastors workers in our district. And on average, we get about 115-130 people (not just active pastors) who attend the Fall Conference. There have been numerous reasons given over the years for lack of attendance, including the length – so we thought it would be a good idea to get feedback on the length as well as the timing (days on which we meet) to see if there is a need for change.

As you can see from the responses a majority thought the length is just right, and the current timing also appears to be the most favored.

Is the length of the Spring Conference (typically 2 days) . . .

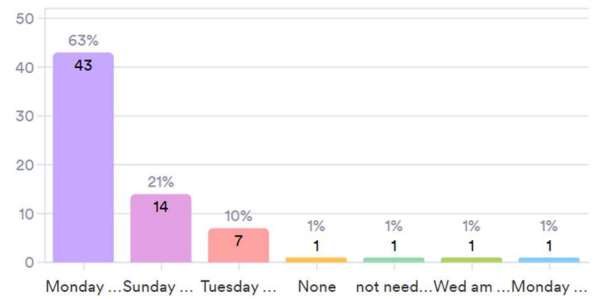
67 Responses- 2 Empty



Data	Response	%
Just Right	53	79%
To Short	11	16%
To Long	3	4%

What is your preference for the Spring Conference? (Typically a 2 day event)

68 Responses- 1 Empty



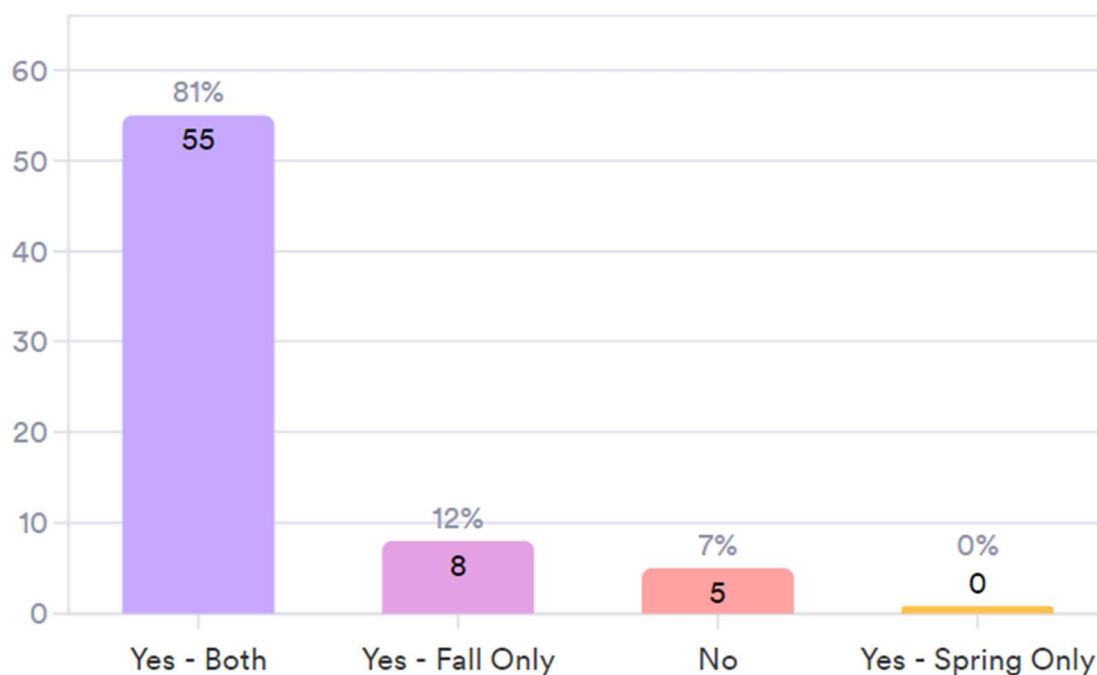
Data	Response	%
Monday afternoon - Sunday afternoon	43	63%
Sunday afternoon to Monday morning	14	21%
Tuesday morning to Wednesday morning	7	10%
None	1	1%
not needed	1	1%
Wednesday afternoon to Thursday afternoon	1	1%
Monday afternoon - Wednesday afternoon	1	1%

Most recent Practice:

Like the Fall practice we do not have great attendance, however, the short conference in the Spring does seem to bring out a few more people. There is agreement that the current length of two days is most preferred. The two-day conference does help keep the cost at a more affordable rate for those attending. There was no real desire to change the date – so for the foreseeable future things should remain as is.

Do you regularly attend the Pastors Conference?

68 Responses- 1 Empty



Data	Response	%
Yes - Both	55	81%
Yes - Fall Only	8	12%
No	5	7%
Yes - Spring Only	0	0%

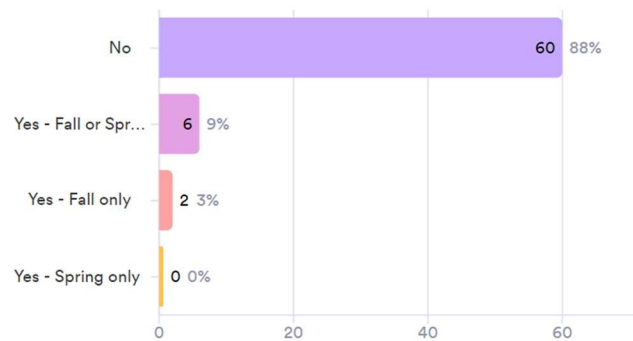
Most recent Practice:

Out of those who actually responded a clear majority attending both the Fall & Spring conference. I appreciate the honesty of those who said they attend neither (5 total out of 68). Again though, we have a total of roughly 170 pastors in the district and only 68 out of 170 responded to this survey.

As of this Fall 2023 Conference we only had 77 pastors in attendance, about 45% of active pastors in our District.

Does your spouse or family travel with you to Pastor's conferences?

68 Responses- 1 Empty



Data	Response	%
No	60	88%
Yes - Fall or Spring	6	9%
Yes - Fall only	2	3%
Yes - Spring only	0	0%

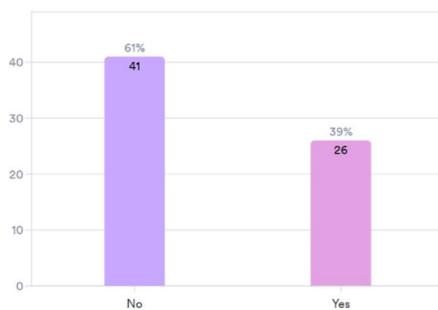
Most recent Practice:

Some pastors attend with their families, while some are unable for various reasons. But for those who have attended there has NOT really been any activities that have been geared for wives or children. So the thought was to see if there is a strong desire, need for activities geared towards families.

As you can see, very few travel with their family. This feedback allows the planning committee to know that while there isn't a high demand for family activities – they can still plan activities if they so choose, but it's not a real focal point in the planning processes. If they decide to offer activities, the respondents gave some ideas of various activities that might be worth consideration.

Would you desire activities that included spouses / families?

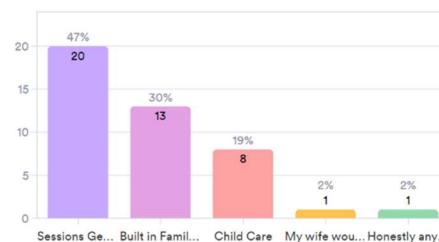
67 Responses- 2 Empty



Data	Response	%
No	41	61%
Yes	26	39%

If "YES" to the question above, what type of activities? (Check all that apply)

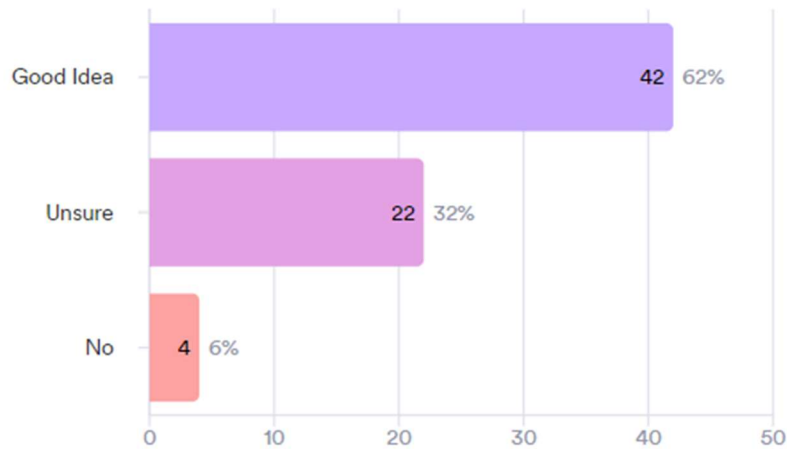
43 Responses- 42 Empty



Data	Response	%
Sessions Geared Towards Wives/Children	20	47%
Built in Family Time	13	30%
Child Care	8	19%
My wife would enjoy hearing from me	1	2%
Honestly anything would be good	1	2%

Final Question: What are your thoughts on having a joint Pastors Conference with the South Wisconsin District?

68 Responses- 1 Empty



Data	Response	%
Good Idea	42	62%
Unsure	22	32%
No	4	6%

Most recent Practice:

We have not had a joint conference with the Southern Wisconsin District as pastors in the past 10 years or any recent date that comes to mind if ever.

This idea came about because of other Districts larger than both the North & South Wisconsin that host large pastors' conferences. The thought here was to encourage collegiality as well as to have a conference in which we can gather together to encourage and grow together. Also pooling our resources for such a conference could be one that might be able to allow us to bring in a more prominent speaker or speakers to truly discuss and have good Christian debate over topics that are relevant to what is going on in our churches, communities, and culture. Sort of a mini-symposium among our districts.

QUESTIONS / COMMENTS

(Divided by lines)

Thanks for opportunity to give opinion to help planners continue to do their best job of scheduling Pastor conferences. Keep up the great work. Great idea to have joint with SWD. Blessings on you work.

I would like to see the Fall conference return to being a "practical" oriented conference. Let's bring in some people who are doing innovative ministry and learn from them. How do we better minister in a changing culture, etc. Seems like a steady diet of CTSFW faculty lately. Time for a change. I'm not positive Antigo is big enough for a conference. We have 140 hotel rooms in our city. Some who attend probably drive home to sleep. I think we have enough restaurants. Due to having a full school and childcare ministry... we could only host the spring if it's basically a 24 hour conference, afternoon, evening and next morning. We would move our school lunch and childcare food times into our gym. I haven't run this past all of our staff leaders yet, so we would need to put a few more heads together before making the final decision if we were asked to do it. Thanks for asking.

The spring conference tends to be smaller...our fellowship hall can accommodate 100-125 people. I'd be interested in having Our Redeemer-Kingsford host a conference. The Iron Mountain area has plenty of hotels, great restaurants, and plenty for people to do if visiting the area. Feel free to reach out to me if interested.

Thanks for all you do! No complaints here.

I'm retired, and I have not been able to attend as often in the past as I would like, but I still enjoy attending when I'm able.

I would like to be a more regular attendee of the Pastors' Conferences, but unfortunately I have not yet made that commitment in my time in Wisconsin. I was a regular attendee of the conferences when I was in Michigan, and I believe there are a number of reasons that have contributed to my change. I will list them below, but they are not in any order other than the order in which I thought of them when considering this question. 1) Family situation changed (it's easier to attend before you have kids). 2) Work load changed (the pace and responsibilities at Pilgrim have not been conducive to faithful attendance). 3) The NWD does not promote the conferences and I, honestly, don't really know they are happening. They are simply not on my radar. 4) The times I have been aware of the conferences, the speakers and/or topics have been uninteresting and or irrelevant to anything I face in ministry. 5) Covid had an impact I'm sure, but I did attend the virtual one. I know it's easy to "complain" or "critique" without offering suggestions or to help, so I would like to offer some suggestions or help. First, look at how the Michigan District runs their fall conference and see what it would take for us to have a similar one. It was always a highlight, not an obligation to attend. Second, begin with a question to be answered as the theme for the conference, then build accordingly. For instance, "How should we think politically as pastors?" There are a wide variety of responses, find 2-3 speakers who will address this from different angles. Or, "Why does creation matter?" Then call Ken Hamm and Chuck Arand. I guarantee people would attend. Finally, and in the same vein as above, I would be willing to serve on the conference committee, or at least serve as a sounding board for sharing my thoughts. I would love to have our conferences be highlight events! Thank you for all you do!

FIRST FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT HOSTING ARE NOT APPLICABLE TO ME SINCE I SERVE AT A VETERANS' FACILITY NOT A CONGREGATION. THANKS FOR ALL YOU DO!

I really don't have an opinion on most of the FIRST FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT HOSTING ARE NOT APPLICABLE TO ME SINCE I SERVE AT A VETERANS' FACILITY NOT A CONGREGATION. THANKS FOR ALL YOU DO! Ices in the last 3 years since I've been back in the district is the presenters. I have logical or theoretical presentations, but man, the past few have been archaic and anachronistic. When I was first in the district we had theological leaders from other church bodies make presentations that were very engaging, thought-provoking, and challenging. To simply get a sem prof really isn't going to significantly improve our theological acumen or adapt our ministries to an ever-changing culture. In my opinion our district and synod have become far too insular. I realize that I am surely an outlier to the current cadre of younger pastors so weigh my comments accordingly. Thanks for your service to the district.

I'm not a regular attendee at Conferences. I answered with what I'd consider the best if I were to attend.

I like the idea of meeting with South WI District. I said we would be glad to host but we really are too small unless we know it will be a small turnout.

A 2 day conference isn't really a conference, to leave behind the church for 24 hours is silly. Make them 3 days long. it's worth the time commitment for pastors.

The word that means "also or excessive" is spelled "too" not "to".

Including wives and families would be great, but I fully understand the challenges associated with planning for them and incorporating activities for them. Simple child care would probably be the easiest way of incorporating families with young children.

Congregations that normally have the space to host a fall conference are those with schools. Meeting space would be in the gymnasium, with table setup. Meeting in the sanctuary without tables is not an option. You need tables so that you can do work. I suppose an option would be to meet in the lunchroom, but that's not a worse idea (trust me, telling teachers to have kids eat in classroom is not good). Displacing students from their lunchroom, or from the gymnasium are not options we want to take as we'd like to stay in good relationship with teachers. Our spring conference at St Jakobi in Shawano went extremely well, but it is a smaller conference in the spring, therefore a doable option. Doing such a thing for the fall conference becomes much more problematic. Those who are making the suggestions, also don't listen when the logistic difficulties of doing such is explained to them. If somebody has an idea, and knows that it will work, put them on the conference committee, let them do the planning - put up, or shut up Yes, I am aware of logistical issues, and also about having to make everyone happy. I did it as chair for 5+ years in the New England District. an serving twice in the NWD.

Going to Marquette, MI, in the fall was always a good time. We should go back there.

Wouldn't mind joining the Southern WI District as long as it's not both Fall and Spring!

I would love to host a conference, but I feel Trinity Merrill would be too small.

Note: Desire to host and ability to host are two different things.

Regarding joint conference - sounds good in theory, but would require location in central Wis. Maybe a once every three year event?

While we have the space and the facilities it might be a bit of a challenge depending on dates because of local events and hotel availability. I would be happy to talk to someone about it. Also while I listed both, we might be better suited for Spring.

I think our congregation could hold a spring conference but not a fall one.

Our facilities are large but with heavy facility usage by our school it prohibits being a possible location for a pastors conference.

If a joint Conference is held with SWD, then it should rotate from our district to theirs each time.

Thanks for your leading! Our facilities would not allow us to be a host of a district conference, but we'd likely be willing to assist a Green Bay-area church that could host.

Use Camp Luther!