

Floor Committee #11: Congregational Services—Group A (Congregational Counseling, Discipleship, Evangelism)

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Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp. 29-36; [welsconvention.net/boram](http://welsconvention.net/boram)—*Supplemental Report Congregational Counseling, Supplemental Report Commission on Adult Discipleship, and Supplemental Report Commission on Evangelism*

Report No. 01

WELS Congregational Services exists to encourage and equip congregations for faithful and fruitful gospel ministry. Our committee reviewed the work of Congregational Counseling, Discipleship, and Evangelism.

We thank the Lord for the many and varied resources that these commissions have provided to our congregations. We recognize and give thanks for the diligent work of those who lead these commissions: Director Jonathan Hein of Congregational Services, Director Donn Dobberstein of Discipleship, and Director Eric Roecker of Evangelism. We also wish to thank Pastor Adam Mueller who was an original member of the Commission on Congregational Counseling and has termed out after a decade of service. We thank these men for their faithful service. We also offer a hearty “thank you” to all the support staff and volunteers who work in these areas of service to support our congregations.

The committee marveled over the many and varied programs that Congregational Counseling has assembled to help congregations with their ministries. One example is Congregational Counseling’s *Merging for Mission Program* (M4M). We recognize the need for this program. As the Congregational Counseling supplemental report points out, there are statistical trends in church attendance, births and baptisms, new adult members received, school enrollment numbers, and demographic changes (cf. the foreseen “enrollment cliff”), that will require congregations and schools to make critical decisions. Having the assistance of district and synodical people and programs will aid in making wise decisions. One of the members of our committee is currently seeing the results of congregations merging in his hometown. He described how Congregational Counseling steps in and helps when there is a question or a problem. We note with approval that “one component” of the synod's updated long-range plan “will be the launch of a program that supports congregations in geographic proximity as they consider if their ministry efforts might be strengthened through cooperation or even consolidation” (*BORAM*, p. 54).

Since this already seems to be working and is part of the plans for the future, we pray that Congregational Counseling has the resources that it needs to effectively carry out this program. We welcome and give thanks to God for the addition of Mr. Dan Nommensen to the Congregational Services staff to help coordinate this work.

The positive and uplifting reports of Congregational Counseling were also mirrored in the reports for Discipleship and Evangelism. We encourage the delegates to become familiar with the many programs and resources described in the reports (e.g. Everyone Outreach). The committee encourages the delegates to draw attention to this information in your home congregation and in neighboring congregations. We also encourage laymen, pastors, and teachers to subscribe to and receive information from the Congregational Services website. The website address is **welcongregationalservices.net**. The committee notes with joy that a great many of the resources from Congregational Counseling, Discipleship, and Evangelism (not to mention the other commissions of Congregational Services) are free of charge. We further encourage congregations to appoint someone (or more than one someone) to study these resources and advocate for them in their congregation as opportunities and needs arise.

We pray that the Lord of the Church continue to bless Congregational Services as the commissions seek to provide necessary resources for our congregations and their ministries.

Pastor Benjamin Tomczak, chairman  
Pastor John Sprain, secretary