

**TOGETHER**

March 19, 2024

## Groups addressing important issues

---

**A** number of groups have been carrying out their assignments to address various issues that are important to our called workers, congregations, and members. Here is an update on those groups and their assignments.

### **The Ministry Recruitment task force (already described more fully in a previous issue of *Together*)**

Chaired by Rev. Paul Prange, this task force was formed as a result of a resolution passed by the 2023 synod convention due to the significant shortage of pastors, teachers, and staff ministers. Its assignment is to look at all factors that impact the recruitment of called workers and bring recommendations for a synodwide effort to recruit and train more called workers. It will bring its recommendations to the 2025 synod convention.

### **Task force on critical theories**

Chaired by Rev. Snowden Sims, this task force was assigned to evaluate the topic of critical theories and provide guidance to WELS called workers and members on how to understand and address these philosophies in light of Scripture. The task force will submit its recommendations to the Conference of Presidents, which will then produce and distribute a pastoral brief on the subject.

### **Theology curriculum task force**

The theology curriculum task force is currently in an 18-month development of the components necessary for future content writers to create new instructional materials for WELS schools to use for the instruction of God's Word. The task force wants the new curriculum to hold fast to our purposes of sharing God's Word in its truth and purity with the next generation and meet the needs of increasingly diverse classrooms. One of its goals is to provide a curriculum that is primarily digital in format, which will make it possible to update the curriculum on an ongoing basis. The task force chairman is Mr. Jim Rademan. Mrs. Melanie Giddings is the curriculum coordinator.

### **Long-range strategic planning task force**

Chaired by Rev. Jonathan Hein, this task force is developing a new synod long-range strategic plan that will guide all areas of synodical mission and ministry. The six-year plan, entitled "Christ through us" (the theme of the 2025 synod convention), will be presented to the synod convention in 2025.

### **175th anniversary planning committee**

Chaired by Prof. Joel Otto, the committee has already begun to make plans for the celebration of the synod's 175th anniversary in 2025. The theme for that celebration will be the same as the theme for the 2025 convention ("Christ through us"). Plans include a book that provides a pictorial history of the synod, video vignettes, an interactive online history of WELS, and a synodwide celebration Sunday in the fall of 2025.

**TOGETHER**

March 19, 2024

## Groups addressing important issues

---

**A** number of groups have been carrying out their assignments to address various issues that are important to our called workers, congregations, and members. Here is an update on those groups and their assignments.

### **The Ministry Recruitment task force (already described more fully in a previous issue of *Together*)**

Chaired by Rev. Paul Prange, this task force was formed as a result of a resolution passed by the 2023 synod convention due to the significant shortage of pastors, teachers, and staff ministers. Its assignment is to look at all factors that impact the recruitment of called workers and bring recommendations for a synodwide effort to recruit and train more called workers. It will bring its recommendations to the 2025 synod convention.

### **Task force on critical theories**

Chaired by Rev. Snowden Sims, this task force was assigned to evaluate the topic of critical theories and provide guidance to WELS called workers and members on how to understand and address these philosophies in light of Scripture. The task force will submit its recommendations to the Conference of Presidents, which will then produce and distribute a pastoral brief on the subject.

### **Theology curriculum task force**

The theology curriculum task force is currently in an 18-month development of the components necessary for future content writers to create new instructional materials for WELS schools to use for the instruction of God's Word. The task force wants the new curriculum to hold fast to our purposes of sharing God's Word in its truth and purity with the next generation and meet the needs of increasingly diverse classrooms. One of its goals is to provide a curriculum that is primarily digital in format, which will make it possible to update the curriculum on an ongoing basis. The task force chairman is Mr. Jim Rademan. Mrs. Melanie Giddings is the curriculum coordinator.

### **Long-range strategic planning task force**

Chaired by Rev. Jonathan Hein, this task force is developing a new synod long-range strategic plan that will guide all areas of synodical mission and ministry. The six-year plan, entitled "Christ through us" (the theme of the 2025 synod convention), will be presented to the synod convention in 2025.

### **175th anniversary planning committee**

Chaired by Prof. Joel Otto, the committee has already begun to make plans for the celebration of the synod's 175th anniversary in 2025. The theme for that celebration will be the same as the theme for the 2025 convention ("Christ through us"). Plans include a book that provides a pictorial history of the synod, video vignettes, an interactive online history of WELS, and a synodwide celebration Sunday in the fall of 2025.


## Gender, sexuality, identity

A standing committee (not a temporary task force), chaired by Rev. Greg Lyon, is developing resources for pastors, congregations, parents, and young people to help them deal with transgender and same-sex attraction issues that are becoming more common in our society and culture.

## Man/woman roles

The Conference of Presidents is continuing its work to develop a pastoral brief on man/woman roles. The brief will be distributed as soon as it is completed.

Please remember these groups as they work to address important issues biblically and evangelically.

Serving with you in Christ,  
WELS President Mark Schroeder 

## Supporting called workers

**T**he Care Committee for Called Workers (CCCW), part of WELS Special Ministries, recently updated its materials. The CCCW exists to assist WELS calling bodies in the spiritual, physical, intellectual, and emotional care of their called workers. Its materials offer instructions on how to set up a congregational care committee as well as ways to help called workers financially prepare for retirement.

“While many calling bodies informally provide support to their workers, having an intentional, structured plan and organization makes sure workers are heard and encouraged,” says Rev. Joel Gaertner, director of WELS Special Ministries. A congregational Care Committee for Called Workers can provide that structure so congregations can make sure their workers are cared for.

St. John, Redwood Falls, Minn., has had a formal Care Committee for Called Workers for years, offering support to its 14 called workers and 2 support staff at its church and school. Five lay married couples form the committee, which is

headed by Mr. Lance Otto, a member of the congregation’s Board of Elders. Otto says a couple from the committee is in contact with the called worker from the very beginning—right when the call is accepted. That connection continues with once-a-year formal visits and numerous check-ins throughout the year. “They’re not just there to solve problems; they’re there to be a supporter and encourager,” says Otto. Having a contact couple also offers a safe place for called workers to share their concerns.

“Our Savior demonstrated a loving and caring heart for his disciples throughout his ministry. By his example, Jesus gave us a model of caring for our called workers. His command to love one another surely applies to Christians caring for the workers he sends us,” says Gaertner. “A local CCCW is often the best way to accomplish this.”

Learn more about how to set up a Care Committee for Called Workers in your congregation at [wels.net/ccw](http://wels.net/ccw).


## Gender, sexuality, identity

A standing committee (not a temporary task force), chaired by Rev. Greg Lyon, is developing resources for pastors, congregations, parents, and young people to help them deal with transgender and same-sex attraction issues that are becoming more common in our society and culture.

## Man/woman roles

The Conference of Presidents is continuing its work to develop a pastoral brief on man/woman roles. The brief will be distributed as soon as it is completed.

Please remember these groups as they work to address important issues biblically and evangelically.

Serving with you in Christ,  
WELS President Mark Schroeder 

## Supporting called workers

**T**he Care Committee for Called Workers (CCCW), part of WELS Special Ministries, recently updated its materials. The CCCW exists to assist WELS calling bodies in the spiritual, physical, intellectual, and emotional care of their called workers. Its materials offer instructions on how to set up a congregational care committee as well as ways to help called workers financially prepare for retirement.

“While many calling bodies informally provide support to their workers, having an intentional, structured plan and organization makes sure workers are heard and encouraged,” says Rev. Joel Gaertner, director of WELS Special Ministries. A congregational Care Committee for Called Workers can provide that structure so congregations can make sure their workers are cared for.

St. John, Redwood Falls, Minn., has had a formal Care Committee for Called Workers for years, offering support to its 14 called workers and 2 support staff at its church and school. Five lay married couples form the committee, which is

headed by Mr. Lance Otto, a member of the congregation’s Board of Elders. Otto says a couple from the committee is in contact with the called worker from the very beginning—right when the call is accepted. That connection continues with once-a-year formal visits and numerous check-ins throughout the year. “They’re not just there to solve problems; they’re there to be a supporter and encourager,” says Otto. Having a contact couple also offers a safe place for called workers to share their concerns.

“Our Savior demonstrated a loving and caring heart for his disciples throughout his ministry. By his example, Jesus gave us a model of caring for our called workers. His command to love one another surely applies to Christians caring for the workers he sends us,” says Gaertner. “A local CCCW is often the best way to accomplish this.”

Learn more about how to set up a Care Committee for Called Workers in your congregation at [wels.net/ccw](http://wels.net/ccw).



To sign up for the e-mail version, visit  
[wels.net/together](http://wels.net/together).



To sign up for the e-mail version, visit  
[wels.net/together](http://wels.net/together).