

Moments with Mary Jo

Gifts will be easier for you — and the recipients

Fall is in the air as I write this article, but it's also time to think ahead to summer. The LWML Nebraska North and Nebraska South districts are thrilled to welcome each of you to the **41st LWML Biennial Convention**, to be held June 26–29 in Omaha! The theme, “Growing in God’s Grace,” is based on 2 Peter 3:18:

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

The banner procession always sets the tone for the LWML convention as it beautifully expresses the theme while highlighting the God-given talents of our districts. The LWML South Dakota District is looking for women who would be interested in making banners. Banner ideas are due to me by Jan. 1. Details are available at sdlwml.org/lwml-convention-2025, or reach out to me.

Gifts from the Heart Gifts from the Heart is getting a makeover for Omaha! What does this mean? Change. Yes, change — positive and necessary change. The days of packing and hauling boxes across the country are over.

This year, we will use Amazon to shop for physical items for our three recipients. Each recipient has selected their top nine item needs and put them



Mary Jo Stier
LWML District
President

on an Amazon wish list. The 10th item for each recipient is Visa gift cards (any dollar amount). This will allow us to work smarter and not harder during the convention.

Gifts from the Heart shopping opens on Feb. 1 and remains open through the convention.

Please use Amazon wish lists to shop online and ship directly to our recipients before the convention. The link will soon be provided. Shop individually or make it a group event.

Physical items will still be accepted at the convention, and we will have volunteers ready to help. But our hope is that we can cut the number of items to be handled in Omaha.

Why the change? The physical burden for the Gospel Outreach Committee, volunteers, and the recipients themselves has become a burden. Recipients are thankful and blessed by the truckloads of items. But coordinating transportation to their facilities and unpacking and storing so many items received at one time can be difficult. This new system will provide our recipients with their top needs over the course of several months during 2025 and not all in one weekend.

I hope you will join us in Omaha. It's going to be an incredible time of worship, and learning more about our Lord as we unite in fellowship with one another.

Funding help available

Do you know of a need in your congregation or in a group? Do you have a preschool, early-education center, or school? Is there a mission that is dear to you? The LWML South Dakota District wants to help.

Throughout the years, the LWML South Dakota District (LWML SD) has received monetary gifts, bequests and honorariums. These have always been grouped together as a Special Gifts Fund. Through an application process, some of these funds could help a need of which you are aware.

Here are the criteria to request these funds:

- ▶ Requests from the Special Gifts Fund may be proposed by LWML members, groups and zones; and the district executive committee and Board of Directors.
- ▶ Requests will be considered by the LWML SD Finance Committee and taken to the district Board of Directors for approval.
- ▶ Use of the funds shall be for mission emphasis, extending the ministry of the Word; and be current and ready for implementation.
- ▶ Recipient(s) of an approved request shall provide a written report to the LWML SD Finance Committee chairman following the spending of the funds, verifying the use of the funding. This could include photos.
- ▶ Written reports shall be submitted every six months after receipt of funds, until the funds are fully used. Once all the funds are spent, please submit a written report within two months.
- ▶ Funds shall be used within a year's time of receipt. If an extension is needed, contact the LWML SD District Finance Committee chairman.

The LWML SD District Special Gift Fund application may be found at sdlwml.org. Go to “Resources” and select “Special Gifts/Subscriptions” from the drop-down menu.

Vonda Sturzenbecher • Treasurer, LWML SD

BROOKINGS ZONE UPDATE

The Brookings Zone was well represented at the LWML South Dakota District Convention — “Inexpressible Joy, Matchless Savior” — in Aberdeen in June, proclaiming that “joy” to our LWML sisters and congregations.

The Brookings Zone LWML also had the opportunity to witness and help at the Puppet Place during the South Dakota State Fair. Ten of our Brookings Zone congregation members helped by inviting and greeting fair goers to the puppet show. Hand puppets, devotions and whistles were given to those who attended the show.

Mount Calvary, Brookings, hosted our Fall Rally on Oct. 5. Our theme was based on Matt. 25:35: “For I was hungry

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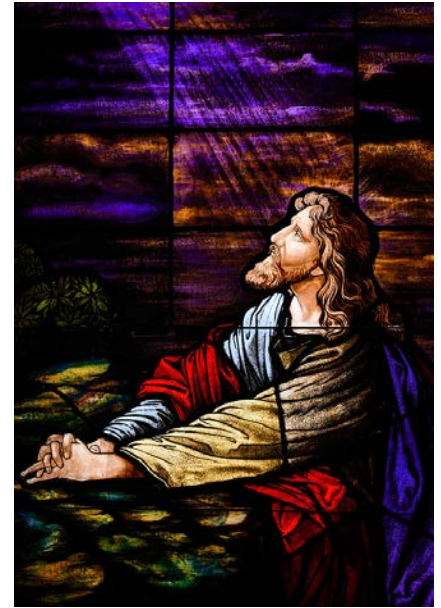
COUNSELOR'S CORNER

First and foremost — JESUS IS SAVIOR



“Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

MATTHEW 1:20-21



Listen to Christ's mission statement again: “For he will save his people from their sins.” Matthew wanted to get Jesus' job description clear from the very beginning: Jesus was coming as a Savior.



Rev. Brian Mosemann
LWML District Counselor

That's it.

It's funny, and somewhat depressing, that in the intervening years, we've come up with all sorts of other things that Jesus is — healer, lover, example,

unifier, friend. Jesus is all of those things. But above all else, Jesus is Savior. Period. That Jesus is anything else is a by-product of His saving work.

It's interesting that the angel inserted Jesus' ultimate job into what is basically His birth announcement. Traditionally, we don't start hearing about Jesus as Savior until the end of His life. At His birth, we're much more interested in magi, gifts and there being no room in the inn.

However, the very first thing God, through His angelic messenger, told Joseph about His son is that He's coming to save people from their sins. The angel didn't say Jesus was coming to lead them or teach them or even to love or comfort them, but to save them.

That is what John was talking about in Revelation, when he says that Jesus is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. That was always the plan!

Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension isn't a story about God making the best out of a bad situation. It is about a plan working to perfection and an ultimate triumph, and it's a plan instituted at His birth announcement. We take comfort in the words of the angel to Joseph: Into this sinful world a Savior has come, and His name is Jesus.

UPDATE

(CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE)

and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.” Rev. Tim Rynearson led our Bible study. Linnea Schwandt and Joyce Kasuske shared about the mission and outreach of Orphan Grain Train (OGT). An ingathering of teachers kits, waterproof pants for infant kits and other items were donated to OGT. Mary Jo Stier, LWML district president, gave a district news update. A short business meeting and election of officers closed the meeting.

The district Christian Life workshops gave us opportunities for growing in our faith. Rev. Dr. Jacob Bobby presented on “Understanding Mass Media from a Christian Perspective.”

Kathy McKinney • Brookings Zone President



The 2024–2026 LWML South Dakota District Executive Committee consists of, from left (seated) Kristy Ring, VP of Christian Life; Dianne Hemminger, VP of Special Focus Ministries; Mary Jo Stier, president; Vonda Sturzenbecher, treasurer; (standing) Rev. Brian Mosemann, senior pastoral counselor; Rev. Christopher McCarthy, junior pastoral counselor; Cathy VandeBraak, VP of Gospel Outreach; Paula Warren, financial secretary; Heather Miller, VP of Communication; and Luann Zuercher, secretary.