

## **Special Needs Ministry** **(Including Elderly and Special Needs)**

### **Bible Passages:**

Matthew 25:40 "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'"

Galatians 3:26-28 "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, 27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

### **Objective:**

To establish and continually review and improve ministries, which include, actively involve and support the people with special needs in our family of believers and community.

### **Rationale:**

Although many members are interested in talking about the future of our congregation, and with that imply that our ministry needs to be focused on young families, young adults and children, in reality 40.6% of our congregation is over 60 years old. (An additional 21% are over 45 years old.) Lowering the average age of our congregation is a goal, which we hope the Outreach programs will address. But as that happens during the next 7 years we cannot neglect the needs of St. John's older members. The Diagnostic Analysis (May, 2000) indicates that people who are moving into Red Wing tend to be over 45.

60-90% of developmentally disabled Americans are not being spiritually nourished. The WELS' "Jesus Cares Ministries", already active within our community, only provides a limited Christian education to the developmentally disabled.

Our proximity to Jordan Towers and Seminary Plaza also encourages us to focus attention on seniors and people with special needs. With the County Jail across the street and the Red Wing Correctional Facility in town we also have an opportunity to serve prisoners and their families.

What a unique and tremendous privilege we have to share the gospel of God's love, mercy and forgiveness through Christ with people whose time on life grows shorter and with others who are in need of that message of compassion.

**During the next seven years:**

**To make this vision a reality:**

1. We envision an active **Visitation Ministry**, that is the **Shut-in Ministry**, which includes lay members as well as the pastors.
  - a. The church secretary will keep an accurate record of members who are not able to attend worship.
  - b. The visitation committee members will recruit new visitors annually.
  - c. The pastors will provide training and materials for the visitation committee at semi-annual meetings.
  - d. The visitation committee will be depended on to deliver audio, video, and digital recordings of worship services and Bible Classes to those who request such services.
  - e. The congregation needs to proactively support and promote the Lutheran Chapel of the Air to our members.
  
2. We envision that **hospital visits** will continue to be a high priority for the pastors.
  - a. The pastors will respond immediately to a crisis call.
  - b. The pastors will strive to visit the local hospital 3 times a week, and more often on special request or circumstances.
  - c. The pastors will strive to visit congregational members hospitalized out-of-town on a weekly basis. WELS chaplains will be notified and make regular visits to our members who are hospitalized out of town.

(Note: The Pastors would appreciate being notified when family members are discharged from the hospital.)
  
3. We envision creating the position of **member ministry coordinator** to help involve members in Special Ministries of the congregation. (Cf. Appendix 2)
  
4. We envision the congregation will provide **senior members** of the congregation opportunities to serve the church and to be served as special needs arise.
  - a. A local branch of Organization of WELS Lutheran Seniors (OWLS) will be established and operating with lay leadership with the pastors serving as devotion leaders and advisory members of the leadership committee. (Cf. Group Life/ Fellowship 2d1)
  - b. Senior members will be utilized as a dependable source of volunteer workers, this may be as mentors; visitors; greeters; ushers; drivers; funeral ushers; funeral set up; mailing; grounds keeping; (Continued on next page)

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maintenance; janitorial services; helpers at the Lutheran  
Elementary School, Children's Bible Study, or Vacation  
Bible School; etc.

5. We envision our  
ministry to the **Hard of  
Hearing** will improve.

- a. The Media Committee will regularly check and improve the church's sound system.
- b. The Media Committee will make a personal sound system available to individuals who request them
- c. The pastors or the secretary will make printed copies of the sermon available before each service.
- d. The Worship Committee will make signed services available when needed, and will advertise those services through local media.
- e. The congregation will provide for the training of our members to meet the needs of the deaf and hard of hearing.

6. We envision our  
ministry to the **Visually  
Impaired** will continue  
to improve.

- a. The Worship Committee will provide large print bulletins and hymnals available at every service, Bible Class, and meetings.
- b. The Worship Committee will prepare the Braille hymnal for each service
- c. The Worship Committee will educate the congregation and make use of the synod's Mission for the Visually Impaired, and the materials that are available through this ministry.

7. We envision that special  
attention must be given  
to the **physically  
disabled** members and  
visitors to our church  
and school.

- a. The church council will give serious consideration to all accessibility issues in our church and school, i.e. adequate ramps, doorways, bathroom access to be provided for worshippers and students. (Cf. Appendix 1)
- b. The congregation will provide a "user friendly" area for those who desire to use it. (Cf. Worship 3, 5)

8. We envision an active  
chapter of **Jesus Cares  
Ministry** or a similar  
program for those who  
are developmentally  
disabled.

- a. The congregation will increase their involvement by recruiting volunteers and financially supporting the Jesus Cares Ministry.
- b. The Jesus Cares Ministry will participate by singing regularly in regular worship services.
- c. The pastors will arrange for adapted worship services at St. John's on a regular basis. (A special service particularly to meet the needs of our developmentally disabled worshippers.)

9. We envision special attention will continue to be given to our **college and prep school students**: The congregation will remember and encourage its young people who are away from home.
- a. The church secretary will keep accurate address records of all members in this age group.
  - b. The Ladies Guild may send annual “care packages”.
  - c. All students will be registered with the WELS Campus Ministry and included on the Synod mailing list, and campus ministry referral lists.
10. We envision that the **Military Personnel** will continue to be recognized and remembered by the congregation: The congregation will remember and encourage its members who are away from home, serving in the armed forces.
- a. The church secretary will keep accurate address records of all members in the armed forces.
  - b. The Ladies Guild may send annual “care packages”
  - c. All military personnel will be registered with the WELS Special Ministries and included on the Synod mailing list, and military contact pastors referral lists.
11. We envision special attention will continue to be given to any member of the congregation living away from St. John’s, Red Wing.
- a. The church secretary will keep accurate records of all these members.
  - b. The Elders will oversee the execution of this process.
12. We envision that **Prison Ministries** will continue to be a regular part of our ministry.
- a. The pastors will visit members, who are incarcerated at the County Jails in our area,
  - b. The pastors will visit other WELS/ELS members, on request, at the county jails or the Minnesota Correctional Facility-Red Wing.
  - c. The Outreach Committee will arrange for the education of and will encourage congregational members to participate in the WELS Kingdom Workers Prison Ministry program (Bible Study correcting, and pen pals). (Cf. Outreach 9d)

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- d. The Outreach Team will work together with area WELS congregations to establish an ongoing ministry of worship or Bible classes at the Goodhue County Jail and the Minnesota Correctional Facility-Red Wing.
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13. We envision operating a **Transportation** system for worship and other events.
    - a. This program will initially be a network of volunteers that will be coordinated by the Happy Hearts of the Ladies Guild.
    - b. Within 7 years, this program will be managed by the Member Ministry Coordinator.
    - c. At the end of 7 years, we foresee owning and operating a multi-passenger vehicle in order to help meet the transportation needs of our congregation. (We foresee transportation will be used for seniors, class trips, fellowship, Young People's, disabled, Jesus Cares, etc.)
  
  14. We envision the congregation will continue showing its support and concern for its called workers (and their spouse) through the Care Committee for the Called Workers.  
(Cf. Appendix 2)
  
  15. We envision an annual **appreciation event or worship service** for volunteers and others who serve the congregation.
    - a. The church elders will appoint this committee.

Additional special ministries might be considered during the next seven years. It is strongly suggested that the pastors be used only as resource people and teachers in the implementation of additional programs, which the congregation might choose to initiate.