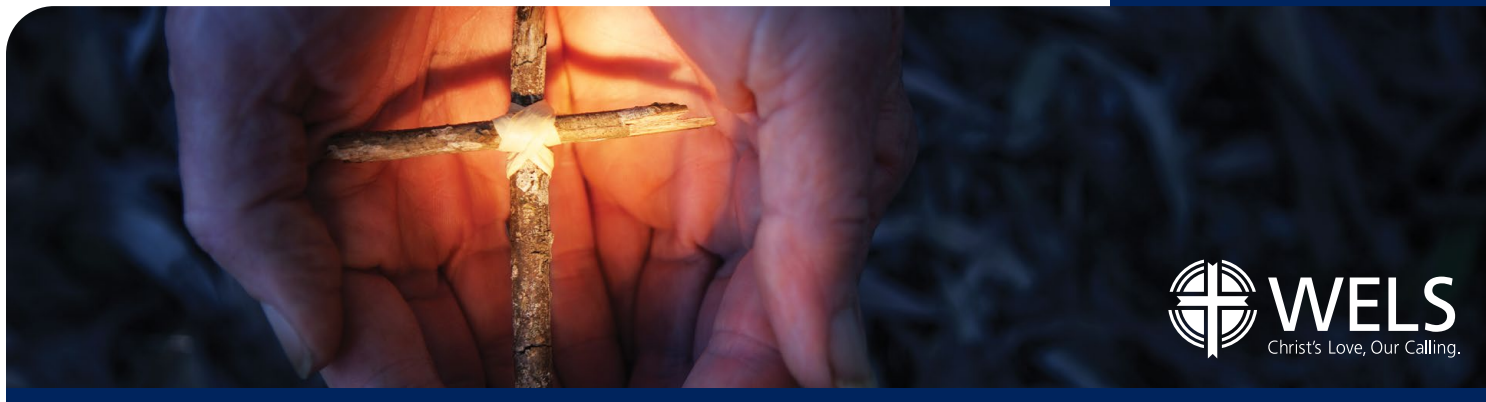


His Hands

Spring 2016



Health and Wellness Committee

Bridging generations with God's Word

Rev. Paul Lindloff serves as pastor at Emanuel First, Lansing, Mich.

We could not foresee what God would do when Jim Rohrback, administrator of Martin Luther Elder Care Ministries, contacted senior centers in the Lansing, Mich., area to inquire about having a WELS pastor conduct weekly worship. Our first service was held on July 6, 2015. From the beginning, five to eight residents (none of them WELS members) attended each Monday morning.

When the school year began, I started taking a couple of seventh and eighth grade students with me. The students would join me in singing, but they also interacted with the residents. They let their light shine, and God blessed the working of his Word. One student immediately formed a bond with several residents as she shared her challenges with juvenile diabetes and freely spoke of her life as a gift from God. At Christmas time, and again recently, I included several younger students from our Lutheran elementary school. The residents love hearing these little ones singing God's praises.



WELS Special Ministries

Look inside for these articles, addressing areas where Special Ministries seeks to help those who face barriers to regular worship.

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By January 2016 a second senior living center was prepared to host a worship service. At this facility eight to ten worshipers attended. Suddenly a total of 13 to 18 seniors were hearing God's Word each Monday. The Women's Missionary Society at our church made some prayer shawls for us, and we gave them to the activity directors for distribution. They asked for more! The children were seeing with their eyes and their hearts how God works through his almighty Word. Inspired and encouraged, their fears of speaking to strangers melted. Their trust in Christ was growing.

For the worship service, we use the confession and absolution from Service of the Word in *Christian Worship*, distributed to each participant. I encourage them to keep that sheet and use the printed Bible lessons and prayers. This has led to discussions about original sin and our need of forgiveness, new life, and salvation in Christ. This brief confessional worship effort keeps Christ at the center – something the seventh and eighth graders have keenly picked up on.

Every Christian congregation prioritizes time, effort, and money to meet the spiritual needs of its membership. Yet God often works in a way we never expected or in a non-conventional manner we had not considered. And sometimes the sermon is not preached by the pastor. In fact, some of the best sermons have no words. All of God's people love to serve a Savior who loved them first. All of God's people love to serve a Savior who loved them even when – especially when – they were unlovable.

The most frequently asked question by the activity directors is: Can you come for a Sunday morning service? Our congregation is blessed to livestream its worship. Typically, activity directors don't work Sunday morning. We're exploring the possibility of a few church members stopping at a senior living center to set up the livestream on their way to or from church. If it works, God be praised. If it doesn't, we'll try something else. It is important to have a plan that keeps us organized, enthusiastic, and focused. God's children believe their Father's promise that his Word will not return to him empty; it will accomplish what he desires and achieve the purpose for which he sent it (Isaiah 55:11).

Thank God for the blessing that each believer is, regardless of age, able to proclaim Christ! Pray with me that God use his all-powerful, all-sufficient Word to bridge generations for our good and his glory.

Thank God for the blessing that each believer is, regardless of age, able to proclaim Christ!.

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving (Colossians 3:23-24).



Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Ministry

Wanted: Spokespersons for IDDM

Mr. Thomas Heuer is chairman of the WELS Intellectual and Developmental Disability Committee.

Spokesperson: Someone chosen by a group to speak officially on behalf of that group.

Why is the Intellectual and Developmental Disability Ministry (IDDM) Committee looking for spokespersons? When a committee is charged with providing services to a community that cannot entirely manage their unique needs on their own, the tendency is to do things for that community. The IDDM committee believes it can be much more effective if it incorporates members of the target community – people with an intellectual or developmental disability. We believe the insight provided by these spokespersons will be invaluable as the committee follows its Mission Statement: "Striving to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with those who have special education needs or developmental disabilities and to provide a supportive Christian network for them."

Who are we looking for? The IDDM committee is looking for several individuals who are members of the intellectual or developmental disability community, are at least 18 years old, and have their guardian's permission, if needed. Each spokesperson should be an active member of a WELS or ELS congregation.

A position description has been developed, along with a form to nominate an individual. The position description lists several possible areas of ability and interest, among them assisting the committee to set and prioritize goals, and challenging the committee to think outside the box when it comes to inclusive ministry. Other potential areas of activity include:

- Identifying ways to increase the active participation of people with a disability within our congregations
- Speaking (in person, electronically, or in print) on behalf of the committee to promote active congregational participation
- Using various social media formats to advance our mission among congregations, schools, families, and interested persons

We would not expect any one spokesperson to be interested in or able to participate in all of the listed tasks. But several spokespersons, each with interest and ability in one or more of the areas listed, would certainly enhance the committee's work.

Our spokespersons would be members of the IDDM committee. Gathering for face-to-face meetings is not easy, with members scattered across several states, and can be even more difficult if a committee member has a disability that limits travel. But participation at meetings can be arranged via electronic means such as Skype or GoToMeeting. The inability to travel should not prevent anyone from seeking or being nominated for this position.

Interested? How do we connect? The position description and nomination form are available from the committee chairman, Thomas Heuer. E-mail tgheuer@outlook.com or IDDM@wels.net. You can call or text Thomas at 920-253-9530.

May the Lord bless our efforts to find spokespersons who can “speak up for those who can’t speak for themselves, for the rights of all who need an advocate” (Proverbs 31:8, CJB).

Slow, compassionate, and patient

Rev. Thomas Gumm is pastor at Grace, Seattle, Wash.

“Philosophies that are Practical” was the topic for the Asperger Atheistic Philosophy Discussion Group meeting at La Botana restaurant. I was invited by this group, which is a splinter group of the Asperger socialization group that has met twice per month at Grace Lutheran Church, Seattle, Wash., for the past four years. The Asperger group wanted to talk religion, but was uncomfortable speaking their minds at the church building. They felt it would be disrespectful, so they came up with this new group to meet off-site and talk religion. I was invited to give the Christian perspective. One of their first questions to me was, “Why are you NOT an atheist?”

It is so important to listen, show consideration and compassion without getting defensive. The people in this group are honestly seeking answers, truth, and understanding. During one discussion a teenaged young man asked me about forgiveness. “Are there people who are unforgiveable?” That question opened the door for some honest give and take. I asked him how he understood forgiveness. We talked about forgiving people who have abused,



bullied, and harmed people with autism. This allowed me to talk about a Christian’s view of forgiveness and peace.

Many in the group are struggling with atheism and some are seeking something better. Others are struggling with their perception of Christianity. They see a lot of legalism in Christians. I show God’s heart and God’s grace, working to change their perception piece by piece, but can do it only in little bites. I am fighting a mountain of false understanding. It took three years for my “Aspies” to express that they trust me and to realize that I care about each of them as a person. I had to overcome their fear that I was going to “shove religion on them.” These are my friends and I care deeply for them. They now see that and they care for me.

I wish I could report to you that I have Aspies in Bible Information Class, or that some have completed BIC, but that is not true. Instead I need to take things at their pace and answer questions when they are ready. I keep things slow and I am very patient. Compassion for people who have struggled so hard with life is so important. We need to remind ourselves that these beautiful souls are eternal. Life has battered them so. They need the loving friendship of caring people to heal these wounds. When I look at my own life, the Lord has been patient with me and has walked with me as I struggled.

Show love to the special needs people that are in your own life. Walk with them at their pace. Don’t look for “success” as the world defines it, but look at the whole person. Enjoy them as a person. Help them to blossom with your friendship, your love, and the blessed peace found in our Savior, Jesus Christ.



Prison Ministry

WELS schools share Jesus with the incarcerated

Mr. Brad Price is administrator for WELS Prison Ministry.

Several years ago my three-year-old son made the trip to Arizona from Texas with me for my grandpa’s funeral. Along the way he said to me, “You’ll see your grandpa again, Daddy.” Not sure what exactly he was thinking, I asked him “when?” Then my son shared with me, “You’ll get to see him again in heaven.”

What an awesome experience it is to see the Holy Spirit work in people at such a young age, impacting the lives of those many years older than they are. Our Lutheran schools at every level are involving students in witnessing to a particular group of adults – prisoners.

Many of our grade schools from Minnesota, Wisconsin, and other states support WELS Prison Ministry with homemade cards and bookmarks to send to those incarcerated in our country. Some



teachers get creative. Mr. Kevin Bode, a fifth grade teacher at Emmanuel Lutheran School in Tempe, Ariz., had his students share the gospel with inmates using the hymn "Jesus Sinners Does Receive." The students used the words of the hymn as a basis to share the love of Jesus with prisoners. One inmate who received a card from Mr. Bode's class wrote, "The cards the children draw and send are a blessing. They truly warm me to the core."

Mrs. Vicki Faust's AP English and Composition class at California Lutheran High School in Wildomar seized a unique opportunity to share Jesus with juvenile offenders in Southern California. The class read an article that a juvenile hall near them lacked adequate books in their library. Mrs. Faust's class collected nearly 800 books, including Bibles, to donate to the juvenile hall. CLHS students Sara Moore and Max Wang commented, "We hoped that these teens would love the books and have more than enough to read. Also that the Bibles would bring them comfort and happiness, knowing that they have a loving Father who sent his Son to save them from their sins."

A Thank You

Johnny, a student of WELS Prison Ministry's Bible correspondence courses wrote, "Thank you so much for the beautiful bookmark you sent! It is lovely and I use it all the time. I'll probably wear it out quickly. Also thanks for your words of support and the little cards and notes from the volunteers. You are truly doing the Lord's work and may he bless your ministry abundantly."

Students from Martin Luther College support WELS Prison Ministry with their wallets and time. Recently, MLC's service group, Anchor, donated over \$1,000 to WELS Prison Ministry from a benefit event they hosted. Individual students have volunteered for years by answering questions inmates submit, correcting English and Spanish tests, and writing to pen pals.

WELS Prison Ministry is very blessed to have so many young Christians willingly sharing their faith with a group of people often forgotten and neglected. Thank you to all our young volunteers!

For more information or to support WELS Prison Ministry, visit www.wels.net/prison-ministry, e-mail prisonministry@wels.net, or call 507-354-3130.



Chaplain Certification Program

Chaplain Certification online courses — Fall 2016

Martin Luther College will offer two courses this fall as part of the WELS Chaplain Certification program. These courses are not just for those who are preparing to be chaplains, but also offer useful skills and knowledge for called workers and church members to serve in specialized opportunities for ministry.

Scriptural Approach to Addiction Counseling (THE9521) –

This three-credit course examines addictions from a scriptural perspective, concentrating on their prevention and treatment. All common addictions will be studied, with emphasis given to those involving alcohol, drugs, and the Internet. The course teaches ways Christians can help the addicted through Law/Gospel counseling and referral.

Geriatric and Care Facility Ministry (THE9525) – As a growing proportion of Americans become elderly, there is an increased need to serve the aging and residents of care facilities. This course trains both lay and called workers to carry out this ministry of compassion and outreach as individuals or as a team. The three-credit course provides the knowledge and skills for congregation members to provide spiritual care for the homebound and institutionalized. The only prerequisite is the desire to learn more about this growing need and its outreach potential.

For information on the certification program or any of these online courses, go to mlc-wels.edu and search for "Chaplain Certification."

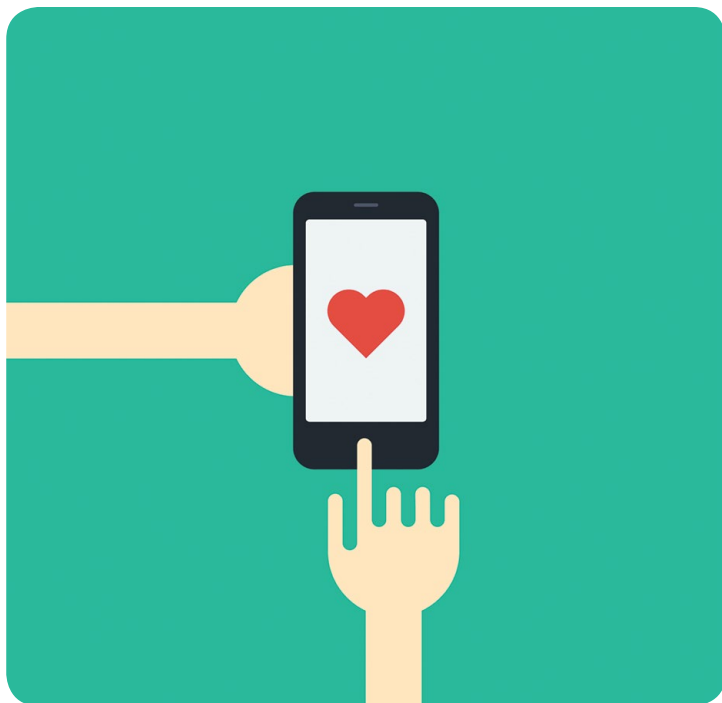


Get SPECIAL ministry for someone you care about

Rev. Jim Behringer is director of the WELS Commission on Special Ministries.

Our synod's website, wels.net, has simplified a useful tool for referring people for special ministries. Whether it is military personnel, prisoners, people with intellectual or developmental disabilities, or WELS members living in Europe, the simple new referral form assists Special Ministries in providing spiritual resources. In addition, the referral form can facilitate global cross-cultural ministry by WELS Missions. The easy-to-remember link for all referrals is wels.net/refer.

- **WELS Military Services** needs referrals to maintain contact and offer spiritual resources to the men and women who are serving our country. We estimate that over 1,500 WELS and ELS members are in the U.S. military, at U.S. installations or overseas. However, only about 20 percent of them are referred for ministry at this crucial time in life. Part of the plan to reach all WELS and ELS military personnel is making the referral form easier to find. Submit the names of your members in uniform today at wels.net/refer.
- **WELS Prison Ministry** serves 1,500 correctional institutions across our country, primarily via a popular Bible study program, but also by connecting inmates with local WELS ministry where possible. Prison Ministry referral is one way that WELS and ELS members can ensure that family or friends who are incarcerated receive Christ-centered Lutheran ministry. Do you know men or women who are serving time? Connect them to Christ at wels.net/refer.



- **WELS Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Ministry** has a program called "He Cares – We Care," which sends seasonal cards, letters, and Christian items to people who are developmentally disabled. Like the rest of us, they appreciate receiving personal mail. The referral form allows WELS and ELS members to enroll loved ones in this ministry-by-mail that provides Christ-centered, simplified messages. Get started by signing up at wels.net/refer.

The revised form also features two new categories: **Civilians Abroad** and **USA Church Locator Referral**.

- **Civilians Abroad** serves two groups: 1) English-speaking WELS members and others in Europe who are of our fellowship should use the Civilians Abroad referral form. The civilian chaplain who serves military troops in Europe also serves these civilians. 2) The Global Ministry Committee also uses the Civilians Abroad referral form to connect with foreign-born WELS members who might be willing to use their language skills or relationships to help us reach out to others of the same language or culture.
- **USA Church Locator Referral** is a handy way for WELS and ELS pastors or members to provide information so that the referred person can be contacted by a nearby church or school. For example, when a member of my church moves to Denver, I might use this tool to let a pastor in the area know about the new WELS or ELS member in the neighborhood.

WELS referral processes were around before there was an Internet. We hope that this new, easier way to connect people with ministry will help many more find the special ministry that meets their spiritual needs.

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Looking for a mission offering idea?

Rev. Jim Behringer is director of the WELS Commission on Special Ministries

"This year's mission offerings go to... Uhhh, does anyone have a suggestion?"

Your group wants to: a) support the spread of the gospel and b) choose something different from last year. Have you considered

Special Ministries? Your offerings can: a) support the spread of the gospel and b) do something different from last year while also c) helping you learn about the challenges to participation in worship that many people face.

For an overview, go to wels.net/special-ministries. The following Special Ministries can also supply resources to help your group promote a mission project:

- **Mission for the Visually Impaired** provides spiritual aids for people who are blind or need large print.
- **Mission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing** helps congregations serve people who are deaf or have a moderate to profound hearing loss.
- **Prison Ministry Committee** provides faith-building materials and Christian encouragement to prisoners. Tens of thousands of inmates have used our correspondence Bible study courses.
- **Military Services Committee** provides face-to-face ministry to WELS military personnel stationed in the U.S. or Europe and support for those aboard ship or deployed elsewhere.
- **Conquerors through Christ** is reaching high schools and colleges with tools to resist the dangers of Internet pornography. CTC is developing sexual purity materials for parents and for those who struggle with this temptation.
- **Freedom for the Captives** brings comfort and hope to survivors of abuse and guides churches in forming abuse prevention policies.

Other Special Ministries that appreciate offerings include:

- **Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Ministry** helps families and churches serve people with special needs. IDDM offers resources on autism and the Special Needs Family Network.
- **Health and Wellness Committee** oversees the development of training for specialized ministry, such as parish nurses, chaplains, or support groups.
- **Mental Health Needs** deals with areas typically addressed by counselors. They help people understand the different kinds of counseling. This committee developed Conquerors through Christ and Freedom for the Captives.
- **Care Committee for Called Workers** helps churches attend to the practical needs of their pastors and teachers.

To connect with any of these ministries and receive help for your mission projects:

- wels.net/special-ministries
- specialministries@wels.net
- 414-256-3241



Committee on Mental Health Needs

When children are present: Implementing church child protection policies

Mr. Victor I. Vieth is a former child abuse prosecutor who went on to direct the National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse. He is the founder and senior director of the National Child Protection Training Center, a program of Gundersen Health System. He is a member of St. John, Lewiston, Minn.

Can you guess a favorite destination of those who sexually abuse children? They love to go to church! According to a study by *Christianity Today*, 20 percent of all congregations include at least one convicted sex offender. Since most sex offenders are never caught, the actual numbers are likely higher. One study found that 93 percent of sex offenders described themselves as "religious" or "very religious." A 2006 study on child molesters found that those active in church accumulated more victims and younger victims and got away with their crimes for longer periods than did those who violated children in other settings.



Why church? Sex offenders tell researchers that churches have the weakest child protection policies, very rarely provide any training on child protection, and are extremely easy to fool. As a result, sex offenders often stay active in church even as many victims of abuse flee.

I have spoken with hundreds of Christians who were sexually abused as children and who have left our churches. Almost always, the victims say they can't come to church because it is simply not a safe place. "I was sexually abused because my church didn't care enough to have policies to protect me," one survivor told me, "and there is no way I will put my children back into such an environment."

It doesn't have to be this way. WELS has developed a program on child abuse that includes a wealth of resources to assist our churches in crafting protection policies. Visit the Freedom for the Captives website at freedomforcaptives.com and click on the "Resources" tab.

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As a general rule, church policies are a matter of common sense. Sex offenders crave opportunities to be alone with a child, so policies that seek to limit these opportunities commonly include:

- **Two-deep leadership.** On school or church outings, there should always be two adults present. If a child has to be removed from a group setting, the child and adult should remain within eyesight of another adult.
- **Respect for the child's privacy.** Since sex offenders like to see children undressing in the hope of initiating conversations about sexual topics, limit the ability of workers or volunteers to watch children undress in locker rooms, showers, or bathrooms.
- **Separate sleeping accommodations.** Since many children have been sexually abused on camping or athletic trips, require adults to have separate sleeping accommodations from children. If there is a need to enter a child's sleeping quarters (e.g., a child becomes ill), the incident should be well-documented and, if possible, two adults should enter the sleeping area.
- **Limit, if not prohibit, events at workers' homes.** Seeking access to children, sex offenders find it advantageous to get children into their homes. For this reason, child protection



professionals encourage events in public settings. If a coach wants to have a team celebration, there is no need to have it at the coach's home; a pizza parlor or other establishment would work just fine.

- **Strictly prohibit sexual jokes or comments.** Adult sex offenders often make sexual jokes or comments in the vicinity of children as a prelude to abusing them. Although Christian schools can appropriately discuss sexual topics in a developmentally appropriate, God-pleasing manner, any form of crassness should be immediately reined in.
- **Windows and open doors.** Although there are times when an adult may have to be alone with a child, such as giving a music lesson, the instruction should be provided in a room with a window so that anyone walking by can see what is going on. Schools should also have an "open door" policy in which a principal or other appropriate party periodically checks on classrooms or other school activities. Since sex offenders crave privacy and predictability, policies of this kind serve as a deterrent.

A woman sexually abused in a Christian school left the church for decades until, one day, the Holy Spirit led her to return. She visited more than 20 churches before she could find a congregation with a child protection policy. This was the church she decided to join – the only one that witnessed its faith by protecting its children. "If you can't see Jesus among the children," she told me, "you can't see him at all."



Health and Wellness Committee

Samaritan Partners: Caring for caregivers

Mrs. Carol Wiedenhoft is a caregiver and a member at St. John, Wauwatosa, Wis.

Rosalynn Carter, former First Lady, once said that you either are, were, or will be a caregiver, or you will need one yourself. Are you a caregiver? Do you make a daily call to check that someone is OK? Do you transport someone to get groceries, prescriptions, or to appointments? Does your "vacation" consist of returning home to help loved ones? Are you the contact person for that dreaded call? Are you the manager for someone living in a facility? Are you caring for your spouse 24/7? Are you a grandparent caring for your grandchildren? If any of these or similar circumstances apply, then you are a caregiver.

Samaritan Partners is a support group for caregivers. We began meeting in June 2011. Our purpose is to encourage, listen, share our experiences, and increase our knowledge. Listening to what others have tried helps us develop new strategies. We respect everyone's privacy while celebrating our common bond – faith in Jesus, our Savior.

Each 90-minute gathering begins at 6:30 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of the month. After an opening devotion, the group proceeds to a topic, or we just talk. We spent the first six months tackling a curriculum, "Powerful Tools for Caregivers." A variety of speakers have addressed us: a lawyer who specializes in legal issues that affect seniors; Timeslips (a way of communicating with people affected by dementia); a pastor teaching us about anger and forgiveness; a psychologist/deaconess team who discussed our emotions. Wisconsin Lutheran Child & Family Services has also provided in-home care information.

A recent, well-received presentation was "Lemons to Lemonade." A woman from the Alzheimer's Institute explained how our difficult days can seem as sour as lemons. But adding water and sugar to lemon juice makes a sweet, satisfying drink. Similarly, adding self-care to sour situations can turn "lemons to lemonade."

If you live in or near Wauwatosa, Wis., we invite you to join us at St. John Lutheran Church, 7809 Harwood Avenue, every fourth Tuesday (safe driving weather permitting). Kindly RSVP so we have sufficient seating and handouts. If you cannot attend in person, teleconference is an option. Let us know if you desire this so that we can reserve time for a conference call. We may be able to use Skype in the future.

Caregivers, we cannot do it alone. We need to care for ourselves so we can continue to care for our receiver. We have room for you, and it will help you enormously to know that you are not alone. More than one attendee has told me, "Carol, don't give up. We need you." The truth is, we need each other, and we need Jesus.

Contact WELS Special Ministries for more information about Samaritan Partners or how to start a group of your own. Call 414-256-3241 or e-mail specialministries@wels.net.



Seniors to meet in Omaha

The Organization of WELS Seniors (OWLS) invites all seniors in our WELS and ELS churches (retirees and / or over 50) to the October 11-13, 2016 convention at the Ramada Plaza Hotel and Convention Center in Omaha, Nebraska. The keynote speakers will share inspiring messages about how the harvest is being enlarged through Home Missions (Pastor Keith Free, WELS Missions), through missions in Russia and eastern Europe (Pastor Michael Ewart, former missionary), and through WELS Military Services (Pastor Paul Ziemer, WELS National Civilian Chaplain). Registration information can be found at wels.net/owls.

Nurses to meet in Fond du Lac

WELS Nurses will meet at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Fond du Lac, Wis., on Saturday, October 22, 2016.

- Dr. Jennifer Londgren of Wisconsin Lutheran Child & Family Service will speak on "Caregiving: Struggles and Strategies for Coping."
- Debbie Dietrich of The Lutheran Home will address how parish nurses can function as volunteer coordinators for nurses serving in retirement.

Register after September 1 at welsnurses.net.