



Deaf & Hard of Hearing

God's plan for deafness in our family

About six years ago, my husband and I embarked on an unforeseen journey. After having three wonderful boys, we were blessed with the most beautiful baby girl we had ever seen. But more than becoming parents with pink in our lives, we quickly learned that our daughter was born with hearing loss. She had failed her newborn hearing test and the subsequent tests at the audiologist. We were now beginning our journey into the unfamiliar land of hearing loss.

Our daughter's first three years of life were full of appointments and therapy sessions. Between ages two and three, we learned that she was losing more of her hearing. During this time, our family was blessed with another son. He, too, failed his newborn hearing screen.

Through genetic testing we discovered that my husband and I both carry a rare recessive gene that causes progressive hearing loss. Thankfully there are no other known consequences.

By age three-and-a-half, our daughter had received cochlear implants. About six months after the surgery, we learned that her five-year-old brother also had hearing loss. Due to his late diagnosis and the lack of information about this rare gene, our oldest two hearing sons will undergo annual testing. Our two hard-of-hearing sons are being monitored closely until they qualify for cochlear implants as well.

This journey has been challenging and emotional for our family, yet educational and rewarding. At the beginning, as devastating as it was to learn that our daughter would never hear the way we do, we had a calming peace, knowing that God has a plan for her and for our family. He was in control and would be with us each step of the way.

God has worked the hearing loss for our good. He has blessed us with loving specialists who are willing to go above and beyond for our family's success. One of these wonderful people is a sign

language interpreter. She has taken on our family for the past two years and has instructed us in the language and Deaf culture. We have come to understand the importance of both in our children's lives. We now embrace our children's hearing loss as something that makes them special and unique.

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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Health & Wellness

“Restricted”

The light-pulsing, vibrating device on the nightstand could only mean one thing—a call for help. I was in the waning hours of a 24-hour on-call shift. “Restricted” read the caller ID, confirming my hunch. “Chaplain, we need you.”

There is nothing routine about these calls, other than talking to God on the 20-minute drive to an address now etched into my mind. Police cars are in the street. Family members are in a cramped apartment as friends and neighbors cycle in and out. Officers stand by—waiting, watching, wondering.

The Medical Examiner is at least an hour away in a neighboring community, performing the task that the ME does best. As I walk through the door, I’m already doing a chaplain’s triage. Who called for me? How can I help? What questions can I ask. . .and answer? How do I gently guide them along the pathway of decisions that they need to make in a short period of time? Do they have a faith community, and can I connect them with it? These questions and more will shape the next few hours of my interaction with these people that God has prepared for me to meet.

Few people wake up in the morning imagining that today will be *the day* a loved one or a friend will be called from this life. God’s jets to eternity do not run on our schedule and normally arrive without warning. So many wish for more time. One more cup of coffee and conversation before we are called home. Too often, though, that never happens.

Few people wake up in the morning imagining that today will be the day a loved one or a friend will be called from this life.

This case is no different. There are regrets, conversations of forgiveness stuck in hearts and throats—unspoken, because a person thought there would always be more time. “Chaplain, can I talk to you privately about this?” God sometimes opens doors for us to share our comfort in Jesus. In fact, he always opens doors for us to show the love of Jesus on what may be the worst day of someone’s life up to that point. But we never know just how long or how short our time here will be. “Speak now or forever hold your peace” is a lesson repeated many times a week.

Before I know it, the Medical Examiner has come. She has finished her work. The funeral home is called and we assist when they arrive. Both the ME and those from the funeral home know that we will meet again, perhaps in only a few hours! All the more reason for us to take time to debrief and to care for our own emotional and psychological health, since one cannot serve the grieving without absorbing some of the hurt.

Over this past year, I was able to connect with some Deaf education experts in our state. After numerous meetings, our daughter has been approved for an interpreter in her classroom. She is growing in both spoken English and American Sign Language. We are thrilled with the access to sound she has received, as well as the interpreter to grant her even more access to language. In the end, we want our children to be bilingual, with access to both the hearing and Deaf worlds.

Recently, we have met other Deaf families in our community. They have been eager to support us in learning the language, and are interested in attending our church. It is an exciting ministry opportunity for our family and church!

Our congregation has been supportive throughout our journey. We have received loving Christian encouragement as well as babysitting help for our frequent doctor appointments. And now our church is making steps toward having an interpreter during worship!

WELS Ministry for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing has been extremely helpful. As soon as they learned of our family, they provided materials for our congregation, including brochures, books, DVDs, posters, Sunday school curriculum, etc. They are also assisting our plans to provide interpreted worship.

We have learned there are many different journeys and viewpoints in the Deaf/Hard of Hearing world. As we are creating our own journey, we have relied on the loving support of our family, friends, and church, but most important, the confidence that God is by our side. We have peace knowing that he has a special plan for each of our five children. “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11).

To learn how the Mission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing can help you, go to wels.net/mdhh and csm.welsrc.net/mdhh.

Rachel Holper is raising her children in Kenai, Alaska, where her husband Ryan serves as principal of Grace Lutheran School.

The streets are almost empty when I make my way back home. I thank God for helping me to serve our first responders and those who are hurting with the love of the Savior Jesus.

Little did I realize that the start of my week would lead to so much heartache: an officer down, ambushed by a gunman; anxious moments, but God’s holy angels were guarding and protecting; his backup there at just the right time, protecting and saving a life. God blessed the hands of the surgeons, doctors, nurses, and all others assisting. He answered a resounding “YES” to the many prayers. There was an outpouring of love, care, and concern for the officer and his family from relatives and friends. The community has shown an amazing amount of love also. Lives were changed in that instant. There was a defusing with the officers and a Critical Incident Debrief planned and carried out. A chaplain needs to be available to talk, to listen, to be there for support.

Fred Voss serves the saints at Shepherd of the Hills, Anchorage, Alaska, and also serves the city’s citizens and first responders as a chaplain for the fire and police departments. He covets your prayers for the first responders there and where you live.

Time of Grace – a resource for your ministry to seniors

It may begin with Mom, or sometimes with Dad. “It” is the realization that more needs to be done for the seniors in our life, due to stroke, dementia, or another age-related trial.

Growing numbers of families are facing such decisions. What is to be the response of Christians individually, and the church as a whole? The physical needs of our aged members may be covered well, but what about their easy-to-overlook spiritual needs?

Family members will come to visit. The pastor or a trained layman may appear once or twice a month with Word, sacrament, and a few minutes of friendly conversation. But all those hours between

can seem endless, and depression over loss of normality is common. WELS members are not immune.

Are there some spiritual options for Christian individuals, families, and the church? What about utilizing a great gospel resource that technology puts at our fingertips now? Time of Grace programming is widely available on TV, online, and in other ways. These messages are adaptable for gospel ministry to our own folks, as well as for outreach to other residents of senior care facilities.

When making personal visits to family members, why not share a familiar section of the Good News along with the usual family news? Or read a devotion. For the more technically inclined, a laptop can provide shorter “Your Time of Grace” messages, either recorded or online. Family members could do much more of this spiritual nurture, which would be more welcome than one might know.

What about the church’s responsibility for its senior members? Family members can get worn down seeking to meet a loved one’s needs, while active seniors often look to offer their time and talents in service to others. Time of Grace messages by Pastor Jeske and his WELS associates could be brought in by visiting volunteers.

Consider approaching the activities coordinator at your nearby care facility. They may be open to including free, non-proselytizing Christian video programs with their other weekly activities. On Sundays, or any day, a TV monitor could play Time of Grace messages for all interested residents. This usually works better where a trusting relationship has been established with the staff. But what an outreach opportunity, and what a blessing to many elderly, lonely residents. Staff members benefit too! This is currently being done at four facilities in the southwest Twin Cities area.

The ministry website is timeofgrace.org. For instructions on how to access, download, and play resources, see the brochures at tog.mywels.com.

We owe it to our seniors to serve them spiritually. Time of Grace can help our lay members play a crucial role in filling that need. Try it!

Arnold Lemke is a retired pastor in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area who stays active in both senior ministry and youth ministry.



Developmental Disabilities

Baker’s dozen at the font

Abiding Word Lutheran Church, Houston, Texas, has had a Jesus Cares program for over ten years. This ministry has been a blessing in so many ways.

Each week our Jesus Cares Sunday school gathers around God’s Word. A number of the participants have been confirmed after being instructed by members. On the first Saturday of each month, we meet for a craft and a snack, then head to the sanctuary for our Jesus Cares service. In March 2018, our regular Sunday service used parts of the Jesus Cares service to show our congregation what the ministry is like.

The teachers, students, and congregation members are all encouraged as God's Word is taught and God's people worship together.

We have also used the program to reach out to our community. Right around the corner from our church lives a woman who has adopted eleven special needs children. As we have gotten to know our neighborhood, we met this family and invited them to attend Jesus Cares. They have come regularly for a few years. One member of that family is enrolled in our school and another in our preschool. We stayed in touch with this family and, in Spring 2018, brought up the subject of baptism. After meeting with the mother, she asked for all her children to be baptized... plus one grandchild!

That would have been twelve baptisms, but God had one more planned. We visited with some of the children beforehand, preparing them with a Bible lesson on the sacrament. The Lord blessed that time by leading one of the workers in the home to learn about baptism and she asked to be included. The number rose to thirteen!

The date was set, and on May 5 there were eight baptisms during our Saturday Jesus Cares service. After worship, a group of our members went to the house to witness five more souls being washed with water

Chaplain Certification online courses – Spring 2019

Martin Luther College will offer three courses in Spring 2019 as part of the WELS Chaplain Certification program. These courses are not just for those who seek to be certified, but also offer useful skills and knowledge for called workers and church members to serve in specialized opportunities for ministry.

Communicating Forgiveness (THE9520) – Study what Scripture says about forgiveness and the many ways this truth can be communicated vividly and meaningfully. Core course. (3 credits)

Grief, Loss, and Trauma – Help for the Hurting (THE9533) – Understand the impact of trauma and how to bring God's comfort to those in the grieving process. Elective. (3 credits)

The Spiritual Side of PTSD (THE9601) – Helps spiritual advisors recognize the signs of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and provide appropriate spiritual care. Elective. (3 credits)

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

For information on the certification program or any of these online courses, go to mlc-wels.edu and search for "Chaplain Certification." Spring classes begin January 9.

and the Word. An additional blessing was that many of our members were able to participate.

Jesus Cares has taught us to recognize the opportunities that God places before us. It has reminded us that ministry blessings are not necessarily financial or church membership numbers but souls for whom Jesus died, souls to whom we get to tell that good news. As we kept our eyes open, we saw open doors for an ESL (English as a Second Language) program and a ministry to inmates at the third-largest county jail in the United States.

All this we call "special ministry," but it's really just plain ministry. It is God's people using God's Word to carry out the mission Jesus has given us. Because Jesus cares for us, we care for others by proclaiming Jesus our Savior.

Interested in starting a Jesus Cares class in your community? Visit tla.org/jesus-cares-ministries or call Rev. Joel Gaertner at 888-600-8542.

Matt Brown is pastor at Abiding Word, Houston, where every ministry is special, and special ministry is just plain ministry.

Rallying for inclusion

Every two years thousands of teens gather for fun, fellowship, worship, and mutual encouragement at the WELS International Youth Rally. But can a teen with special needs attend and participate in this event?

Our daughter Sonja was born with cerebral palsy and has profound challenges with mobility and communication. Her younger sister Christina had attended the 2016 Youth Rally in Fort Collins, Colo., and it was a given that Christina, along with the rest of the teen group from our church in Oak Creek, Wis., would attend the 2018 event in Bowling Green, Ohio. But what about Sonja?



Having turned 18 in March, this would be Sonja's last opportunity to attend a rally. But special accommodations would be required: she would have to be accompanied by one of her parents at all times to serve as caregiver; she would need more privacy and space than the dorm accommodations would allow; and her dietary and mobility needs would have to be addressed.

Thanks to Kris Snyder and her team that organized the 2018 event, all these issues were solved. While Christina bunked in the dorms with the rest of the group, Sonja stayed with us in a hotel directly across the street from the campus. The arena which served as the primary venue for the rally was wheelchair accessible, so Sonja could participate in every worship service and see all the keynote speakers. The Bowling Green State University cafeteria had gluten-free options which served Sonja well. When asked about favorite parts of the rally, gluten-free pizza was one of them.

Sonja particularly enjoyed the songs by the band Koiné and the address by Steve and Sarah Schroeder. Steve was a US Army Blackhawk helicopter pilot injured in a January 2017 crash. Our daughter could relate to the intense therapy regimen that Steve has undergone since his accident.

The theme of the rally was "Never Alone," which seemed particularly fitting for Sonja. A person who deals with a disability can often feel left out and alone. Teenagers, too, are vulnerable to feelings of unimportance and worthlessness. The gospel love of our Savior was spelled out so beautifully in the lyrics of the rally song, written and performed by Koiné:

Sitting all by myself in the darkness
All I see are the dark clouds rising
Seems there's no one around who hears me
Who understands, understands
But then I hear you say,
My name is Jesus,
I'll help to see you through.
My name is Jesus,
And I have promised you
You will never, no never be alone,
I'll be with you 'til I carry you home
In the darkness, in the sunlight,
No matter where you go.

The entire rally was a wonderful reminder that we share a universal need for God's love, and God has filled that need by sending Jesus to be our Savior.

So can a teen with special needs attend and participate in a WELS International Youth Rally? Because of Sonja's experience we are so happy to answer that question with a resounding, "Yes!"

Margo Schmidt is a member at St. John's, Oak Creek, Wis., where her husband Steve is also the pastor.

Prison Ministry

Breaking into prison (ministry, that is)

Know anybody who is eager to get into jail or prison? Meet two men who are: David Hochmuth and Darren Green. They are WELS Prison Ministry's new administrator and chairman, respectively.

New administrator

For Dave Hochmuth (pictured: center on p. 6), life in prison ministry begins at age 60. Raised in a WELS parsonage in California, he realized that he possessed neither the gifts nor the desire to follow his father into pastoral ministry. So he studied engineering and spent 23 years in that field. Meanwhile, he served in a variety of church offices and as a Bible study leader.

Preparing to teach was God's way of teaching the teacher, and Dave found his passion. He enrolled in the staff ministry program at Martin Luther College and was assigned in 2007 to St. Andrew, Middleton, Wis., as Minister of Spiritual Growth.

In 2011, a bombshell dropped: his brother was arrested. Over the next few years, Dave visited several prisons to encourage his sibling. As his fear of the unknown eased, he learned the ropes of the prison system, the need of inmates for consistent spiritual nurture, and the impact of incarceration on families. He volunteered with Conquerors through Christ, a WELS ministry to those addicted to pornography, and others took note of his gifts.

But he never expected the divine call to enter prison ministry full time. "If you had told me 20 years ago that I would someday be in this position," he admitted, "I would have laughed at you." Now he sees how God has been preparing him.

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Hochmuth acknowledges the challenges ahead. "The size of the opportunities compared to the size of our human resources is sobering. But if Jesus could work with five loaves of bread and two small fish..."

His priorities include reinvigorating the publications program, recruiting more volunteers for face-to-face ministry, serving inmates after their release, and getting ex-offenders involved in kingdom work. "We need to set a clear direction, establish priorities, and then get at it," he says.

Dave and his wife Mary have been a team since 1989, raising three children. Now they are partners in another field, since Mary has become involved in ministry at the Dane County Jail. They share a heart for those who are locked up. "We're all sinners.



Some of our sins may be more socially acceptable, but we're all the same before God," Hochmuth observes. "People in prison are blood-bought souls, too, and Jesus told us to reach them."

Hochmuth will visit the WELS Prison Ministry facility in New Ulm, Minn. frequently, but unlike previous administrators, his office will be at the Center for Mission and Ministry in Waukesha, Wis. Contact him at 414-256-3243 or email prisonministry@wels.net.

New chairman

Darren Green (pictured: right), 50, has assumed duties as chairman of the Prison Ministry Committee, succeeding Leon Brands, who served faithfully for the past twelve years.

A 1994 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Green was assigned to the mission field in Russia. He has also served parishes in Nebraska, Colorado and, since 2006, St. Peter in Monticello, Minn. He married Naomi in 1992, and their marriage has been enriched by two children.

Beyond the congregation, Darren was elected as Special Ministries Coordinator, first for the Nebraska District and later for the Minnesota District. But his involvement with the incarcerated became personal when his brother was sentenced to prison. Spurred by this family crisis, and encouraged by WELS Prison Ministry, he has taught a weekly class at the St. Cloud State Prison for the past ten years.

As Green's passion for souls behind bars has grown, he has identified other opportunities for ministry: helping families deal with the stresses of having a loved one incarcerated; ministering to ex-offenders when they are released; addressing the spiritual needs of prison staff and their families, who face their own stress.

"Jesus died for all of them," says the veteran of soul care. "He ate with sinners and offered water to the woman at the well, who had her own 'issues'."

He may now be "Chairman Green," but his heart remains in serving the lost. "I love the verse in Hebrews: 'By only one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being sanctified' (10:14 EHV). Then it quotes Jeremiah 31: 'And I will not remember their sins and their lawlessness any longer.' That beautiful gospel is the message that inmates need to hear, and our mission is to bring it to them."

To share your thoughts with Pastor Green, call 763-295-5315 or email welsne@gmail.com.

Military Services

"Ripley's believe it or not!" and WELS European Chaplaincy

"Believe it or not!" is a phrase that Jerry Gallow utters frequently. At our last Easter retreat in Magdeburg, I asked Jerry whether he had ever attended the famous Oberammergau Passion Play. With a smile on his lips, he quickly replied, "Pastor, believe it or not, we did. While we did not get tickets ahead of time, we got them there for only fifteen marks, or about ten dollars!" In the eighteen months I have known Jerry and Marilyn, I have heard more than one of his fantastic stories. Since he always starts with "Believe it or not...", I have given him the nickname "Ripley."

Jerry and Marilyn first came to Germany in the late 1960's when Jerry served a short military tour here. They returned in the early 70's and welcomed the first WELS European chaplain, Pastor Ed Renz. Believe it or not, they have been here to welcome almost every chaplain since. Believe it or not, they remember every one. They can tell you stories about each one's family and ministry.

Like the other WELS members living in Europe, they have their membership in the States. Almost every year, they return to visit their home church and family and friends.

Even though Jerry has lost most of his vision and is very frail, he and Marilyn faithfully worship and commune twice a month. They travel by train to Flörsheim, where we pick them up for worship at Wicker. They also attend almost every other special activity we offer in Germany. We have had 43 annual Easter retreats since the Gallows came to Europe. Believe it or not, they have attended every single one! The bottom line is that every aspect of their lives testifies to their love for the Lord, his Word, and the Wisconsin Synod.

Before I came to Germany, the previous chaplain, Joshua Martin, told me that the members here make this ministry special. There is no doubt about it. The Gallows are just one example of this. While my call is to serve as a civilian chaplain to WELS military in Europe, our fellowship includes military contractors, civilians, students, and others who are also living here. Although our ministry is centered in Germany, it stretches from London to Sicily, from France to Poland. The long distances, however, do not keep us from

rejoicing in the close bond of fellowship we share in Jesus Christ with all members of the WELS.

The European Chaplaincy is supported by the prayers and gifts of WELS members here and in the States. The Organization of WELS Lutheran Seniors has also been a longtime supporter of this ministry. Please remember us in your prayers and with your gifts.

Visit our website for our worship and retreat schedule at welseurope.net. If you or someone you know is headed to Europe as a student, a member of the military, etc., please fill out the Special Ministries referral form at wels.net/refer. Or send an email to welschaplain@gmail.com.

Donald Stuppy and his wife Marge have served our WELS members in Europe since January 2017. They reside in Spiesheim, southwest of Frankfurt.

One tough Ranger

Army Rangers are tough. Physically tough. Mentally tough. Anything less, and they would not be among that elite band of brothers. But PTSD is tough, too. This is a story told by a Ranger who attended a PTSD retreat sponsored by the Lutheran Military Support Group, held May 4-6, 2018 at Camp Phillip, Wautoma, Wis.

It begins with some disclosure: *I recognized that I volunteered as a Ranger, but my wife Sarah did not. And I realized that I am a chameleon that has learned to reflect my environment and adapt to what others want. I prayed that God would open my eyes more to my weaknesses and help me to focus on the one person that I can change in this world. Me.*

But this weekend, for the first time in my life, it wasn't weird for me.

He names off a horrid list of symptoms confronting him: *At this retreat, I learned about the symptoms of PTS, such as: relationship problems, anxiety, fear, paranoia, withdrawing, putting up walls, hyper-vigilance, sudden bursts of anger and emotion, being easily startled, memory*



blocks, irritability, depression, and losing those we love because of who we project ourselves as, and the demands placed upon us in the defense of freedom.

He calls them *some pretty big issues*, then goes on to comment that at the retreat he had a *pretty good crowd to share it with*.

That was important. Sharing is not something victims of PTSD or PTS are inclined to do. But this Ranger reports: *Golly, I met some pretty solid guys this weekend, and am thankful to have gone. My mom gave me great advice while I was on my way to the retreat, and that was to stay as long as possible, and get every drop of benefit from the time away that I could. She was right on and I'm glad that she encouraged me not to leave early.*

He learned that he was not alone with marriage problems: *Almost all of the men at the retreat had a similar path as me in regard to marriage, and struggle with it.*

He came to an important realization: *I have trained to protect and defend against enemies, but not loved ones from my own pride and anger.*

He is thankful for those loved ones—and Martin Luther: *You will never know the specialness of the memory of the package that I got to open on Christmas morning while I was deployed. What a blessing the efforts and influences of my in-laws have been to me. I truly didn't think that Luther's teaching would have anything to offer me, and I am glad that I was mistaken... God got my attention through Sarah.*

He is also thankful for a special pastor: *What you may not know is that, when I left home last year on my deployment, after being served divorce papers, I sought out what would not leave me. I sought help from four different chaplains and did not find what I needed. I went to the closest available church (WELS), and it was the beginning of a new journey that I am daily thankful to be on. Thank you, Pastor Dane from Good Shepherd Lutheran Church.*

And finally, he shares this insight from the retreat: *Fear is a liar to us all whenever it is outside of that which pushes us to keep God's commandments.*

These are the words of a tough Ranger—now fighting PTSD with tough love and tough faith. We pray for him and the many others who fight this battle.

Mental Health

Three-phase approach to fighting pornography addiction

Conquerors through Christ (CtC) is thinking about the future.

You may already know that at conquerorsthroughchrist.net you can find a video-based, five-step plan to help anyone hooked on pornography to confront this soul-corroding addiction. We call it

the REJECT portion of the battle of godly sexuality against selfish sex and pornography.

But did you know that's only one aspect of the ministry? The other two parts are RESIST and RECOVER.

RESIST means to *continue* to stay away from pornography. This happens in the life of the recovering addict, but it is just as important in the life of a child. To help parents lead their children toward God's version of sex, we are developing a full "Parent Support System" for those with children ages two through twelve. Beyond that, we're working on a Sixth Commandment Curriculum, a High School Curriculum (almost finished!), and materials to help college and seminary students become compassionate leaders in their communities.

We've adopted an aggressive publishing schedule for these materials. Get updates by signing up for our eNewsletter at the CtC website.

Our RECOVER ministry is in its infant stages. We've just started conversations about how to help whole families whose lives are torn apart by porn addiction. We've begun to delve into best practices for helping wives whose security has been shattered, husbands who are blindsided, and children whose futures are adversely affected by the wreckage of porn.

We're thinking about the future, and we'd like you to join us. Head to conquerorsthroughchrist.net today to discover how you can learn from, support, and pray for this ministry.



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.

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.