

Floor Committee #12: Congregational Services B (Special Ministries, Worship)

Subject: Special Ministries and Worship

Reference: *Book of Reports and Memorials*, pp. 29-36; online supplemental reports for Special Ministries and Worship

Report No. 01

Our floor committee notes the retirement of Rev. Jim Behringer as director of Commission on Special Ministries and thanks him for his faithful service in this area. We also pray that Rev. Joel Gaertner's leadership as the new director continues the important task of sharing the gospel with anyone and everyone despite any challenge or obstacle. It is heartening to see the compassion in action that Special Ministries leads and encourages.

Our floor committee gave considerable discussion to the new hymnal. We first of all want to acknowledge the massive amount of work that was put into the hymnal and thank project director Michael Schultz, the nearly 100 volunteers, and the staff at Northwestern Publishing House (NPH) for their commitment and effort. Our committee expresses appreciation especially for the vast resources available, the Service Builder program, and the options for the psalms.

We discussed the implementation of the new hymnal in the congregations of our committee members. Not all the congregations represented in our committee are using the new hymnal, but the majority of them are, whether that means using the services in their entirety or introducing elements from the services. The following comments were noted. The services and music of the new hymnal seem to require a high level of musicianship and significant preparation, with some items seeming to require a concert-level ability to do well. That is not necessarily a bad thing, but we could see congregations with fewer musical resources having some struggles. Simplified accompaniments may be welcome for some congregations. Some members have found it difficult to sing some of the psalms, chants, and other liturgical parts. The books for musicians are cumbersome to transport and to use. Perhaps there could be a different organization of material to ease in playing for worship. With those comments noted, the committee does not mean to disparage the project or the finished product. The committee thanks the hymnal project participants for a wealth of resources and the beauty of what they have brought together.

Finally, our floor committee discussed an unprinted memorial (2023-05) regarding WELS' heritage of worship. Committee members confirmed the accuracy of the memorial's whereas statements, and the committee agreed to bring the memorial to the floor of the synod convention. It was noted that some of the translation work proposed in the memorial has been done already by a Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS) source. Our committee explored how much might need to be translated and how much a project like this might cost for a paid translator to do the work. Based on information gained from a man who has professionally translated materials for the LCMS, a rough estimate puts the project at 150,000 words at a potential cost of \$12,000 to \$15,000 if a translator charged full price to do the work. That

estimate may be highly exaggerated based on certain factors (how much material is already translated and publicly available, how much a translator is going to charge, whether or not someone might take on the work at a reduced rate or even *pro bono*, etc.); however, our committee felt it was important to make the voters aware of a potential cost with this resolution.

Pastor Bart Brauer, chairman

Teacher Michael Koestler, secretary