

## Pacific Northwest District Special Ministries Report June, 2016

Report to the Twelve Districts pages 41-47

Special Ministries are ministries that show compassion for those who need a little help or those who are far from home. Every single person will need Special Ministries sometime in their life. It covers Prison, Military, Care Committee for Called Workers, Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Mental health, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Visually Impaired, Health and Wellness. Special Ministries provides resources and some training in these areas of love. Each congregation has individuals who will need resources because they have special needs.

Pastor James Behringer writes the following in the Report to the Twelve Districts:

*Through its leaders and committees and in partnership with several WELS parasynodical agencies, Special Ministries committees mobilize thousands of volunteers in a worldwide effort to meet the spiritual needs of people who might otherwise be ignored or forgotten. All units of Special Ministries are almost entirely dependent on grants and the freewill offerings of individuals, congregations, and groups. In the recent budgets, \$30,000 has been designated to partially support the civilian chaplain program of Military Services. Other than that funding, only the Special Ministries administrative office is funded through the synod budget.*

*As part of the Congregation and Ministry Support Group (CMSG) Special Ministries probably provides more ministry resources to congregations and individuals than most areas of WELS ministry. The Special Ministries Resource Center ([www.csm.welsrc.net](http://www.csm.welsrc.net)) has become a vital link in providing resources quickly and economically. With the launch of this resource center in 2015, Special Ministries has invested a lot of effort in making it useful and valuable for the sake of people with special needs, and the WELS ministries that serve them. It continues to be a challenge to make our called workers and laity aware of the wealth of Special Ministries resources available.*

*A key to several Special Ministries is referral. Military Services, Prison Ministry, Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Ministry and ministry to the Visually Impaired depend upon referrals and requests for help. This year the WELS referral form was streamlined to make it easier to refer people for Special Ministries. If you or someone you know can benefit specialized ministry resources, please use the form at [wels.net/referral](http://wels.net/referral).*

I would like to highlight a new area in Special Ministries, namely, Health and Wellness. This committee covers a vast area of need. It is missioned with offering programs and materials for the spiritual, physical and mental care to all people when they are homebound or in a care facility. The WELS Chaplain Certification program is part of Health and Wellness. If you would like more information about the WELS Chaplain Certification program please talk with Pastor Fred Voss. He has completed the course and is using it in his ministry. The WELS Nurses Association is also part of Health and Wellness. If you have a nurse in your congregation, please encourage them to contact [www.welsnurses.net](http://www.welsnurses.net).

The Pacific Northwest District Special Ministries Committee has Pastor Robbin Robbert in Wasilla, Alaska. He is Special Olympics trained and has served on the Special Ministries National committee. His father dedicates his time and effort serving on the National Special Ministries Board.

Pastor Edward Frey Jr of Nampa, Idaho is also a veteran of serving on the national Special Ministries Committee when he was a pastor in another district. He brings his knowledge and his heart to our district to help those churches in our Eastern part of our District.

Pastor Thomas Gumm is our District's coordinator and lives in Seattle. He is on the Synod's Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Committee. He is IDDM's Facebook page manager. He is trained in helping those with autism.

Please come over to the Special Ministries display to talk and look at the materials.