



## ***Congregational Leaders to Evaluate and Enhance the Evangelism Program of Their Church***

### **PART 1: CLEAR SENSE OF OUR MISSION**

#### **The Church is the Body of Christ**

 *1 Corinthians 12:12,27*

The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ.... Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

*The church is living, active, growing—like a body...*

#### **A body that is built up—nurture**

 *Ephesians 4:11-16*

It was [Christ] who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

 *2 Peter 3:17,18*

Dear friends, ... be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

*Nurture means growth. Peter warns, “Be on your guard...” there are false teachers and teachings that can sicken us and even destroy us. We need to remain spiritually healthy, and we do this by: “Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18) Within a Christian congregation a gathering of believers has the opportunity to help each other grow in faith. The goal of our growth is to: a) reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son, and b) become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. We grow and help each other grow that we have full knowledge the Scriptures and totally accept it. God’s goal for us is to be a spiritual adult—mature that matches the model: Christ. “until”—this complete unity and maturity will not be attained in this life, but in the next. Yet we keep striving to grow, for when we slack off we are weakened and can fall prey to Satan.*

## A body that builds together—fellowship

📖 *Ephesians 4:4-6*

There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

*There is one body* members of the body—the church—do not pull apart, they cooperate *and one Spirit* the group of believers is “dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit (2:22)” —*just as you were called to one hope* all share the hope of the resurrection from the dead *when you were called—one Lord* Jesus the way, truth, life, *one faith* united in our common faith in Jesus, *one baptism* the means by which we were brought to faith; *one God and Father of all* only true God whom we are privileged to call ‘Father’, *who is over all and through all and in all*.

A translation of the Greek word *κοινωνία* (*koinonia*), “fellowship” means oneness, sharing, having all things in common. When we think of our condition from the very beginning of our existence—alienated from God and from each other—we realize that fellowship is a marvelous gift of God. In our original state we were far off from God and separated from one another. God has graciously brought us to himself and thus joined us also to one another. This he has done by the blood of Jesus and by the Holy Spirit working through the means of grace. It is by the “love of God” and the “grace of our Lord Jesus Christ” and the “fellowship [brought about by] the Holy Spirit” (2 Corinthians 13:13) that God has drawn us together. And God continues to keep us close to himself and to each other through the same means of grace, the gospel in the Word and also in the fellowship meal of the Sacrament, through which God provides us with a “participation” (*κοινωνία*, fellowship) in the body and blood of Christ.

Within a Christian congregation a group of Christians has the opportunity to enjoy and display this fellowship. The Christian congregation ideally will be a marvelous showcase that expresses visibly the truth of Ephesians 4 that we have “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.” Within a Christian congregation a gathering of believers around Word and Sacrament enjoys the blessing of experiencing “the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love”—a common and united faith in the Lord Jesus and his redemptive work, founded and caused to flourish by the Spirit through the means of grace.

## A body that builds out—outreach

📖 *Ephesians 3:6*

...through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

Fellowship and nurture have to do with that which we experience within the family of believers. Outreach has to do with reaching out to those outside the congregation, particularly to those outside the family of Christ. It has to do with giving those outside the family of Christ what they need the most, the message of new life in Jesus Christ. Congregations share the Gospel of Christ with the community so that by the power of the Spirit others can be brought into the Christian family where they, with us, can enjoy the blessings of Christian fellowship and nurture.

For our physical bodies to be healthy, the various systems must all function well and complement one another. Think of nurture, fellowship, and outreach as systems that Christ our Head has for his body, the Church. If the systems are imbalanced, the functions Jesus has designed for his body of believers are negatively affected. Guided and strengthened by God's Word, we strive to focus on people with ministry of nurture, fellowship, and outreach.

It happens, perhaps far too much, that congregations become more inward-focused than outreach-oriented. The "bodily systems" of nurture and fellowship receive attention and effort, while attention to outreach lacks.

*Discussion:*

How does a congregation's nurture ministry serve its outreach ministry?

And vice versa, how does its outreach ministry serve its nurture ministry?

- a) **As Christians grow (nurture) in the Word, they are motivated and equipped to share the Word with others.**
- b) **As more people are contacted with outreach, there is more teaching to do, more classes of various levels to hold, more people to serve in member ministry.**

What tensions do congregations experience as they strive to do both nurture and outreach?

**It comes down to these needs: people who do the work, time for doing the work, and resources for getting the work done.**

### **Learn from Jesus**

📖 *Matthew 9:35,36*

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

**Compassion— ἐσπλαγχνίσθη—**to be moved in the inward parts, i.e. to feel compassion

**Harassed— ἐσκυλλμένοι—**root means to flay, like flay with a knife.

**Helpless— ἐρριμμένοι—**lit. "cast away"

📖 *2 Corinthians 5:14-20*

Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. So, from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.

Christ died for all—the whole world, and we who embrace his death by faith will now...

"no longer live for themselves"—our sinful nature leads us to be self-centered, a “what’s in it for me” attitude. Think of the disciples who argued about getting positions of honor and glory in Christ’s kingdom, but for him who died for us. Our great motivation is the love that Christ has for us, that he died for our sins. We are compelled not by what we have to do (law) but by what Christ has done for us (gospel). Whenever we get weary with ministry, come back to this verse again and again.

“Regard no one from a worldly point of view”—we don’t see people with self-centered motivation—looking at them as competition or a threat to what I want for myself. We see them as people for whom Jesus died and are compelled to bring them the gospel so that they may know him as their Savior and receive the gift of eternal life.

Through Christ who died and rose again, we are a “new creation.” It’s the work of God—creation.

We have been given the “ministry of reconciliation” to tell truthfully the work that God accomplished through his Son, Jesus Christ. He reconciled the world—all people—to himself through Christ (objective). Now he commissions us to speak the truth of that message, so people hear and believe it. For only by faith do people receive the benefits of the reconciliation that God has already accomplished. If they reject it—their sins remain on them, and they will be condemned.

Implications for evangelism:

- We don’t have to wonder if people are included in God’s act of reconciliation through Christ.
- We won’t burden people’s consciences with rules and regulations for salvation.
- We are compelled by the love of Christ to tell others the good news.

## Commission of Christ

com + mission = the mission of Christ that he has called us to share with him.

## Four Commissioning Passages:

(see: *We Believe Therefore We Speak*: David Valleskey, pages 126–134)

📖 *Matthew 28:18–20*

Then Jesus came to [the eleven disciples] and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Disciple—follower of Jesus, believer. Christ tells us to do this by using the means of grace, particularly baptism, by which the Holy Spirit brings people to faith, and then continue teaching them everything that he taught us—that people grow in the faith and are guarded against all that would dissuade them from following Christ.

*Discussion:* How does the universal authority and permanent presence of Jesus impact the commission he has given us—to make disciples of all nations?

📖 *Mark 16:15,16*

[Jesus] said to [the Eleven], "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."

The timeline of this passage is not just during the lifetime of the Eleven, but this is a commission to his church. The preaching of the gospel is what Christ wants done until he comes back. He said, "This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14).

Go (literally) "having gone"—the assumption is that we will go to those who have not heard it and believed it.

Two responses: faith and will be saved. Unbelief and will be condemned. When we proclaim the gospel "we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life. (2 Corinthians 2:15-16).

📖 *Luke 24:46-49*

[Jesus] told [the Eleven and those gathered with them], "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

In the Matthew passage, Jesus promised his enduring presence and power for his church. In this passage he adds to that. We can count on power from on high—the reference is to the coming of the Holy Spirit.

📖 *John 20:21-23*

Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

The Father sent Jesus; Jesus sends us—think of the grand purpose that describes for us!

Filled with the Holy Spirit, the church handles the keys to the kingdom of heaven.

*Discussion:*

If you had been one of the disciples in the presence of the risen Lord Jesus and heard him speak these words, what key truths would impact your mind and how would those truths shape your life?

## With a clear sense of our mission for evangelism:

- Unbelievers and the unchurched are a focus of our attention and action.
- Church leaders prayerfully plan with purpose: evaluation of current situation, setting goals, developing strategies, implementing action plans.
- Members are unified in their service to one another and in their efforts to reach more people for Jesus through involvement in evangelism efforts of the congregation and in their friendship witnessing.
- “Church is people, God’s people—gathered, forgiven, motivated, called, sent, and energized by the gospel, a people missionized and on mission from our Lord Jesus, a people who are God’s mission within their sphere of influence, an amazing grouping of groups of people who have God’s mission in their hearts, a God-given purpose for their lives, and a harvest field of empty and helpless and hopeless and homeless and fatherless and godless and pain-filled souls waiting to be welcomed, accepted, and gathered—by someone.” ~Wayne Schulz (conference paper: *Every Church a Mission*)

## PART 2: CONGREGATIONAL EVANGELISM

### Evangelism—What it is?

In the middle of the word “evangelism” is the word “angel”. One of the tasks that God gave his angels is to be messengers. We recall how God sent the angel Gabriel to announce to Mary that she would give birth to the Savior of the world (Luke 1:26–38). Thus, the word “angel” means “messenger”. With the word “evangelism” the focus is on the message that messengers bring. The prefix “ev” comes from the Greek and means “good” so evangelism is about the good message, the good news—the gospel. Evangelism is the activity of spreading the good news of the kingdom of God, the gospel of eternal salvation through Jesus Christ.

### Evangelism—What is needed?

Only two things needed for evangelism:

1. **The gospel** which is “the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile” (Romans 1:16).
2. **An audience** of the gospel: “Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17).

**The only way that people come to faith in Jesus and grow in faith is by the power of Holy Spirit working through gospel. (See 1 Corinthians 12:3, Romans 1:16.) Our effort is to gather an audience for the gospel (Romans 10:17), and then tell people the gospel.**

### Evangelism—What is the motivation?

- *Christ’s Work for Us Completed Our Joy*

Christian joy is possessing peace that comes with God’s forgiveness. It is having the assurance of God’s presence and providence. It is living with the confidence of life after death in heaven. Our joy in Jesus is perfect and

permanent. It is perfect because he paid fully the price of our redemption. It is permanent because God has declared us free from sin through Jesus and gives us eternal life by faith in him.

The gospel is the amazing message that Jesus has completed everything for our salvation. He lived a holy life to fulfill God's will of perfection for people. He bore the punishment of the world's sin by his bitter sufferings and death. After Christ completed every detail of God's plan of salvation, he declared from the cross, "It is finished." There is nothing more that we can do to complete salvation. It is already done. In amazing grace God credited the perfect life of his Son to us, and he counted Jesus' death as our death for sin. Jesus is our joy because he is our complete Savior!

- ***Our Work for Christ Completes Our Joy***

The Savior who fully completed the work of salvation is the same one who gives us the work of spreading the message of salvation. When we proclaim the gospel so that others come to faith through the power of the Word, our joy in Jesus is completed. The apostle John wrote in his first epistle: "We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete" (1 John 1:1-4). In his second epistle he writes also, "I have much to write to you, but I do not want to use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to visit you and talk with you face to face, so that our joy may be complete" (2 John 12). John's joy in the Lord would be complete when his readers shared saving faith in Jesus with him.

The original word rendered in the NIV as "complete" means to perform a divinely given task. The same Greek word translated with the word "fulfillment" is used in connection with Jesus' transfiguration. Moses and Elijah talked with the Lord "about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem" (Luke 9:31). On Good Friday Jesus fulfilled his Father's will of completing the reconciliation of the whole world to God.

Now our work is to complete the divinely given task of sharing the good news of salvation through Christ. Just as Jesus loved his Father and obeyed his will, so we love Jesus and dedicate ourselves to obeying his will. The Savior said, "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete" (John 15:9-11).

Jesus finished the work of salvation in loving obedience to his Father. It filled him with joy and satisfaction that he had complied fully with his Father's will and redeemed the world from sin's curse. Similarly, our love for Jesus makes us glad to do his bidding of sharing the only message which saves people from eternal death. How it gladdens our hearts when people see Jesus through the gospel and are led to confess him as their Savior and Lord!

This is our single motivation for working hard to identify and seek prospects: “For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again” (2 Corinthians 5:14-15).

## Key Components of a Congregation’s Evangelism Program

### Locating Prospects

#### 1. Prospect is:

- Any unchurched/unbelieving person we discover through personal contacts or outreach efforts who is open to receiving information about Jesus or our church.
- Any unchurched/unbelieving person who comes to us and expresses interest, openness to discussion, or receiving information about Jesus or our church.
- Any unchurched/unbelieving person who is known by someone in our congregation who requests that name be put on the prospect list and for whom they are praying: loved one, FRAN, co-worker, etc. (FRAN = Friend, Relative, Acquaintance, Neighbor)
- Any churched person who initiates the discussion or visits our worship service or other event and expresses an interest for more information.

#### 2. Prospect Sources:

- Worship service guests
- Families of children in Sunday School & VBS
- Early Childhood Ministry & Lutheran Elementary School
- People requesting pastoral ministry
- Member referrals
- Adult Information Class referrals
- Unchurched spouses/family of members
- Those who respond to outreach efforts
- Guests of church organizations
- Those who participate in programs or events
- Inactive members

**“Come” events**—these are activities to which you invite people—“DOORS” which are open for people to come into contact with the gospel and your church’s ministry. Coordinate those events with **“Go” activities** that infiltrate the community with information and invitations. While planning those events, be clearly aware of the society around you, realizing that you are called to do ministry within today’s culture—even seizing opportunities that are created by this changing world!

Examples of “Come” events:

### *Focus on Families*

- Christmas/Easter for Kids
- Sunday School
- Sports and activity camps/youth group
- Preschool/early childhood care programs
- Seminars on marriage/family issues

### *Seasonal Opportunities*

- Worship services: Christmas and Easter, outdoor/picnic-neighborhood service
- Special events: “Advent by Candlelight”
- Important days: Mother’s/Father’s Day, Valentine’s Day, Veterans Day

### *Community Service*

- Invite local schools, leagues to use your gym/field
- ESL classes
- Volunteer your facilities for a polling place, blood bank to set up, meeting place for community organizations

### Examples of “Go” Events:

*Mailings/electronic media:* invitations to special services and events

#### *See the people*

- Go to them, engage them in discussion, listen and learn all you can about them.
- Go about this effort with the conviction that each and every person in your area is a blood-bought soul and that only by faith in Jesus will they share the joy of heaven.
- interviews
- booth survey at a fair or community festival

### Conduct interviews/surveys with these purposes in mind:

- to raise awareness of your church in the community
- to seek input regarding people's needs/desires—information that can help you develop specific outreach plans
- to leave an invitation to a service or event at your church

#### *Focused Outreach for People in Your Area:*

- new residents
- new parents
- senior living centers
- nursing care facilities
- campus ministry
- military bases
- jails/prisons

Go strategies strive to make connections with people in the area and invite them to come.

Come strategies are activities to which you can invite people. Keep members fully aware of all the “doors” through which they might bring a guest.

### Once-a-Month Invite Strategy

<b>January</b>	Commitment Sunday / New Year’s Resolution Sunday (coordinate with new member welcome dinner & introduction to getting involved in member service)
<b>February</b>	Valentine’s “Love” Sunday / Super Bowl Party
<b>March</b>	Ash Wednesday / Transfiguration Sunday / Touring Choir
<b>April</b>	Children’s Procession of Palm Sunday / Easter Sunday
<b>May</b>	Mother’s Day / Graduate Recognition Sunday, Memorial Day
<b>June</b>	Father’s Day
<b>July</b>	Soccer Camp / VBS Sunday
<b>August</b>	Christian Education Sunday / Back-to-School Sunday (Sunday School start up)
<b>September</b>	Rest from Labor Sunday / Youth Sunday
<b>October</b>	Fall Festival / Reformation Sunday (What’s a Lutheran?)
<b>November</b>	Veterans Day / Thanksgiving
<b>December</b>	Christmas for Kids / Advent by Candlelight / Christmas Eve / Christmas Day / Carols & Lessons

Any “special invite Sunday” need not supplant the regular lectionary or order of service. It can simply include a prayer, or recognition of a special group, or can be incorporated into a sermon emphasis. A calendar of special invites gives you “something” to advertise and a special service to which members may be encouraged to invite someone.

### Nurturing Prospects

The goal of this section is to help the congregation develop an organized plan for follow-up on those people listed on their prospect lists. The main focus of *Prospect Management* is connecting people to the gospel through which the Holy Spirit does his work of conversion and sanctification.

Nurturing prospects means bringing them into contact with the gospel. Some ways of doing that are through mailings/emails, visitation by the pastor and trained lay evangelists, and invitations to services and church events.

For some people on the list, there may be no response from them for a long time, but we never know what circumstances the Holy Spirit might use to open their ears to the gospel. Then we want to be ready.

It is very helpful to have a prospect data manager for your congregation's prospect list. After all the work of collecting information about people through "come" and "go" events, you want to put that information to use. A data manager helps to assure that the information on prospects is collected, maintained, and available for the follow-up methods that the church leadership determines and utilizes.

**It is important for your congregation to have a workable system to keep track of prospects and the activity that is conducted. In these notes, there are no specific recommendations for types of software programs, since there is a variety available. In this section, the emphasis is on what kinds of information to gather and keep, and categorizing prospects, so that you can develop a trackable system for follow-up.**

## Prospect List Management

### 1. Information to gather

- **Basic information:** Strive to obtain for every person/family on your prospect list: name, address, email, and phone number.
- **Background information:** The more you know about people, the more you can personalize your contacts. Try to find out family information, employment, church background, and interest in your church's ministry.
- **Bonus information:** Having information on birthdays, anniversaries, and hobbies gives you opportunity for showing a deeper, personal interest in people.

### 2. Rank Prospects

The available resources of people, time, and finances in congregations are not likely large enough to serve every prospect with the same focus of attention, especially with a large list. For that reason, it is wise to categorize the list.

- **Excellent**—those who show great interest in your church's ministry. Likely, they have attended a worship service or event. They ask questions or request information.
- **Good**—those who are friendly and indicate an interest in your church and ministry. They are receptive to follow-up contacts but do not want to take it deeper.
- **Fair**—those people who agree to be on your prospect list, but do not show much/any interest or response.

## Share the Word

Establish a follow-up plan to spiritually nurture those on the prospect list through closer contact with the Word and with your congregation's gospel ministry.

Sample Plan for nurturing prospects:

1. **Excellent** Prospects—Give these the most attention, both personally and impersonally:
  - Personal visits/contacts
  - Monthly mailing/email (*Outreach Newsletters*)
  - Invitations to special services, events, Adult Information Class
2. **Good** Prospects—When this group is large, regular personal visits are not always possible. But keep in touch with all of these people by sending:
  - Monthly mailing/email
  - Invitations to special services, events, Adult Information Class
3. **Fair** Prospects—Make periodic connection with these by sending:
  - Invitations to special services and events

Be aware that people move from category to category. For example, prospect who are rated *good* come to a worship service or church event, and follow-up visits reveal greater interest. So your prospect list manager moves them to the *excellent* category, and further personal contacts are made. It's true also that *excellent* prospects who initially show a lot of interest may get "cold". However, don't remove them from the list. Keep the way open for them to connect with God's Word and your congregation's ministry by providing mailings either as *good* or *fair* prospects.

The WELS Commission on Evangelism provides a product called *Outreach Newsletters*. This is a collection of short articles designed to help congregations reach out to people with God's Word, especially those on their prospect list.

## Member Witness

We cannot underestimate the importance of friendship evangelism. Members of our congregations have a circle of people they know who need Jesus. In the bonds of those relationships a trust is formed which is a natural setting for spiritual conversation and invitation to learn more. To help our members be more confident and equipped for witnessing to people they know, an important aspect of every congregational evangelism program is member witness training.

For most of us, friendship is a better setting for witnessing than trying to share the gospel with people we don't know or don't know very well. What are some reasons for this?

### *Friendship Evangelism Training Materials*

A special aspect of member witness training in congregations is to identify and train some members to nurture those on the prospect list by making law/gospel presentations.

## **A Checklist for Congregational Outreach Readiness**

### ***Leadership***

- Leaders are models in worship and Bible study.
- Leaders know and seek to carry out the mission of the church.
- Leaders exercise a Christ-like servant spirit and joy in their work.
- Leaders are encouragers; they work at trust and consensus building.
- Leaders plan the work and work the plan.

### ***Planning***

- We have a long-range plan and/or planning committee.
- We know our community (demographics) and are planning ministry to match.
- We have a written, displayed, and practiced mission statement of purpose.
- We have goals for ministry this year and action plans to carry it out.
- We evaluate our programs and over-all ministry regularly and annually.

### ***Outreach***

- Members own the mission of the church and desire to seek the lost.
- A growing budgetary percentage is for outreach work.
- Evangelism callers are recruited and trained for law/gospel visits with prospects.
- Friendship witnessing is taught and practiced regularly.
- We have “go” & “come” strategies planned.
- We have attractive and cost-effective publicity and advertising in the community.

### ***Appearance***

- Our signs are attractive, readable, well placed.
- The buildings and grounds are well kept, strikingly attractive, neat and clean.
- We have greeters to welcome people before and after services.
- Our people are warm, friendly, and caring; they greet visitors readily.
- Our called workers, leadership, and people display a joyful, resurrection faith.
- Harmony and unity are evident in the church’s life.

## **The Mission Field around Your Church**

Wherever you are located; whatever the age of your congregation; no matter how many other churches exist close by, there are people in your area to tell the saving truth of Jesus Christ. In fact, that’s the reason you’re located where you are. God has established you in that area to be the beacon of spiritual light to those lost in the darkness of eternal death.

Congregational outreach takes planning, organization, and effort. For this the Commission on Evangelism stands ready to partner with you in the process. Particularly, the School of Outreach serves congregations of the WELS with planning, assistance, and resources for congregational evangelism programming and implementation of outreach strategies. Presentations include: Congregational Organization and Planning for Evangelism, Locating Prospects, Nurturing Prospects, Friendship Evangelism, Church Identity, Worship Welcome, and Assimilation. Interspersed among the presentations are several breakout sessions in which congregation leaders work to take the information from the presentations and establish specific outreach plans for their congregation.

Additionally, **Telling the Next Generation** is a program provided by the WELS Commission on Evangelism, the Commission on Lutheran Schools, and Early Childhood Ministry to assist congregations with planning, assistance, and resources for implementation of outreach strategies utilizing their Lutheran elementary school and/or early childhood ministry. There is a one-day workshop led by WELS church and school leaders who are experienced with conducting school ministries with an outreach focus. In breakout sessions, the presenters and other advisors work with individual congregations to advise them regarding outreach plans and strategies. In the months following the workshop, those advisors will follow-up with congregations in order to answer questions, supply resources, and give advice for fulfilling the goals that were discussed and planned at the workshops. Information at: [wels.net/tellingthenextgeneration](http://wels.net/tellingthenextgeneration)

## **Conclusion**

Leaders that the church needs now are driven by a passion for reaching the lost. This is at the heart of church leadership. Leaders observe the life and ministry of Jesus and draw from him the heartfelt desire to conduct the work of the church, always with the goal of reaching more and more people with the saving message of the gospel. They keep careful watch over every aspect of ministry, every program, every organization, every function and ask: “How is our activity helping us share the name of Jesus, especially with those who do not know him as Savior?” The church needs leaders who carefully balance the church’s nurture ministry for its members and outreach efforts to people in their locality. They guard against a congregation becoming too inward-focused and not enough outreach-minded. Passionate leaders for Christ are constantly working to create and sustain an outreach awareness, and commitment in the minds and hearts of their fellow members.

Church leaders are needed now who repent of shortcomings, passivity, and failures. Clinging to the joy of forgiveness in Jesus and empowered by the Holy Spirit through the gospel, they lead their congregations forward to accomplish Christ’s will for his church on earth.

The church needs faithful leaders who are serious and passionate about evangelism.

Dear leader, the church is blessed to have you now!