

Committee No. 11
CONGREGATIONAL SERVICES

Our Lord has blessed our District congregations with many resources from WELS Congregational Services for focused attention on specific areas of gospel ministry and congregational life. The healthier a congregation is, spiritually speaking, the better she is able to participate in the joint ministry work (World Missions, Home Missions, Ministerial Education) that she does with all her sister congregations in our Synod.

These are the six areas of Congregational Services: Congregational Counseling, Discipleship, Evangelism, Lutheran Schools, Special Ministries, and Worship. Members and teammates from these six areas can visit our churches and schools to help assess ministry efforts and plan for the future through these tools. Merging for Mission can help nearby churches join forces. AXIS can help a church do long-range planning to revitalize a ministry. Everyone Outreach can help a church understand and even change its culture for the sake of furthering Christ's kingdom. WELS School Accreditation and Telling the Next Generation can help a Lutheran Elementary School achieve excellence in Christian education. Congregational Services also provides worship resources for pastors and musicians and other worship planners, a comprehensive stewardship program, a guide for WELS Youth Night, marriage resources for couples and for the pastors who counsel them before and after the wedding, a handbook for a congregation's Care Committee for Called Workers, help with fighting the temptation of pornography by way of Conquerors through Christ, abuse prevention training through Freedom for Captives, and, in the future, a module for adjusting a church's constitution and bylaws for more nimble decision-making and better use of members' abilities while remaining faithful to Scripture. One new standout appears to be the WELS Committee on Identity, Gender, and Sexuality which aims to serve and minister to those struggling with questions about their identity with compassionate truth and helpful resources, and also to those who have been called to provide biblical law and gospel to souls whom Christ loves. Other groups supported by WELS Congregational Services include those who serve in the military, the hearing impaired and the visually impaired, those with developmental disabilities, and those in prison.

For a complete list of all the events and resources offered by WELS Congregational Services visit their website <https://welscongregationalservices.net/>.

A number of us on this floor committee expressed appreciation for the work that fellow WELS members have accomplished to help our congregations with faithful and fruitful gospel ministry. A number of us also expressed dismay over not knowing about all these resources before reading about them in this year's RTTD. This report may therefore be taken by all WELS members in our Minnesota District as encouragement to read pages 26 – 35 in the 2024 RTTD and evaluate whether one or more of these resources might be deployed in their home congregation. Since many in the MN District may not know how to access the RTTD or that the RTTD even exists, we note that many of the paragraphs of the Congregational Services report in the RTTD pages 26 – 35 could be pasted "as is" (or quickly adapted) into weekly bulletins or PowerPoint slides for a series of informational blurbs so that our MN District members might know about the wide range of innovative, practical, biblical support that WELS Congregational Services provides.

Rev. Nathan Cordes, Chairman
Mr. Joel Pankow, Secretary

Pastors

Dennis Harbach
James Roecker
Keith Schreiner
Daniel Walters
Jonathan Zimpelmann
Anthony Allard
Yaffet Gabayehu
Marques Nelson
Edwin Frederick

Teachers

Paul Kelm
David Zabel
Daniel Kell
Mark Kutz
Kyle Seim
John Fenske
Scott Luepke
Mark Renner
Lucas Boehm
Scott Gostchock
Jonathan Huebner
Drew Kock
Jared Matthies
David Mielke
Wolf Parsons

Lay Delegates

Gary Stiller
Roger Klckziem
Jerry Dittbenner
Bruce Rigge
Richard Zeman
David Beadell
Terry Stremcha
Ron Matthees