

New member thoughts on National Convention

My name is Marie Louise Mwenda, I now live in Sioux Falls SD. I came seven years ago from Africa, as a refugee. Now I am a proud American and a proud Christian woman that belongs to Come and See Congregation at Resurrection Church. I belong to the Resurrection LWML organization. It was my blessing to be chosen to be sent to the National LWML Convention in Des Moines IA in June 2015. I give all the glory to God.

Nearly one hundred South Dakota ladies loaded the bus with our suit cases and ourselves and headed toward Des Moines via Mission Central stop.

We arrived Mission Central located at Mapleton IA. God was opening the skies for all the rain to come at that time. Missionary Gary led us to the barn where he has set up a church, and all the gifts from missionaries and congregations and people. There were displays from all over the world showing their culture. When I saw the nation's displays I felt like it shows we are all God's family, meant to be brothers and sisters. Gary introduced a young woman that was going to Africa to do missionary work. Some of our members got caught waiting in the downpour and rode to Des Moines while drying off as best they could. No complaints about it.

When we entered The Convention hall everyone was friendly, the workers were in corn yellow t-shirts so we could pick them out if we needed help with directions. Registration was fast and then we explored the building where would be for the next three days. I helped a mobility-limited friend get around in her wheel chair during the convention.

Opening ceremony seemed like the pastors celebrated our being there and celebrated Jesus being with us. All the pastors that came in to the service by procession was a moving site. To see 4000 Christian sisters in one room, praying, singing, laughing was awesome.

The LWML store was giving away things along with Concordia was giving away things. I bought two necklaces with Martin Luther symbol. I took them to Africa for two sisters in Christ, they were very happy. Talking to some of the vendors, and gathering all the giveaways was enjoyable. I remember waiting in lines everywhere.

For servant events my friend and I chose the signing of cards to be sent around the world. When we went to get food, they put us in groups from different states and we met so many new friends and enjoyed their fellowship. We got exhausted, but we found a quiet retreat down on the ground floor to sit and watch people, see SD members passing by, stopping to say hello. We met more new friends there, all of us had so much in common.

We chose a Bible study with a Pastor from Lutheran Hour, Stelz; he spoke to us much on the theme Sow nourish reap. It was very interesting.

The different flags processional showed me that we in America have many countries here and are all one in Christ.

The President of Missouri Synod Dr. Harrison spoke about the Supreme Court decision of allowing gay people to marry. He had my attention.

I was impressed with how the business meeting went fast and was interesting, to know more of how the LWML operates.

Sunday closing service was especially moving. Realizing we were about to head home and leave all the new friends and Sisters in Christ we had met. But it was a realization also that the time is NOW to do the Lord's work of spreading his word and working his missions.

I am excited to attend more LWML gatherings and plan to attend the District convention at Pierre in 2016 and National at Salt Lake City in 2017, God willing.