



Love ^{IN} Action

WELS SPECIAL MINISTRIES

Showing God's love to those with special needs or in special circumstances



Love ^{IN} Action

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRAYERS AND SUPPORT!

In these pages, you'll learn about the eight areas of WELS Special Ministries:

- Visually Impaired
- Care for Called Workers
- Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Mental Health
- Health and Wellness
- Prison Ministry
- Military Services

Funding for the programs you'll learn about in these pages comes from people like you, who have a heart to share Christ's love with those who may face hurdles in worship and in life. Our special ministries are primarily supported by special offerings from individuals and groups.

To support Special Ministries' work of meeting the spiritual needs of those who face barriers to the gospel of Jesus . . .

Give online at wels.net/sm-donation, click on "Designation," and choose the Special Ministry you wish to support.

Or send a check, payable to WELS, with the special ministry you'd like to support in the memo line, to:

WELS, Attn: Gift Processing
N16W23377 Stone Ridge Drive
Waukesha, WI 53188-1108



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear fellow members of Jesus' body,

"Who are you?" The question from the jail guard caught me off guard. He had just requested my I.D., and my driver's license had revealed my name. So what information was he seeking?

The guard's cautious gaze was no longer focused on my face but on my faith. What kind of person, he wondered, wears a t-shirt that boasts, "I'm here to give the devil trouble." Gently, I explained, "I'm a Christian, and I'm here to visit my friend who is an inmate."

Who are you? You are a Christian. You are here to make salvation through Jesus known to the ends of the earth (and thereby "give the devil trouble.")

You are also here to be the hands of Jesus in this hurting world, expressing his love through your comforting words and servant actions. God redeemed you to put his "Love in Action" in your church, your family, your community.

WELS Special Ministries helps equip churches and individuals to serve in love. The Special Ministries umbrella covers eight specialized areas, but the opportunities to put love in action are countless.

You may put God's love in action to someone far away, such as an inmate or a soldier. But most special ministry is local. You carry it out in your home, your church, or your community. Thousands of WELS volunteers serve the needs of neighbors who have a disability, an addiction, an illness, or other limiting circumstances.

As you read these pages, I hope you will see where God might be calling you to be "His Hands" to serve those around you. Let the Lord hear your praise for what is already being done, and pray about what we can accomplish together. You may have skills or experience that can be used in your local setting. You may be moved to support the work of a Special Ministries committee with your talents or your offerings.

As God inspires you, learn how you can put his **"Love in Action."**

In the name of our God, who is Love,



Jim Behringer
Special Ministries Director

MISSION FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Try to read your Bible with your eyes closed. Or attempt your daily devotions wearing glasses smeared with Vaseline. Now you have an idea of what it is like to be blind or visually impaired.

The “vision” of the **Mission for the Visually Impaired (MVI)** is to make Christian resources available free of charge to anyone who is visually impaired or has a disability that prevents them from reading a book.

MVI offers Braille resources, audiobooks on flash drive, and large print materials, all produced by volunteers at the workshop in South St. Paul, Minn. There is no cost for the service, and U.S. Postal Service shipping is free.

The MVI committee includes several blind members. Troy Hergert, a member at Grace in downtown Milwaukee, Wis., who is blind himself, explains the value of their voices in steering the ministry: “Blind people are well-informed about current methods and technology that serve the visually handicapped.” One example is JAWS, a program that announces what is on a computer screen, such as devotions and *Forward in Christ* articles on wels.net.

Financial support is MVI’s biggest challenge. It is completely funded by individual donors, and volunteers perform all the labor. However, costs to maintain Braille and copy machines and facility costs often exceed annual donations.

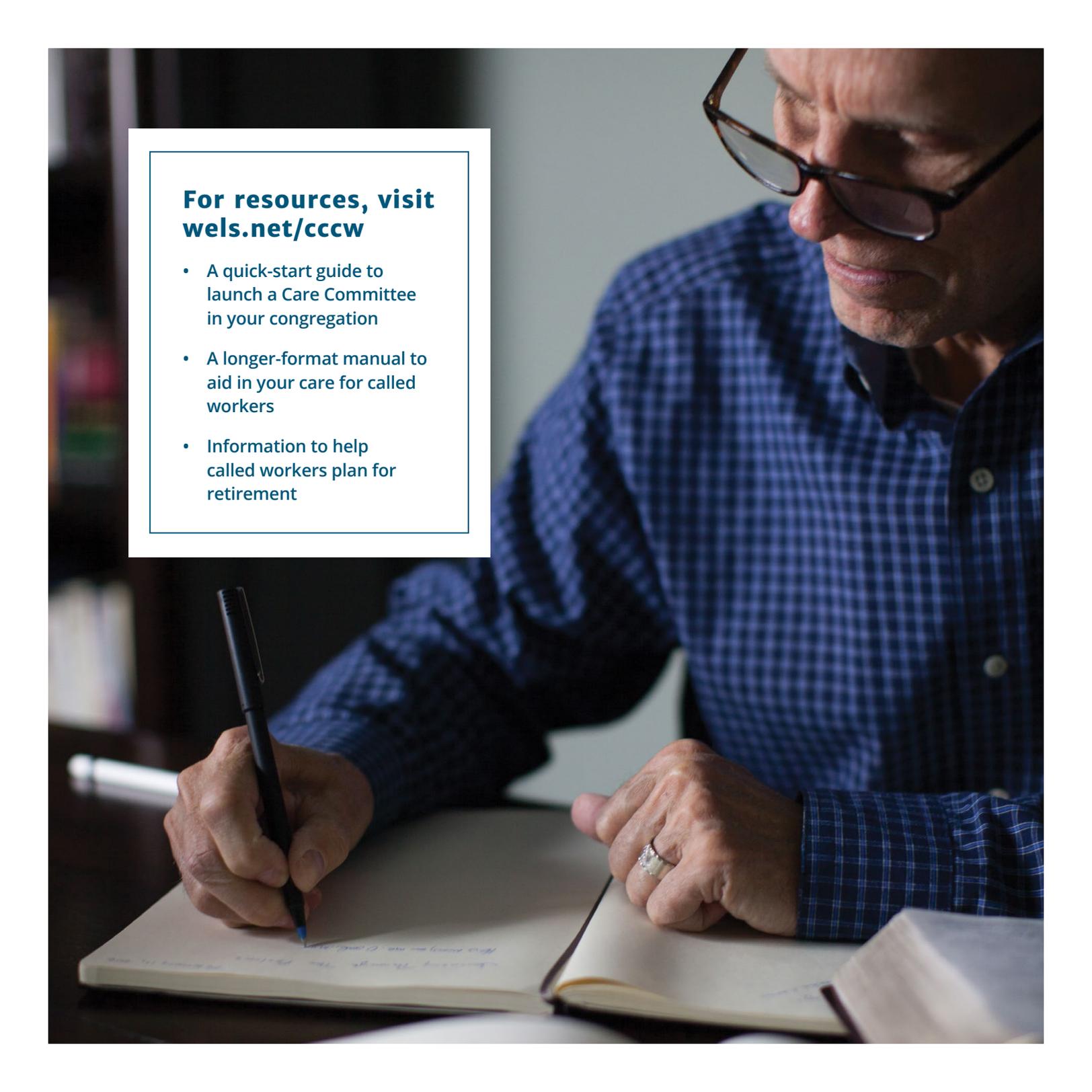
“People with visual disabilities need the same access to spiritual growth materials as everyone else,” says Troy Hergert. It is easy to see that providing these materials is what “love in action” looks like.

For resources, visit wels.net/mvi

- A catalog of materials available in Braille, audio, or large print
- Spiritual materials provided at no cost world-wide
- Custom-produced Braille spiritual materials upon request

**“PEOPLE WITH VISUAL
DISABILITIES NEED
THE SAME ACCESS TO
SPIRITUAL GROWTH
MATERIALS AS
EVERYONE ELSE.”**



A close-up photograph of a man with glasses and a blue checkered shirt, focused on writing in a notebook. He is holding a black pen in his right hand and has a ring on his left hand. The background is softly blurred, showing what appears to be a bookshelf. The overall lighting is warm and focused on the man's hands and the notebook.

**For resources, visit
wels.net/ccw**

- A quick-start guide to launch a Care Committee in your congregation
- A longer-format manual to aid in your care for called workers
- Information to help called workers plan for retirement

CARE COMMITTEE FOR CALLED WORKERS

The **Care Committee for Called Workers (CCCW)** exists to help congregations address the spiritual, physical, intellectual, and emotional needs of their pastors, teachers, and staff ministers. This can take on many forms, but one constant is that congregations with a CCCW place a high value on aiding and supporting those who serve them.

“Called workers are so important to us. We want to make sure they have support and know that they’re appreciated.” says Lisa Schroeder. She and her husband Bob have served for many years on the CCCW at Immanuel, Greenville, Wis.

A Care Committee offers a way for church members to show love in action to those who serve them—their pastors, teachers, and staff ministers. Schroeder adds: “Our called workers are giving their lives to share the gospel; they need our support. Plus, it’s so good to get to know them on a level you might not otherwise.”

“OUR CALLED WORKERS ARE GIVING THEIR LIVES TO SHARE THE GOSPEL; THEY NEED OUR SUPPORT.”

A congregation’s CCCW team can advocate for repair of a parsonage, for continuing education, or assist in retirement planning. Care Committees may also organize anniversary or farewell celebrations, assist during a family emergency, help a worker find housing, or organize for a move.

The program provides suggestions for welcoming new workers and helping them settle in to a new community. It also encourages annual interviews with the worker during their stay and when they prepare to move on.

Kurt Holzhueter, chairman of the Special Ministries CCCW, says that even congregations without an active Care Committee can learn how to do more. Leaders and interested members should look at CCCW guidelines to make sure their workers’ needs are being met. “To get more participation from congregations, we’re trying to make things simpler, easier to get started, and a little less formal,” he says.

You can find CCCW resources online, including a quick-start guide to launch a committee, a manual for building on that quick start, and guidance for retirement planning.

INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES MINISTRY

Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Ministry (IDDM) is a special ministry for people with special needs.

The mission of IDDM is to help congregations share the gospel with the intellectually or developmentally disabled. Look to us for:

- Resources to involve special needs families in worship, fellowship, education, and service.
- Advice on confirmation resources for those with cognitive disabilities.
- Information on WELS summer camps for people with special needs.
- Educational materials from our partner, Jesus Cares Ministries, that make Jesus accessible and understandable to all.
- *He Cares/We Care*, a program that reminds these often-overlooked children of God that they are loved. Cards and letters are sent at holidays, birthdays, and other times. Sign up at wels.net/refer.

IDDM also encourages churches to form support networks for families in the community with an intellectually or developmentally disabled member.

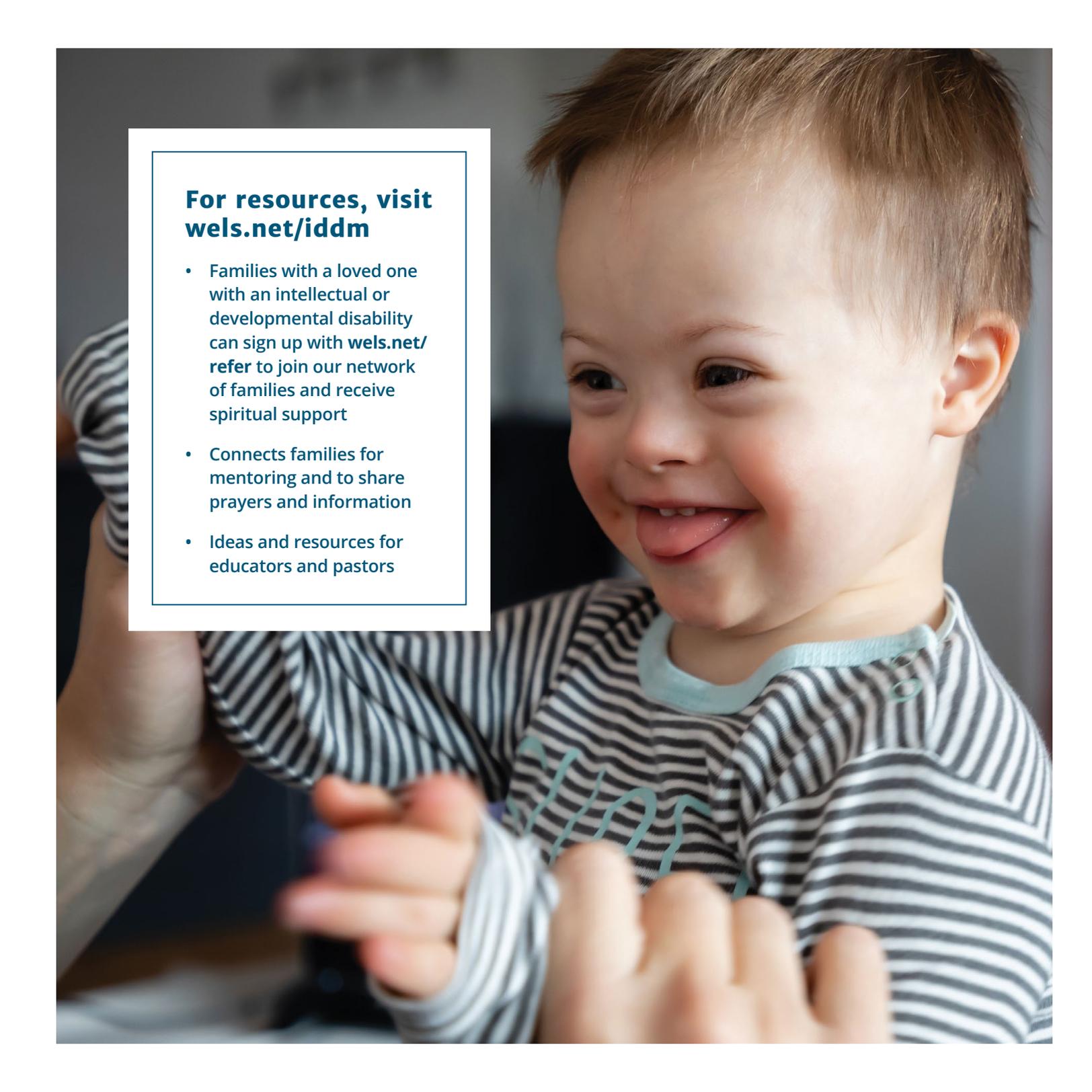
Many of these families are unchurched.

Margo Schmidt, mother of a developmentally disabled daughter, shares her heart: “I have so much to learn about biblical principles from these children of the most high God: 1) Serve as Jesus did – pour out your energy and love as a sacrifice. 2) Set aside your needs to put others first. 3) Relax your controlling grip on the future and rely on Jesus with your whole heart.”

“I HAVE SO MUCH TO LEARN ABOUT BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES FROM THESE CHILDREN OF THE MOST HIGH GOD.”

We want people of all abilities to hear the good news and see their place in the body of Christ. As we include adults and children who have these differences, we fulfill Jesus’ injunction to serve one another with our love in action.

Bill Truebenbach, chairman of IDDM, asserts: “If more people in our churches had some form of volunteer opportunity within an intellectual and developmental disability program, they too would see those big, beautiful hearts that love the Lord and are our brothers and sisters.”

A close-up photograph of a young child with Down syndrome, smiling and clapping their hands. The child has characteristic facial features and is wearing a black and white striped long-sleeved shirt. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

**For resources, visit
wels.net/iddm**

- Families with a loved one with an intellectual or developmental disability can sign up with wels.net/refer to join our network of families and receive spiritual support
- Connects families for mentoring and to share prayers and information
- Ideas and resources for educators and pastors

**“IN THE CHURCH, EVERY CHILD
OF GOD BELONGS.”**



INCLUSION

Everyone wants to feel they belong.

In the church, every child of God belongs. “Now you are the body of Christ, and *each one of you* is a part of it” (1 Corinthians 12:27). And each part is equipped with gifts for service. “Now *to each one* the manifestation of the Spirit is given *for the common good*” (1 Corinthians 12:7).

Is the deaf Christian made to feel that they are part of the body? Is the developmentally disabled believer invited to use their gifts for the common good? Do you consider those with impaired vision or mental illness when counting spiritual gifts in your congregation?

The saint who cannot see can add their vision to the church council or make phone calls.

The child of God who is intellectually disabled can play handbells or hand out bulletins.

The faithful member who battles depression can encourage shut-ins or tutor students.

The believer who cannot hear can make their prayers heard or help with office tasks.

We call this **“inclusion.”** Christians who face barriers in everyday life still want to participate in church life. And we *need* them to be included.

“ . . . those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor” (1 Corinthians 12:22, 23).

People with disabilities or other challenges are parts of the body of Christ—indispensable parts! Please include them so that they can use their gifts and put their love in action.

***His Hands* newsletter**

Inspirational stories and constructive ideas fill each issue of *His Hands*, a periodic newsletter from Special Ministries.

Read how churches are finding ways to include *all* their members in worship and service to the Lord, how Special Ministries is helping these members and congregations, and how you can be involved with this important work.

- To get it delivered to your inbox, go to wels.net/subscribe

MISSION FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING



It is estimated that more than 90 percent of deaf people in the United States are unchurched. People with hearing loss *can* participate in worship and church life, and the church *can* provide assistance to ensure that the gospel is heard. That's where the **Mission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MDHH)** can help.

People who are deaf and hard of hearing are two different populations, each with particular needs, but both share a need for Jesus. To that end, MDHH's purpose is to educate and provide resources for church leaders and members.

Hearing loss is largely invisible. "Can you hear me?" the speaker asks, but those who cannot even hear the question do not respond, so the speaker (e.g. a preacher) proceeds. Many people with hearing loss don't ask for help and don't realize what they are missing.

Hearing aids have improved greatly, but don't solve all problems. Next Sunday, count the number of hearing aids as worshipers are dismissed, and you will realize that this issue cannot be dismissed.

One simple and helpful idea is to make sure the captioning is turned on for the WELS Connection and other video messages.

Assistive Listening Devices

"I wish the pastor would speak more loudly and clearly!" Assistive listening devices like the Williams Sound System and Bluetooth technology can address this common complaint.

**"THE BIGGEST BLESSING
FOR OUR CONGREGATION WAS
MAKING [A HEARING LOOP]
AVAILABLE SO EVERYONE
COULD HEAR GOD'S WORD!"**

A hearing loop makes a huge difference for those whose hearing aids are equipped with a T-switch. MDHH can advise you on this approach. After St. Luke, Watertown, Wis., was looped, Scott Krause, a hard-of-hearing member, cheered, "The biggest

blessing for our congregation was making it available so everyone could hear God's word!"

Sign Language

Deafness presents more than a sound barrier. For many deaf people, English is not their primary language. Interpreters use American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate. Worship and Bible class come to life when the deaf can "hear" sermons and hymns in their own language.

Monica Brandt, an interpreter and member of the MDHH committee, observes: "Signed services are a blessing because they open the church to more people in the community. Not every church offers signing, so it is an automatic "in" to the deaf community for any WELS congregation that is able to make their service accessible."

If your church offers signing, or is considering it, MDHH can help find interpreters in your area, or provide information on Video Remote Interpreting, which uses video conferencing. E-mail mdhh@wels.net for assistance.

Online videos demonstrate how to sign WELS worship. Find them at wels.net/mdhh.

A religious sign dictionary, *Sign to the Lord a New Song* (available at nph.net), helps interpreters choose the correct signs for worship.

To encourage WELS members and our future called workers to learn sign language, an online ASL class is offered each spring semester through

Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn. Learn more at mlc-wels.edu.

Nicki Barabas is another MDHH committee member. As a deaf person, she has benefited from their services. "They helped provide ASL interpreters for all women's retreats, offered resources about local interpreters for my past and present churches, and organized the MDHH convention in a way that ensured I could socialize with other deaf and hard-of-hearing friends."

For resources, visit wels.net/mdhh

- A directory of churches with hearing loops and signed services
- Resources to assist churches in meeting the needs of the deaf and hard of hearing, including instructional needs
- Sign language videos
- MDHH can help find interpreters in your area, or provide information on Video Remote Interpreting, which uses video conferencing

**“GOSPEL ENCOURAGEMENT WAS
ESPECIALLY UPLIFTING FOR US AT
A TIME WHEN WE ARE SO BURDENED
WITH GUILT AND SHAME.”**



CONQUERORS THROUGH CHRIST

“Am I truly saved?” the 17-year-old e-mailed as he explained his seven-year addiction to pornography.

“How can I help my friend?” a church member asked me. “He also feels awful for hurting his wife so badly.”

“I feel unworthy of God’s love,” a man confessed after finding our videos on YouTube. “I feel like running away from God.”

These messages reminded me of what you may already know—Christians, too, struggle with pornography. Old and young, single and married, men and women. So many feel hopeless and helpless because of porn.

Conquerors through Christ (CtC) can help. As a Jesus-focused, anti-porn ministry, CtC’s mission is to help God’s people reject, resist, and recover from the wreckage of pornography so that they can rejoice in the gifts of sex or singleness. CtC aims to equip pastors, teachers, parents, and church leaders to reach those whose lives have been affected, in some way, by porn.

CtC has produced a training camp for preachers, a Bible study for churches, numerous eBooks for parents, four years of high school curriculum, catechism lessons, guidelines for accountability

partners, and a book, *From Dirty to Dancing*, on conquering porn. Find all these resources and more at **conquerorsthroughchrist.net**. May God use them to help you reach those in your church, your school, and your home.

A 20-something recently shared this: “There is a small group of us who just finished reading your book. Its gospel encouragement was especially uplifting for us at a time when we are so burdened with guilt and shame.”

Through Christ, you can conquer bad habits, struggles, and temptations. Even pornography.

For resources, visit **conquerorsthroughchrist.net**

- Training for pastors
- Bible studies
- eBooks for parents
- tools to reject and resist porn, including a book, *From Dirty to Dancing*

FREEDOM FOR THE CAPTIVES

Anita, a survivor of childhood sexual abuse, is grateful. "As a Christian and as a survivor, because my faith is everything to me, just knowing that a ministry like Freedom for the Captives exists brings me great comfort. It gives me hope and a sense of peace." **Freedom for the Captives (FFTC)** focuses on preventing child abuse in Christian schools and churches as well as ministering to survivors.

The statistics are alarming: 28% of women and 16% of men identify as survivors of sexual abuse; 20% of adults acknowledge suffering physical abuse; 11% were emotionally abused; 15% were emotionally neglected. In other words, one out of five people in our pews may be such a survivor.

The song goes, "Jesus loves the little children." Churches put that love in action by adopting and implementing child protection policies. Too many painful stories tell of church leaders who protected the abuser while portraying the accuser as a liar or immoral. Survivors and cautious parents want to know what policies are in place to keep children safe.

For church leaders and those who work with children, FFTC has created "Standing Up for Children," an online abuse-prevention class. The four-session training is free, and participants

receive a certificate upon completion. More ideas on creating a safe environment can be found at **freedomforcaptives.com**.

People who have been abused often struggle spiritually. At the website, you will also find resources to help survivors find comfort from Scripture and from counseling. When Anita found FFTC, she said, "For the first time I feel that I am able to freely speak about my abuse without the fear of judgment."

Standing Up for Children: A Christian Response to Child Abuse and Neglect

This important video training series explains the need for training members to identify abuse when it occurs and how to respond.

Watch Anita's testimony and register for individual or group training at **welscongregationalservices.net/c003**.



MENTAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY GROUPS

Mental Health Needs

Christians are not immune to mental health issues that require professional counseling or medical attention. The **Committee on Mental Health Needs** provides guidance on different therapy models, choosing a counselor, and when to refer someone for help. Find a list of WELS and ELS counselors nationwide at **ChristianTherapistNetwork.com**.

Recovery Friendly Churches and Addiction Support Groups

Jesus said that it is the sick, not the healthy, who need a physician. Lutheran congregations can be healing places for those who have been broken by addiction.

“Addicted people are looking for relationships,” advises Phil Merten, a pastor with extensive experience in this field. “They need people who will accept them, support them, give them hope. They need help connecting with God and learning that, even in their addiction, God loves them.”

Encouraging people in recovery fits the church’s mission to seek the lost (outside the church)

and the straying (inside the church). A church that sponsors an addiction support group can become a spiritual home for people who struggle. Recovery friendly churches put love in action by sending a message to the community: “We care about those who are not perfect.”

The secular “12 Step” approach is not the only option. WELS churches can offer an alternative that is powered by law and gospel. “Recovery Friendly Churches” is a video that can be used to show congregations the benefits of such a mindset. Find the video and a discussion guide at **welscongregationalservices.net/c010**.

For resources, visit wels.net/mental-health

- “Recovery Friendly Churches” video with discussion guide at welscongregationalservices.net/c010
- Downloadable resources on topics such as different therapy models, when to refer someone for help, and seeking the right counselor

COMPASSION MINISTRY AS OUTREACH

God doesn't think small. He said, "It is too small a thing" (Isaiah 49:6) to send Jesus only to restore Israel. He wants to save the whole world!

Similarly, don't think small when planning **compassion ministry**. For example:

- A facility for the aging is now home for a member or two. But many other residents are lonely and without a spiritual shepherd. Why not hold a worship service at the facility and invite everyone, or take your kids to sing or talk or read to the elderly?
- An autism diagnosis spurs you to explore a special Bible class for one member's son and another's daughter. But autism also touches many unchurched families. Why not design a ministry that you can advertise community-wide to families who face this challenge?
- Inmates at the county jail appreciate your Bible class, but each inmate has a network of loved ones who are also affected. Why not consider an outreach that will make your church known as a place of hope for all who are impacted by incarceration?

Abiding Word, Houston, Texas, follows that approach. "Many don't realize the resources we have for this ministry. It's our gifted people and their eagerness to serve," says Pastor Matt Brown. "Outreach to inmates and a Jesus Cares program for the developmentally disabled may not pack the pews on Sunday morning, but they build up the kingdom in many ways."

**"MANY DON'T REALIZE THE
RESOURCES WE HAVE FOR THIS
MINISTRY. IT'S OUR GIFTED PEOPLE
AND THEIR EAGERNESS TO SERVE."**

This type of ministry often starts with concern for people we already know. Inspired by our Father's love for every lost soul, we can put love in action when we say, "It is too small a thing" to serve only those we are familiar with. "How can we reach out to more people like this one?"

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

If thoughts of mortality increase with age, that implies a ripening harvest among America's 65+ population, which is projected to double from 36 million in 2010 to 72 million in 2030. Many of them will finish their race in facilities for the aging, which makes them easy to locate . . . and to serve.

The mission field is right—and ripe—before us in care facilities, where many do not know the love or promises of Jesus. Volunteers can know the joy of sharing the treasures of God's truth.

"Every level of our membership gets involved," reports Jon Woldt, staff minister for outreach at St. John, Libertyville, Ill. "The elementary school choir joins me for the annual Christmas service. They also make the rounds for caroling events."

The church's 12- to 15-year-olds pitch in for "Reading with Residents," games, and other activities. Recently St. John's servant youth put on a "walker wash," bringing smiles to many who wheeled away behind bright, shiny walkers after witnessing the teens' love in action.

Adults also find satisfaction in serving. About 15 members of the senior choir make visits. Four adults join Woldt for his twice-a-month Bible class, and relationships are growing with residents who do not belong to St. John. Some arrive early, some stay late, and conversations often dwell on

spiritual topics. Several volunteers make one-on-one visits to other facilities in the area.

The **Health and Wellness Committee** offers resources to assist you. Ministry to the aging is a much-needed outreach to a population that is much in need. Help the elderly to remember that Jesus has not forgotten them!

For resources, visit wels.net/health-and-wellness

- Downloadable Bible study on ministry to the aging
- Helpful tips on how to better serve the aging members of a congregation

Don't forget to check out the **Organization of WELS Lutheran Seniors (OWLS)** at wels.net/owls. Through involvement, fellowship, mutual support, life enrichment activities and service to others, OWLS members are encouraged to be all that they can be.

**“THE MISSION FIELD
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**“I LOVE IT, BECAUSE I CAN
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KNOWLEDGE WHILE HELPING PEOPLE
TO GROW SPIRITUALLY AND STAY AS
HEALTHY AS POSSIBLE.”**



CHAPLAINS AND PARISH NURSES

Chaplains

Firehouse. Jail. Police station. Hospital. Military base. Nursing home. Chaplains take the gospel “outside the walls” to hurting souls who may never come inside the church walls.

David Rosenbaum, pastor at Redeemer, Merritt Island, Florida, has seen how putting love in action yields gospel fruit in various chaplaincy settings:

- At facilities for the aging, where the Word comforts those nearing death as well as the staff.
- At the county jail, where classes and counseling assure our least admirable citizens that Christ was crucified for them too, and his redemption makes a new and better life possible.
- At the firehouse, where first responders are not exempt from personal emergencies. They need to know that Jesus, the ultimate First Responder, is on duty 24-7 and ready to dispatch his aid.

Online Chaplain Certification courses will equip anyone—called worker or congregant, male or female—who wants to follow Jesus outside the church walls to meet people where they are.

Find out more at wels.net/chaplain.

Parish Nurses

Nursing is not limited to the hospital or doctor’s office. Within a parish, nurses can implement a wellness-based, non-invasive practice among God’s people. “I love it, because I can share my faith and my health knowledge while helping people to grow spiritually and stay as healthy as possible,” says Anne Mackey, parish nurse at Lord of Love, DeForest, Wis.

Parish nurses personalize Christian love for ailing members by assuring them that someone cares. Sickness or surgery prompt prayer, reflection, and often anxiety. Pastors can prescribe soul medicine, but a parish nurse can offer medical insights and advice as well as compassion. The nurse can alert the pastor to spiritually hurting sheep and be a trusted resource to consult when health issues arise.

A parish nurse is a currently licensed Registered Nurse (RN) who promotes both physical and spiritual wellness among the members, guided by the congregation’s mission statement and the pastor. It’s one more way to put love in action.

Find out more at wels.net/parish-nurses.

PRISON MINISTRY

James, an inmate who receives our Bible studies, writes: "I'm currently housed in the Honor Block in Attica and just so happens I am in the first cell. So everyone passes my cell coming and going. I pray often that God will lead someone my way. I pray that the Holy Spirit gives me boldness to share the good news about Jesus Christ as our Savior. What do you know, a fellow walked by and asked, 'What are you so focused on?' and we began to talk about Jesus!"

WELS Prison Ministry shares Jesus with thousands of current or former inmates nationwide. Some, like James, receive our self-study Bible courses. Each booklet includes a test that is returned, then graded by a volunteer. "Many of them write that if they hadn't ended up in prison, they would never have known about Jesus," marvels Eleanor, a test corrector. "And they learn about Jesus through our books!"

Many prisoners struggle with guilt, loneliness, and unworthiness. The Jail Ministry Training Team equips WELS and ELS members to serve in local correctional facilities, adding the power of face-to-face ministry. One former inmate is deeply grateful. "I treasured the weekly visits by a local church member. It was the one hour of the week I could truly relax. Those visits kept me going."

Some inmates are WELS members, whose names were submitted online at wels.net/refer. Many more found us by the enthusiastic referral of fellow prisoners who use our Bible studies.

Released inmates and family members are mentored by trained Christians in how to live a new—or renewed—faith out of thanks to Jesus. Daryl, a former inmate, says: "It's a heartwarming, loving feeling that you've got somebody that cares about you."

Get Involved

- Support Prison Ministry with your financial gift
- Pray for Prison Ministry volunteers and the men and women they serve
- Make greeting cards and bookmarks to be mailed to inmates
- Collect *Meditations* (no more than one year old and with your mailing address removed) to be mailed to inmates
- Find Bible study material at csm.welsrc.net/prison-ministry-bible-studies
- Become a test corrector, pen pal, or mail handler for ministry-by-mail
- To receive training for visitation ministry or mentoring a returning citizen, call 414-256-3243



**For resources, visit
wels.net/pm**

- Refer inmates to receive spiritual care at wels.net/refer
- Downloadable jail ministry Bible studies at csm.welsrc.net/pm
- Information on ministry to the released
- Contact us at prisonministry@wels.net or 414-256-3243 for assistance in starting or continuing a prison or jail ministry program at your congregation

MILITARY SERVICES



Our enemies never stop plotting and undermining and attacking to bring down our nation. The enemies of our soul, likewise, never stop plotting and undermining and attacking to bring down the kingdom of God and its citizens.

Satan seeks the weak and the vulnerable, like young WELS men and women who, for the first time, are away from home, family, and church.

The devil recognizes these “soft targets,” and so should we. **WELS Military Services** trains our members in the armed forces to be more spiritually alert and resilient.

European civilian chaplain

Since 1973, a full-time chaplain has served our military and civilian members living in Europe. The chaplain is based near Frankfurt, Germany, but leads worship at a monthly rotation of locations in Germany, Switzerland, and England. He also teaches confirmation classes, counsels,

and communes those who live in remote locations. The scattered flock gathers for Easter and Fall retreats. See more at **welseurope.net**.

Current WELS residents in Europe testify:

“The chaplain is my only link to God’s Word taught in truth and only way to obtain the Lord’s Supper. This service is invaluable to our family.”

“The chaplain provides spiritual nourishment for us who live abroad, allowing us to stay in the Word and enjoy fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ.”

National chaplain

For doctrinal reasons, WELS does not participate in the U.S. military chaplaincy. However, our national chaplain maintains relations with the head chaplain’s office of each branch, ensuring that the concerns of our denomination are heard. He also helps WELS members with religious accommodation needs and counsels those who wrestle with issues related to military service.

The chaplain’s weekly devotion is e-mailed to all service members who have supplied their contact information. Members of the military and their loved ones can subscribe to the weekly devotion at **wels.net/subscribe**.

Military contact pastors

Uniformed chaplains are assigned to most bases and units. But few military chaplains understand the distinctive doctrinal stance of our denomination.

“MILITARY CONTACT PASTORS ARE POSITIONED TO BRING THE UNCHANGING GOSPEL TO FAMILIES THAT EXPERIENCE FREQUENT CHANGE, UNCERTAINTY, AND OTHER UNIQUE STRESSES. WE WORK TO LEAD MILITARY FAMILIES TO FIND STABILITY IN THEIR SAVIOR.”

Wherever feasible, the pastor of a nearby WELS or ELS congregation is asked to serve as a “military contact pastor” to meet the spiritual needs of our members in uniform. This may involve leading worship on base, offering private Communion, or arranging rides to church. It can also include organizing church members to stand by service members and their families, preparing a service member for deployment, or checking up on a deployed member’s family.

Aaron Goetzinger, pastor at Redemption, Watertown, N.Y., serves Fort Drum. He describes his role: “Military contact pastors are positioned to bring the unchanging gospel to families that experience frequent change, uncertainty, and other unique stresses. We work to lead military families to find stability in their Savior.”

Who are they? Where are they?

Half of WELS members in the military are missing! We know there are many more in uniform than in our database, but we cannot serve people if we do not know who or where they are.

It’s easy to help us . . . and them. Go to wels.net/refer, enter the name and contact information for your service member(s), then keep it updated as duty stations change. You will play a key role in defending the souls of those who defend us.

For resources, visit wels.net/military

- Service member referral at wels.net/refer
- Weekly military devotions; sign up at wels.net/subscribe
- Downloadable resources on PTSD
- Directory of military contact pastors



Love ^{IN} Action



**CONTACT
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