

CMSG Update

2016-2017



Congregation and Ministry Support Group

The Congregation and Ministry Support Group commissions are: Adult Discipleship, Congregational Counseling, Evangelism, Lutheran Schools, Special Ministries, Worship, Youth and Family.

A Valuable Resource for Congregations

The Congregation and Ministry Support Group (CMSG) assists congregations and schools through their called and lay leaders so that they might carry out gospel ministry in the most faithful way on the local level.

The various CMSG units give focused attention to specific areas of congregational life. Resources that are offered include print/electronic material, "schools" for specialized leadership training, conferences, consultation, and web connections.

CMSG works in partnership with the Conference of Presidents, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, and Martin Luther College for efforts at continuing education, professional growth, and pursuit of excellence in ministry.

CMSG is a valuable resource for local congregations, but its work also has a direct impact on the synodical priorities of missions and ministerial education. Strong and healthy congregations are best able, with gospel ministry, to expand the kingdom and to enable the synod to carry out its ministries. Thus the many CMSG programs and services benefit not only congregations but also the worldwide mission of WELS.

To make a gift to any of the following projects, fill out and mail the enclosed gift coupon or go to wels.net/give to donate online. For assistance in making a gift to CMSG, contact the Ministry of Christian Giving, 800-827-5482. The amounts listed are not the full costs of each project. For more information about CMSG ministry work, visit wels.net.

For assistance in making a gift to CMSG, contact the Ministry of Christian Giving, 800-827-5482.

Youth and Family/Adult Discipleship

Since 2009 the work of these two volunteer commissions has been blessed by God, even without designated staff and program funding.



The 2015 synod convention approved a resolution that placed the calling of a director for Youth and Family Ministry high on the unfunded priority list in our continuing effort to strengthen congregations and their ministries. Since that time, both the Ministry Committee of the Synodical Council and the Conference of Presidents have expressed strong support for calling a director who would serve both the Commission on Youth and Family Ministry as well as the Commission on Adult Discipleship. Because of the many areas in which these two commissions have common tasks, there has been discussion about combining the two commissions into a single entity.

At its April 2016 meeting, the Synodical Council discussed a request to approve this position immediately, using dollars from the commissions' special funds and from the Financial

Stabilization Fund to provide funding for the position for the rest of the current biennium. The Synodical Council decided not to approve the position immediately, but rather to reconsider the proposal in November 2016. Regardless of what decision is made in November, the new position will be given high priority in the planning process as the Ministry Financial Plan for the next biennium is developed.

The cost for the first half of 2017 for director, office, and programs is \$100,000. Gifts received toward this goal by Nov. 1, 2016, will help to provide bridge funding before the Ministry Financial Plan for the next biennium is developed. If the director position is not authorized in late 2016, gifts will still provide support for the commissions' important initiatives. Gifts received in 2017 will strengthen our ability to improve ministries in a wide range of areas, including:

- Family ministry
- Marriage ministry
- Ministry to Millennials
- Apologetics resources
- Youth ministry
- Member assimilation/retention (adults)
- Retaining young people (college)
- Better Bible classes
- Small group ministry

Outreach Movies

With striking visuals and vivid sound, a movie effectively engages an audience and powerfully communicates a message. There is no greater message than the gospel of Jesus Christ. And look at the massive audience of people to whom God wants this good news delivered—the world! WELS is using the medium of movies to tell the message of salvation to many people.

Three movies have been developed through a collaborative effort of the WELS Commissions on Evangelism and Adult Discipleship, Northwestern Publishing House, and WELS Multi-Language Publications. The movies were professionally produced by the award-winning producer Boettcher-Trinklein TV, Inc. The first movie, *Road to Emmaus* (www.roadtoemmasmovie.com), conveys the vital message that Jesus is the world's Savior who was promised by God throughout the Old Testament and fulfilled God's saving plan by his sacrificial death and his glorious resurrection. The second movie, *Come Follow Me* (www.comefollowmemovie.com), conveys the meaning and blessings of following Jesus to comfort, strengthen, and guide us as the Lord's disciples today. And the third movie, *My Son My Savior* (www.mysonmysavior.com), is about the coming, life, and ministry of Jesus told from the perspective of his mother Mary. The movie portrays Mary experiencing and pondering the miracle of Jesus' coming and

humbly growing in her understanding that her son is also her Savior. The main message for all viewers is that Jesus is their Savior too.



Many WELS congregations use the movies and supplemental study materials for classes and outreach. Members give them to their friends and use the opportunity to talk about Jesus and the gospel ministry of their church. In addition to English, the movies are dubbed in various languages for worldwide distribution. They are broadcast on TV and cable networks, and they are available for downloading from websites.

Since these movies are so effective in helping us share God's Word with many people, we are working to produce a fourth movie. The plan is to show the fulfillment of Jesus' command at his ascension for his followers to be his witnesses and take the gospel "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Our goal is to have the movie and supplemental resources available in 2018. The estimated cost for professionally producing this movie is \$300,000. Your special gift will help us accomplish this important effort.

Lutheran Schools

Educational research indicates that aside from the teacher, the greatest predictor of student success is the quality of the school's leader. Strong school leaders are also a blessing to congregations. WELS schools face a growing shortage of trained principals and early childhood directors. Three programs currently offered to address this shortage exist only through special gifts.

1. The **Principal Training Program** requires a willing congregation, their current principal, and assigned teacher candidate to commit to training over the first three years of ministry after which the candidate may be assigned to another school as a principal. This program allows the candidate to first build skills and be mentored as a teacher, while also experiencing on-the-job leadership training. Ideally, four to six candidates will be in training each year. Gifts totaling \$10,000 would support the training of two candidates for three years.
2. **Apprentice Mentoring Program:** Five to ten graduates of Martin Luther College are assigned as principal or director

apprentices each year. The new apprentice is paired with a trained mentor for the first two years at a cost of \$2,500 per year. The host congregation is responsible for the first \$1,000 of the cost. Gifts totaling \$15,000 would support half of this focused leadership training each year.

3. **Leadership Candidate Training** seeks to identify current WELS teachers who display aptitude to be future school leaders. A one year cohort of training with a mentor enables the candidate to receive focused training to lead a school. Gifts totaling \$40,000 would allow for a year of training for 20 future leaders.

Please join us in praying for the success of these programs as we seek to train new and experienced teachers to be leaders in our schools and congregations.

Military Services

Luke Cecil attended Faith Lutheran Church in Radcliff, Ky., while his mother, Captain Rebecca Cecil, was deployed with the Army Reserve to Afghanistan. Faith is one of 125 WELS congregations whose pastor serves as a WELS military contact pastor (MCP) for a nearby military installation. Rebecca could receive WELS devotions written especially for men and women in service. Luke never felt alone, because members of Faith go out of their way to make sure that military families are okay.



Captain Rebecca Cecil and family

WELS Military Services provides training, encouragement, and information to military contact pastors so stateside military personnel and their families receive spiritual encouragement and ministry while living the military life. Overseas, military families in Europe receive ministry of Word and sacrament at services conducted by the WELS European civilian chaplain. National civilian chaplain Paul Ziemer provides training for lay worship leaders, devotional materials, and counseling and encouragement to the deployed.

WELS Military Services has a budget of over \$220,000, about half of which is funded through gifts of individual WELS donors. \$5,000 would provide funds to visit troops deployed overseas; and \$10,000 would cover most costs of an MCP conference. Gifts

totaling \$15,000 would cover the housing costs of one of our chaplains or travel and training for 25 military contact pastors.

Prison Ministry

"This is the best, most accurately written content Bible study for prisoners to enrich their lives by faith in Jesus to save their souls and lives from the evil temptations of addiction. I thank God for WELS Special Ministries" (Derek). "I appreciate the time you guys take to spread the Word in an easy to understand manner. I can relate a lot to Jonah . . . I see me being here, in prison, as God's way of saying 'Aaron, return to me and read my Word'" (Aaron).

"I appreciate the time you guys take to spread the Word in an easy to understand manner. I can relate a lot to Jonah . . . I see me being here, in prison, as God's way of saying 'Aaron, return to me and read my Word'"

WELS Prison Ministry has published more than 35 Bible study courses (15 available in Spanish) for prisoners. Volunteers responded to the 13,000 prisoners who completed courses last year. Teams of trainers help WELS people do face-to-face jail ministry and mentoring.

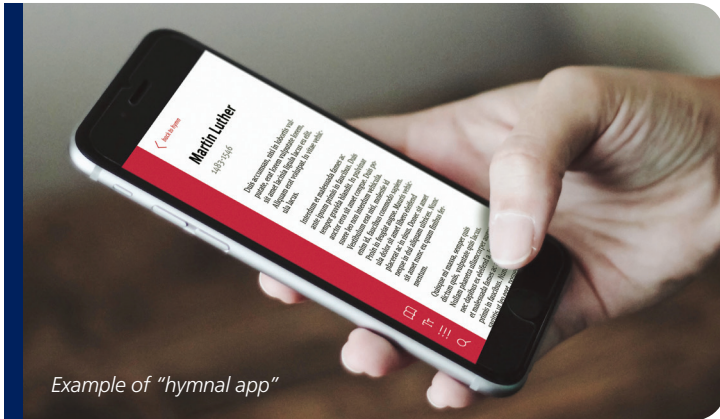
WELS Prison Ministry's budget of \$200,000 is funded through gifts and grants (which have been reduced recently). Gifts totaling \$7,500 would allow us to produce 15,000 books for one course. (We print/reprint five titles each year.)

Hymnal Project Digital Resources

The WELS long range plan, adopted by the 2011 convention, included a goal to "establish a committee to publish a new hymnal by the 500th anniversary of the first Lutheran hymnal (1524)." NPH agreed to fund the position of a project director and the work of various committees to prepare the hymnal and accompanying print volumes: pew edition, accompaniment edition, altar book, occasional services volume, and pastor's companion. The work began with the installation of a project director in April 2013 and the formation of project subcommittees – 60 people serving various aspects of the project.

Now, almost three years into the project, it is apparent that additional worship resources beyond printed volumes will enable planners, leaders, and worshipers to make the best use of a new hymnal's potential. Three additional resources are under consideration, pending sufficient funding to make them a reality. Research into recent hymnals and supplemental products created by other church bodies has discovered similar resources and shows the value of our WELS project producing such tools.

- A “service builder” computer program to expedite production of worship folders and take advantage of the hymnal’s flexible and vast resources, both print and electronic.
- A “musicians’ resource” – a powerful tool that allows musicians to print scores for a wide variety of instruments to better enable them to contribute their talent in worship.
- A personal digital edition of the hymnal – an app for tablet or smartphone. The goal for this resource is to make it easier for people to use hymnal contents as a personal devotional resource. Unlike a printed book, it could include audio files for personal or family devotions.



The “service builder” will greatly facilitate service planning and will vastly reduce the amount of time needed by the pastor and church office to create worship folders. It will assure that worship folder design is of the highest quality. In addition to presenting wonderful new hymns to our church body, this “service builder” is one of the most exciting goals of the hymnal project. (You can view a demo of a similar product created by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod by searching YouTube for “Lutheran Service Builder demo.”)

Christ’s church on earth has always been blessed by people who think not only of themselves, but of those who worshiped before them, those who worship with them, and those who will worship after them.
From welshymnal.com.

“For a generation yet unborn” is the hymnal project motto on the project’s homepage (welshymnal.com). Your gift will help the project’s resources to be the best they can be as older generations pass to younger generations the

awesome privileges of planning and leading...and worshipping. Development and production of all three resources is projected to cost several hundred thousand dollars.

WELS Worship Conferences

Inspiring current and future church musicians – that’s one goal for the triennial worship conferences. Your gift helps to make it affordable for adults, teens, and children to attend.

In 2014 over 1,000 people participated. For 2017 we want to feature a children’s choir of 80 voices and a high school honor choir of 120 voices – both drawn from all over the United States and Canada.

The worship conference is powerful for inspiring the next generation of church musicians, but that’s not all. After singing in the 2008 Honor Choir, Tyler Weinrich changed his college plans and enrolled at Martin Luther College. Now Weinrich is a third grade teacher and school music director, helping to train and inspire the next generation. He says about his worship conference experience:

I never knew that spending a few days with my peers and around God’s Word in song would have made such a powerful impact on my life. I thought I knew what I wanted to do with my career, but God had different plans for me. Being in the honor choir inspired me to pursue a profession in God’s ministry. The experiences of being a teacher and choir director have brought me great joy and fulfillment. I thank God for the worship conference, which he used to guide me into a life of service to him!

The inspirational impact of the children’s choir and high school honor choir is not only for children and teens. Kurt Cereske, the 2014 children’s choir director, presented a workshop, “Beautiful Sound from Average Children,” designed to help those who direct our Lutheran elementary school children. Many choir directors and Lutheran school teachers attend the conferences. They benefit from the excellent models of singing possible with children and teens. Lay leaders attend the conferences. Their impressions can help them to encourage pursuit of excellence in their churches back home.

Gifts totaling \$20,000 would make it affordable for 230 children, teens, and other students to attend the 2017 conference. Many of these young people would not be able to participate without generous support provided by those who encourage their musical development.

An additional \$30,000 allows registration fees to remain affordable for adults and subsidizes travel for those who travel the farthest.