



Mental Health

Preventing child abuse in church

Churches should be the safest, most loving places on earth. Church leaders should be on the frontlines of protecting children. So why is child abuse so prevalent in churches? I believe there are two reasons:

Satan targets churches. The ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences) Study found that 21 percent of the population are victims of childhood sexual abuse. That's one out of five people in your pews! The study also found that victims are much more likely to participate in behaviors like sexual promiscuity or drug or alcohol abuse. (Learn more at cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy.)

The shame and sadness lead victims to look for ways to cope. They are plagued with spiritual questions: "Was the abuse my

fault? Why didn't God come to my aid? What do I do with all my shame and anger?"

Satan knows if he can hurt a child, he might just have them for life.

Perpetrators target churches. Where would perpetrators find easy access to lots of children? In church, where there are often



WELS Special Ministries

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

Mental Health

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fewer policies and restrictions than other places. Churches are also happy to see volunteers, accepting almost anyone eager to participate in ministry.

Consider how one sex offender described his mindset:

I consider church people easy to fool...they have a trust that comes from being Christians...They tend to be better folks all around. And they seem to want to believe in the good that exists in all people...I think they want to believe in people. And because of that, you can easily convince, with or without convincing words. (Quoted in "Ministering to Adult Sex Offenders" by Victor I. Vieth, *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. 112, No. 3, p. 214)

Four steps to prevent child abuse in your church

Jesus has called us to be "wise as serpents and innocent as doves" (Matthew 10:16). We don't need to be paranoid about everyone who works with children. But we will be wise, always keeping in mind the health and safety of children. So how do we prevent child abuse in our churches?

Enforce an up-to-date child protection policy. When I arrived at my church, we didn't have such a policy. And I didn't know where to start. So I borrowed one from another WELS church. Then our Children and Youth Committee adapted it to fit our church and ministry. Having a professional social worker on that committee added great insight.

If possible, every church should have a committee to update and enforce its child protection policy. Make use of social services professionals. Make sure your leadership, e.g. church council and elders, are familiar with the policy so that they know how to respond to a child abuse claim.

Require volunteers to read and sign the child protection policy. Having everyone aware and on-board will create a unified culture that desires to protect children and serves as a deterrent for perpetrators.

Require background checks of volunteers. There are different ways to do this. Check with your church insurance provider for options. Background checks will flag prior offenders and deter future offenders, letting them know that you take this seriously.

Require child abuse prevention training. Freedom for the Captives (freedomforcaptives.com), a WELS ministry for survivors of abuse, has released "Standing Up for Children," a free online video training course for churches and schools. (See the following article for details.) This training, or something similar, should be required of every volunteer who works with children.

Child abuse is a difficult topic to acknowledge, especially in church. But Satan is using this sin to harm the people whom Jesus loves. We must be wise in how we minister to children. We must find ways to encourage the many survivors who are suffering in silence in our pews. We must follow the example of the Good Shepherd in protecting his sheep. His precious lambs are worth the effort.

Ben Sadler is passionate about protecting all of Jesus' sheep. He shepherds the flock at Goodview Trinity Lutheran Church, Goodview, Minn.

"Standing Up for Children" – Online child abuse prevention training

Freedom for the Captives, a WELS ministry, announces the release of "Standing Up for Children: A Christian Response to Child Abuse and Neglect."

The online video course is taught by Mr. Victor Vieth, national director emeritus of the National Child Protection Training Center (gundersenhealth.org/ncptc), and Dr. John Schuetze, professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and counselor with Christian Family Solutions (christianfamilysolutions.org).

Participants who watch all four videos and pass quizzes on the content will receive a certificate of completion. Veterans of similar training have called this course "excellent."

For a conference, faculty in-service, or other group, the videos can be shown to everyone at once, then each attendee would receive the "key" to take the online quizzes.

The training is available at WELS.net University (wnu.wels.net) but must be accessed with an enrollment key. To request the enrollment key and instructions to take the course, e-mail freedom@wels.net. You must include the following information:

- Your name and phone number
- Name of church where you are a member
- Whether you are a pastor, teacher, staff minister, or church member
- Whether the training is for personal or group use (indicate which group)

Thanks to a grant from the Antioch Foundation, Mr. Vieth is available to appear in person to conduct training at select larger conferences. To request him, e-mail freedom@wels.net.



When churches and schools start conversations about abuse, it is not uncommon for Christians who have suffered abuse to seek help. Our website, freedomforcaptives.com, offers survivors a rich supply of spiritual resources and other useful information. Congregations and schools will find guidance on abuse prevention policies and other important topics.

The mission of Freedom for the Captives is "Equipping the Body of Christ to protect children and empower abuse survivors." We hope you'll find our resources helpful and healing.

Doesn't God want what's best for me?

About a year ago my strength left me. I could no longer exercise. At times I could barely walk. I thought I was dying. There were days when the best I could do was lie in bed. I couldn't concentrate well enough to do my college classes. I couldn't even read fiction. Once a student who could take four classes and be on the dean's list, I had to drop the one class I was taking. Recently, because of extreme fatigue and compromised memory, I had to quit a job I really enjoyed as a bank teller. My brain fog was too much and no one could figure out how to control it.

Living with a chronic, invisible illness is very difficult. People can't see how you are feeling. Some say, "It's all in your head." Others say, "You look fine." They don't understand. How could they, when they have never endured something like this?

Struggling with even the smallest tasks of life has left me very discouraged. Some days it feels as though my body is giving up on me. Leaving my job left me feeling like a failure. I am not strong or successful, and fear I never will be where I want to be in life.

But I have to remember: God knows what is best and has promised to work everything out for my good (Romans 8:28). It is not easy to see what could be good about being so sick I can't work a regular job. Even doing laundry or walking up stairs involves pain. Wouldn't God, if he wants what is best for me, make me well so I can be successful and make a lot of money?

That's how it seems to me, but God knows better, and my eternal welfare is his top priority. If struggling with my health is what keeps me close to him, then I can view that as a blessing.

God allowed St. Paul to suffer with a "thorn in the flesh." He asked God three times to take it away, yet God answered, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9). It may not feel that way, but I am strong through Christ who lived, died, and rose again so I can spend eternity in heaven.

My worth doesn't come from being successful in the world's eyes. My worth is not in what I do, but in what God did for me. Jesus considered me worth dying for, and that makes me valuable to God as his precious, forgiven child for eternity.

No matter what happens to my health in this life, I still have Jesus and an eternity of perfect health ahead. Even if I never make a

lot of money because of my struggles, I am rich through faith in Christ. "Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)

Sarah Allarding is a WELS certified chaplain. She is one of Jesus' jewels at Crown of Life, Warren, Mich.

Support groups can be a wonderful blessing for people who feel they are alone in their struggle. Contact Special Ministries at specialministries@wels.net or 414-256-3241 for guidelines on beginning a support group at your church.



Health and Wellness

Lutheran "leftovers"

It was a proud tradition in our house, and Mom was good at it. She could take a little of this leftover, a bit of that one, and just a smidgen of the one near the back of the refrigerator (the one alongside the sauerkraut)...mix it all together...call it a casserole... and feed her family another nourishing meal.

Many a Lutheran has been raised on leftovers. Some Lutherans may even think of *themselves* as leftovers. They're retired or soon will be. They've always been active at church, and their church has been richly blessed because of them. But now they count themselves among the "saintly seniors." They move a bit more slowly, with a little less energy, and plan a lot more carefully. Some even seem to think their useful, productive years have passed them by.

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Which are you—the smidgen of leftover "flour" or one of the last "drops of oil"? You know where this is going, don't you—to that Old Testament, famine-afflicted village of Zarephath...to that widow and her son...to their last supper...to that outrageous "Feed me first!" demand by God's prophet. And of course you also remember what our amazing God did with those leftovers. (If not, read 1 Kings 17.)

So what might our amazing God want to do with—and for—"leftovers" like us?

Before you even try to guess, know that there is a nationwide organization designed for and entirely made up of "Lutheran leftovers." It's called OWLS. For more than 30 years, it has been

encouraging “leftover” Lutherans to share generous chunks of their less-cluttered time and their collective talent with their churches.

The goal of OWLS is “to give older WELS and ELS Lutherans a continuing sense of purpose and involvement in church-centered work during their maturing years and to provide for their growth, development, service, and happiness in a God-pleasing manner.”

For example, wouldn’t your congregation love to have your help with the children of its Sunday school, vacation Bible school, or Lutheran elementary school? Or maybe you’d prefer helping in the office, or with maintenance, or with visiting shut-ins and nursing homes. Look around your church and you’ll find satisfying service opportunities that can be matched to the preferences and abilities of anyone who may feel like a “left-out leftover.”

Do you still manage to be “up and around” but can no longer be “out and about”? Others face the same predicament. But OWLS wants you to know that you still have options—opportunities to serve—right from your kitchen table. With your prayers and offerings you can support the European Civilian Chaplaincy, which OWLS helps to underwrite, or WELS Prison Ministry, which can always use pen pals and test correctors.

Ask if your church has an OWLS chapter. They typically gather for fellowship, service projects, guest speakers, and fun. If there is no local chapter to answer your questions, you can ask for more information at:

Online: csm.welsrc.net/owls
E-mail: OWLS@newulmtel.net
Mail: P.O. Box 84, New Ulm, MN 56073
Phone: 507-354-4403

Finally, only the Lord knows what he’s going to make out of Lutheran “leftovers.” But knowing our Lord, it’s bound to leave a sweet and satisfying taste in the mouths of the “leftovers” who let him use them!

Race to our Convention for Lutheran Seniors!

Elkhart Lake, Wis., is famous as the site of Road America, a four-mile, 14-turn race track that has hosted the “fastest racers in the world” for over 60 years.

From October 10 to 12, 2018, the town’s fame will grow when the “fastest retirees in the WELS and ELS” gather at the Convention for Lutheran Seniors in the glorious Osthoff Resort, a four-star hotel overlooking Elkhart Lake. The village is west of Sheboygan, midway between Milwaukee and Green Bay.

The convention brings together “senior saints” who are one in faith and fellowship to be spiritually enriched, have fun, meet new friends, and renew old acquaintances. Offerings support the European Civilian Chaplaincy and provide scholarships for Martin Luther College students preparing for the teaching or preaching ministry.

The convention is being hosted by OWLS (Organization of WELS Lutheran Seniors) but...*you don’t need to be an OWLS member to attend.* Come and see for yourself the blessings the group offers to any WELS or ELS member who is 55 or over, retired or not.

We have arranged for a tour of the race track (at safe senior speeds). Other possible excursions include the Kohler Design Center in Kohler and the Wade House Historic Site in Greenbush. Back at the hotel, there will be engaging speakers, worship, fellowship, and plenty of good food.

“Finish Your Race” is the theme of this year’s convention, but “Start Your Race” at these websites:

Registration form: csm.welsrc.net/owls
Osthoff Resort: osthoff.com (to see the hotel but not to register for a room)
Elkhart Lake: elkhartlake.com (plenty to do in a town of 967)
Road America: roadamerica.com (learn why it’s a legend)

So “start your engines,” do your planning, and talk to others about coming along for the ride. See you in Elkhart Lake. It’ll be a hoot!

Chaplain Certification online courses – Fall 2018

Martin Luther College offers three 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.

A Scriptural Approach to Addiction Counseling (THE9521) – This core course offers a study of addictions, especially substance abuse and pornography, and the ways Christians try to help through Law/Gospel counseling and referral. (3 credits)

Frontline Chaplaincy (THE9524) – This elective is specially designed for those who would serve as chaplains to people on the frontline of the defense of our society, namely the military, police, firefighters, and their families. (3 credits)

Geriatric and Care Facility Ministry (THE9525) – A team-oriented approach to ministry for people who are aging or residents in care facilities. This elective provides both knowledge and skills for congregation members to provide spiritual care for the homebound and the institutionalized. (3 credits)

The Chaplain Certification Committee has scholarships available for those who are accepted into the program and successfully complete courses. Contact Chairman Robert Dick at chaplainercert@wels.net.

For information on the certification program or any of these online courses, go to mlc-wels.edu and search for “Chaplain Certification.” Fall classes begin August 20.



Military Services

Worshiping in a secular military

“Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God” (Psalm 20:7).

My understanding of Psalm 20:7 has changed since Missionary Howard Mohlke chose it to be my confirmation passage. I see that passage differently after six years of active duty as a United States Marine. King David was talking about two of the most effective and powerful weapons of his time. Today’s “chariots and horses” take the form of advanced jets and accurate weapons, but the temptation that Psalm 20 alludes to has not diminished.

The armies of Old Testament Israel had the advantage of having God as the head of their military organization. Our service members don’t have that advantage in a nation which separates church and state. Our nation values the qualities that our Christian men and women bring to the Armed Forces, but it will remain a secular organization.

The military provides for the religious needs of its service members through military chaplains from major religious denominations. This does not meet the needs of WELS service members who can only practice their faith fully through clergy of their own fellowship, particularly the reception of Holy Communion. The Department of Defense accounts for this situation through the regulation DoDI 1300.17: Accommodation of Religious Practices Within the Military Services. This regulation directs the services to approve requests for religious accommodation “when accommodation would not adversely affect mission accomplishment, including military

readiness, unit cohesion, good order, discipline, health, and safety, or any other military requirement.” In most circumstances WELS members can request religious services and the military will have to approve the request or be in violation of the law.

A request for religious services during basic training is an example of a good situation to use this right. The WELS National Civilian Chaplain to the military can help to prepare the religious accommodation request in advance and will connect the service member with a WELS pastor in the area who can serve them. In basic training this request will go to the drill sergeant/drill instructor. If the military member is already at their permanent duty station the request will go to their unit chaplain. In both cases, a military chaplain will be responsible for helping enable the request because, in addition to their religious duties, chaplains are responsible for ensuring that military members can worship according to their religion. When making the request, the military member will have to explain that the WELS is an Armed Forces-recognized “distinctive religious group” and it is not appropriate for them to receive services from Lutheran ministers who are not WELS.

The military can deny a request due to military necessity, such as the impracticality of bringing a WELS pastor onto an active battlefield or to a secret base. They will, however, work through the unit chaplain to provide access to appropriate religious materials or an opportunity to call or Skype a WELS minister.

Today’s “chariots and horses” are powerful, and our military is perhaps the strongest earthly army ever to exist, but I rejoice daily that our nation protects my right to take King David’s advice and trust in the name of the Lord my God instead.

For more information on how to request religious services while in uniform, contact Pastor Paul Ziemer, the WELS National Civilian Chaplain, at military@wels.net.

Adam Lawrenz is a member of the Military Services Committee and serves in uniform in the United States Marine Corps Reserve.



Military Contact Pastors meet in Tampa

Want to get Military Contact Pastors (MCP’s) to attend a conference on ministering to our members in the Armed Forces? Schedule it in Florida in January!

The Military Services Committee held the annual conference for some 30 MCP’s at Northdale Lutheran Church in Tampa from January 30 to February 1, 2018.

The pastors, who all serve near military bases, heard presentations by an exercise instructor who works with wounded veterans, a former Navy SEAL who lives with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a Marine veteran explaining the military mindset and procedures, another former Marine who uses jiu-jitsu as therapy with PTSD victims, and an active duty Army sergeant assigned to the National Guard chaplains’ office.

The conference was highlighted by a trip to MacDill Air Force Base, home of the military's Central Command and Special Operations Command, where the base chaplain fielded questions about religious accommodation for distinctive religious groups (like WELS) and how pastors can gain access to service members who request WELS or ELS pastoral care.

The next MCP Conference is planned for early 2019 in the western United States. For more information, contact Pastor Paul Horn, chairman of the Military Services Committee, at revhorn2004@gmail.com or 770-943-0330.

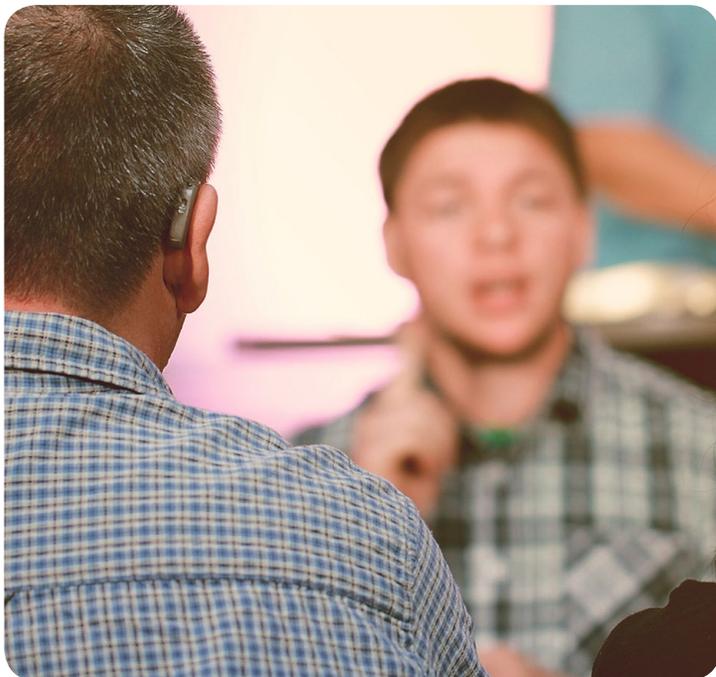


Deaf & Hard of Hearing

Can you hear us? We're part of the body too!

Imagine walking into church and not wanting to talk to anyone. No, you're not mad at another member or the pastor. You're embarrassed. It has become increasingly difficult to hold a conversation. You try to smile and nod, but it's at the inappropriate time. Frustrated, you wonder: "Why do I keep coming? I can't even hear the Word!" Unfortunately, there are people who walk into our churches and feel just that way.

Whether it is the construction worker who has lost his hearing over years of running heavy equipment, or the young girl who had spinal meningitis when she was one year old and lost 90% of her hearing, hearing loss affects people of all ages. Hearing loss does not discriminate, and it often carries a stigma.



People often link hearing aids and hearing loss with "old people." My father had this problem. He lost 70% of his hearing in one ear due to a childhood illness. As an adult he finally sought help. After he was fitted with his new hearing aid the audiologist told him, "This is the same model President Reagan wears." To a man in his twenties this was not a compliment! It wasn't until his late fifties that he finally wore one.

Whether it is because of embarrassment like my father, or the severity of the hearing loss, many of our members are not able to hear the Word on Sunday morning. They avoid Bible study because they can't hear what everyone says. They duck out on fellowship because there isn't much point when you can't communicate. Yet the Word is of chief importance. The apostle Paul wrote, "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ" (Romans 10:17).

Every member—whether deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or those with special needs—is a part of the body. "Now the body is not made up of one part but of many... But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." (1 Corinthians 12:14a, 26, 27)

Every member—whether deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or those with special needs—is a part of the body.

As members of the body of Christ, we should not be satisfied with sitting in a room with each other for one hour a week, then going our separate ways. As the body, we build each other up with the Word of God, share in each other's struggles, and rejoice in each other's successes. The body is not satisfied that those with hearing loss can merely read a printed sermon and the hymns, but strives to aid those members of the body by utilizing interpreters, assisted listening devices, looping, and proper lighting and visibility for lip reading.

Your congregation is not alone in these efforts. The Ministry for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MDHH) is here to help. MDHH offers a wealth of information to help break down barriers and stigmas regarding hearing loss, to clearly proclaim the Word of God, and to bring the body of Christ closer together.

Aaron Duve is a member of the MDHH Committee and serves the body of Christ as pastor at Holy Redeemer, Port Huron, Mich.

Learn more about how MDHH can help you or your congregation at wels.net/mdhh and at csm.welsrc.net/mdhh.



Visually Impaired

Seeing life through the eyes of the blind

My name is Rebecca, but many people call me Bekki. I am an extremely happy, outgoing 44-year-old who just happens to have vision loss.

I am new to your congregation and excited to get to know you. However, before we get too deep into conversation, I need to share some important things with you.

I am visually impaired, or as some prefer to say, legally blind. I have many friends who have “low vision.” That is also a form of blindness, but low vision includes some usable vision.

I walk with a white cane. Many of my friends prefer to use a guide dog. Both serve the same purposes: to help us scan ahead for obstacles, assist us in navigating, and identify ourselves as someone with a visual impairment.

What kind of obstacles, you ask? Holes in the sidewalk, chairs that are not pushed in, bags and purses lying on the floor, etc. As someone who has walked into many a half-closed door, I can tell you that these and many other things are a huge deal for my friends and me.

Here are some “do’s and don’ts” when approaching someone with a guide dog. These rules are for the safety of the owners and their beautiful animals.

- If you see a dog in harness, please DO NOT attempt to pet, touch, feed, or do anything else that may distract the dog while it is “working.”
- Talk to the owner, not the dog. This will distract the dog. Many owners want you to meet their furry friend and even pet them, but let the owner introduce you, then follow their instructions.
- The guide dog is that person’s eyes and their guide. Do not try to take over for the dog. Never take the owner’s arm to guide them, and never grab the dog’s harness.
- Always walk on the person’s right side. The dog is trained to be at their owner’s left. You could distract the dog and get them off course.

In time, I will come to know your voice, but I cannot always recognize a voice if there is a lot of noise around us. So please say your name each time you approach me. This saves the embarrassment of hearing me ask you every time, “I’m sorry, what is your name?”

Everyone likes to be heard in a group conversation, and it is no different for someone with vision loss. You will find that I am a very interesting woman. Even though I am not able to read non-verbal signs between people, I still have something to share. So please include me in your conversations. Do not talk over me as if I do not exist. I am an independent adult woman who has a voice of her own. I will give you respect; I only ask for that same respect in return.



If you find me sitting by myself in a pew or at a table after the service, do not assume that I am choosing to be alone. Come up to me, introduce yourself, and let me tell you if I would like some company or not. Nine times out of ten, I would love some!

If you need to leave, please announce that you are doing so. This way I am aware that you are no longer there. It will save me the embarrassment of having another conversation with only myself.

One final thing that I really want you to remember: Please do not avoid me as if I have a disease that you can catch. Blindness, as scary as it can seem, is not something that I can give you. Many of my friends have lost their vision because of inherited diseases, complications from medicines, or were born without sight. I lost my vision after two strokes and massive brain swelling from the removal of a brain tumor.

None of us asked for this, nor is it easy. But at the end of the day, we are just like everyone else in this congregation. We are all God’s children who read the Bible and quote Scripture. The only difference between you and me is that we see the world through a different pair of eyes.

It was really nice to meet you! When I see you next, remember to introduce yourself, as I would really like to talk with you again.

“I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them” (Isaiah 42:16).

Rebecca Glassing lives in the Twin Cities and volunteers with the Mission for the Visually Impaired (MVI) in St. Paul, Minn.

Learn more about MVI’s work and resources at wels.net/mvi and at csm.welsrc.net/mvi.

Recovery Retreat coming in October

As substance abuse, pornography addiction, and mental health issues rise, Lutheran Recovery Ministries ([facebook.com/LutheranRecoveryMinistries](https://www.facebook.com/LutheranRecoveryMinistries)) has responded with Resilient Recovery groups and now a weekend retreat.

The Recovery Retreat will be held October 26-28, 2018 in Phoenix, Ariz. The theme is Finding Hope Amidst Pain and Suffering. There will be sharing meetings (both mixed and according to need), breakout groups, Law and Gospel presentation, guided prayers, songs, Sunday service, socializing, and lots to eat!

Attendance is limited to 60. The cost of \$142 includes four meals and accommodations, or \$72 for meals only. After July 15 costs rise by \$20. E-mail resilient@crosswalkphoenix.com for a registration form.

The retreat is designed for WELS members who are: (a) in recovery from a substance abuse disorder, pornography addiction, or a mental health disorder; (b) have a loved one in recovery; or (c) struggle with any habitual sin. Attendees will also be equipped to develop and improve recovery ministries in their home churches.

Special camps for special needs campers

Each year, these WELS camps are designed for people with developmental disabilities:

- Joy in Jesus retreats in Minnesota are for those 18 and older.
 - Camp Omega near Waterville, September 21-23, 2018
 - Green Lake Bible Camp near Spicer, October 7-9, 2018

You can find links to registration forms at tlha.org/jesus-cares-ministries.

Hand in Hand with WELS Special Ministries

To learn more about WELS Special Ministries or donate to Special Ministries projects, visit wels.net/special-ministries.

To subscribe to the email version of *His Hands*, visit wels.net/subscribe.

To refer military personnel, prisoners, or people with developmental disabilities for Special Ministries resources, visit wels.net/refer.

