

With love from Lisa

Balancing act

I was looking at the LWML website to check out the Christian Life Committee's *reSOURCEs for Planning Programs*. The theme for January 2020 is "Balancing Act." Whoa, does



Lisa Asmus
LWML South Dakota District President

that hit home to you like it does to me? Some weeks it feels like I could join the circus with the balancing acts I do with my time. Past LMWL President Gloria Edwards addresses this so well in the devotion she wrote for the theme:

"So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31).

An email arrives. "Can you bring cookies or other nibbles to the coffee hour next Sunday?"

A text message dings. "Could you help out by taking my son to soccer practice? I have a dentist appointment."

The phone rings. "We need volunteers to canvass your neighborhood sometime in the next two weeks. We need donations for the homeless shelter."

Your calendar is already full. After all, you do have your own husband and children (or grandchildren) to take care of. It's your turn to lead this week's women's Bible study. You've promised a good friend to help her pick out new furniture for her den. Your family wants to see that new movie this weekend. Then there's your own appointment to get that needed haircut. What's more, you promised yourself that you would go for a walk at least every other day!

How can you manage all of this? After



all, there is not a single item on that list that is wrong or wasteful. Can you make more hours or more days to accomplish it all? Of course not! God gives each of us 24 hours each day and seven days each week. How then can you balance all that is required?

Take a deep breath. Ask for God to fill you with calmness and peace. Recall Ps. 37:7a: "Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him."

Ask yourself if you have taken the time to be quiet before Him. Have

you read and meditated on His Word? Have you talked to God about your choices, your time, and your activities? The Holy Spirit leads us to make our top priority time in God's Word and in prayer. The guidance God graciously gives us through His Word helps us to balance our busy lives so that we might live according to His will. God promises us that we can do all things through him [Christ] who strengthens us (Phil. 4:13).

Let your decisions, your priorities, your yes and your no be guided by God's will for you. May all that we do bring glory to God.

Prayer: Dear Father, thank You for caring for all of Your children. We are thankful that our lives are filled with family, friends and opportunities, and that the skills given by You are needed by others as we serve them in love. Give us Your guidance as we prioritize our time. Give us the wisdom to seek Your will in all that we do. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our Savior. Amen.

In this new year, I pray that your time decisions and priorities are guided by God's love and ... "whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31b).

2020 Prayer Service

LIVING IN *love*, BEARING FRUIT



The 2020 LWML Prayer Service will be available for free download at lwml.org/prayer-service beginning Jan. 2.

Written by Rev. Allen D. Anderson, past Rocky Mountain District president, the prayer service will help us take time to reflect on His love for us, our love for Him, and how the fruit we bear is a result of living in His love. The Prayer Service is designed to be used at any time, by large or small groups.

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

Only God knows

Another year comes to an end. For some, it was a year of great success and great joys. For others, it was a year of tremendous hardship and sorrow. The end of the year gives us a chance to reflect in thankfulness on the blessings that God has given us, but also to reflect on our sins and failures, and God's great and abundant mercy toward us.



Rev. Daniel Grimmer
LWML District Counselor

We also now look forward to a new year. With each new year, there is a sense of anticipation, but perhaps also fear. What will the new year hold for me? What challenges and triumphs will I have this year?

Every year, the answer to those questions is the same: Only God knows. Will my business be profitable this year? Only God knows. Will my kids do well in school? Only God knows. Will my health be good this year? Only God knows.

Only God knows what 2020 will hold for you. For some of us, it will be a year of tremendous joys. For others, it will be a year of painful crosses. For many of us, it will probably be many of both. For some of us, this may be our final year before we meet our Lord face to face in heaven. What will 2020 hold for the LWML, for the South Dakota District, or for your society and zone? Only God knows. We simply don't know what the future will be. Only God knows.

But we do know that God holds the future for us. Whatever crosses and trials you may face this year, you will not face them alone. Our gracious Savior will be with you this year. In fact, St. Paul shares these amazing words of comfort and joy:

"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."

— Rom. 8:28

Because you are in Christ Jesus, called according to His purpose in Baptism and made a new creation in Him, you love Him. God promises that He will work everything in your life for your ultimate blessing and good in Jesus.

So whatever 2020 may hold for you, your family or the LWML, know that God will work all of these things together for your good. He will be with you to comfort and strengthen and guide you all throughout this year.

Rejoicing with you in a new year of God's grace,
Pastor Grimmer

Heart to Heart Sisters

What is the purpose?

The Heart to Heart Sisters (H2H) district program is an intentional effort to welcome and encourage multicultural women to participate in the life and work of the LWML.



Kay Nelson
Heart to Heart District Leader

Why is H2H a separate district program?

Because women connected with LCMS multicultural ministries are often new to the LCMS. Along with possible language barriers, this isolates women from the rest of the church body and organizations such as LWML. Connecting with them requires an ongoing intentional effort.

Is the H2H program designed to enhance our evangelism efforts among multicultural communities?

Not exactly. The H2H Sisters program is designed to connect, engage, invite and mentor multicultural women leaders who are already in LCMS multicultural congregations. As we support and strengthen them, they will be better equipped to evangelize multicultural communities in their areas.

Must multicultural women leaders, identified for the H2H Sisters program, speak English?

They should have a working knowledge of English or work through a translator. They will be able to bridge the gap between the LWML and their congregations. It is my personal experience that some of the women speak English well and can share information about the LWML with the women of their congregation.

May a multicultural lady belong to an existing LWML group?

Yes, of course! It would be great to be included into an existing LWML circle.

There is a need in today's society to reach out to others with understanding and a helpful heart. The mission statement of the LWML states that we assist women in affirming her relationship with God, so that she can use her gifts in ministry to the people of the world.

What we are saying is LWML women are impacting the world for Jesus Christ. We are making a difference! Reach out, take that first step to recognizing the multicultural women of the LCMS, then embrace her culture and support her in learning about how wonderful the LWML is. Learn about her talents and let her know how she can enrich our district LWML.



SIoux FALLS ZONE report

The Sioux Falls Zone Fall Rally was hosted by the LWML of Trinity Lutheran Church, near Hartford, on Oct. 6.

Mary Jarratt Smith led the ladies in a fun Bible study on Esther. We learned how God is preparing each of us to do His work as we go along in our lives. There were 58 people attending, and our Mite donation was \$484.

The in-gathering activity was applying the LWML logo on 344 white dishtowels that were given to soup kitchens in our communities.

Lisa Asmus, LWML district president talked us about “Taking It to the Streets” to spread the word about LWML.

Emily Murray, a Young Woman Representative, gave a report of her time at 38th Biennial Convention in June in Mobile, Ala.

We ended with a delicious meal prepared by the Trinity ladies.

Patty Peters • Sioux Falls Zone President



From left, LaRaye Rehfeldt (Trinity, Hartford, society president) Emily Lafrentz (Sioux Falls Zone mission services leader), Mary Jarratt Smith (Rally speaker) and Heather Miller display the towels that were marked with the LWML logo and distributed to soup kitchens across the zone.

Looking forward to seeing you at 2020 convention!

The Yankton Zone is preparing for our sisters and brothers of the LWML South Dakota District to come and “Set Your Eyes on Jesus!” at the 2020 LWML district convention.

The convention will be held May 29-30 at St. John’s, Yankton.

The Yankton Zone and the convention committee are proposing perfect vision as we are “Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith” (Heb. 12:2a).

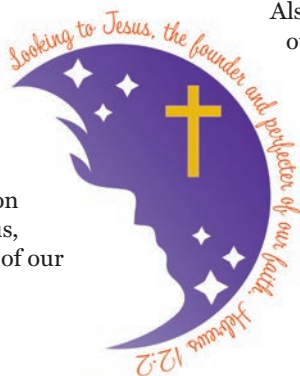
Once again, new mission

grants will be chosen and new leaders will be elected. The convention will also feature speakers, Bible studies, a worship service, singing, in-gathering and other events.

Also, it is a time of sharing our love for, and faith in, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Come join us as we look to Christ with 20/20 vision.

Florence Powers
2020 LWML South Dakota District Convention chairman



Set Your Eyes on Jesus

Report time!

It’s that time of year again. Zone and society secretaries, please send me your completed reports. I look forward to collecting them from you by Feb. 1.



You can find the forms under the “Helps” section at sdlwml.org. Click “LWML SD District Forms & Helps” — they are located at the bottom of the page. Please choose the Society or Zone report, fill it out and email it to me at miller-he18@hotmail.com or mail it to Heather Miller; 1803 W. 10th Street; Sioux Falls, SD 57104.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Heather Miller
LWML District Secretary

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With love from Lisa

A different kind of love

“I love you” is used to show affection to your spouse, children, grandchildren, parents and friends. Have you ever said them before hanging up the phone, only to wish he or she would do something different or act differently?



Lisa Asmus
LWML South Dakota District President

In February we hear “love” a lot because of Valentine’s Day. If someone gives us a gift, we feel we “should” give them one in return, and we feel guilty if we don’t have a gift for them at the time we receive theirs. It’s easy to love someone when they treat you well or do all the right things.

Jesus showed a different kind of love to us, one that does not expect something in return:

“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

— Rom. 5:8 (NIV)

On Feb. 26, we will begin the season of Lent with Ash Wednesday. Many of us will leave church that night with a cross of ashes on our forehead, and after hearing, “remember you are dust, and

to dust you shall return.” These ashes can signify how our sins have died with Christ on the cross in the “fire” of His death. In Christ, who is the Resurrection and the Life, we rise “from the ashes” with new life — forgiven and free to follow in the ways of our God by the power of His Holy Spirit.

It is humbling to know that Jesus loves me and died for me so that I can live in eternity with Him.

“See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!” — 1 John 3:1 NIV

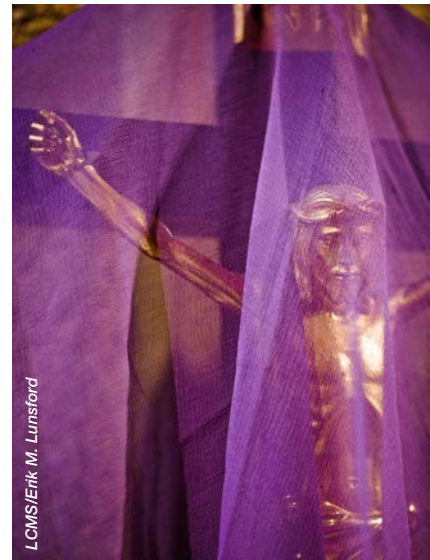
He won’t take His love away from me — no matter what I do or don’t do. That frees me to show His love to others. I do this by letting my service be motivated by God’s love for me.

District convention

I was once given a peacock feather and asked to balance it on my finger. It was a difficult task. When I was instructed to look at the eye of the feather and again try to balance it, I could do it! It was easy when I let my focus be on the eye and not on the task!



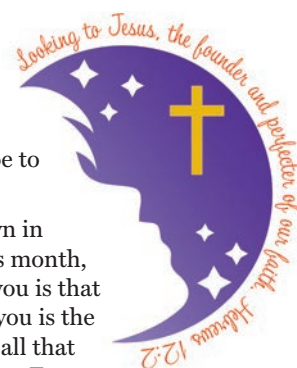
“Set Your Eyes on Jesus” is the theme for our district convention, to be held May 29-30 at St. John’s, Yankton. Our



LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford

theme verse and focus of the convention is “looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith” (Heb. 12:2a). We will be encouraged to focus our lives on Jesus by Debbie Larson, LWML president, and Rev. Brian Friedrich, the new president of Concordia University St. Paul. I trust you will save the date on your calendar. I hope to see you there!

As love is shown in many ways this month, my prayer for you is that Jesus’ love for you is the motivation for all that you do. “Set Your Eyes on Jesus” as you “Serve the Lord with Gladness” (Ps. 100:2).



Mite deadline quickly approaching

It seems just like yesterday that we gathered in Sioux Falls and selected 11 mission grants with a \$50,000 budget to fund for this 2018-20 biennium.

The Lord’s plan was a little different this biennium and changes were made to our mission grant selections. He has blessed our mite offerings to include 14 recipients to receive funding. With the biennium deadline of March 15 almost here, I encourage all not to wait to send in your mites. These Mighty Mites produce magnificent outcomes in proclaiming Christ’s saving message both at home and abroad.

All funds need to be sent to Donna Harr, LWML district financial secretary. Her address is 3528 S. Prairie Gardens Place, Sioux Falls, SD 57110. When sending in your mites, use the new Financial Secretary Remittance form found at sdlwml.org. Click “LWML SD District Forms & Helps.”



Please continue to pray and trust in God’s plan for all the mission projects of the LWML South Dakota District.

Ann Cruse • VP of Gospel Outreach

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

Christ is King!

Presidents' Day has been celebrated in some way, shape or form in this country since 1800, originally in recognition of George Washington's birthday on Feb. 22. Later it became a day in which to honor the two most recognized presidents in U.S. history, Washington and Abraham Lincoln. Today Presidents' Day celebrates all U.S. presidents, past and present.

Throughout the course of American history, some presidents have obviously been more honorable than others. In today's political climate, the upcoming presidential election later this year is cause for concern for many Americans. Republicans are terrified that the White House will be occupied by a Democrat, and Democrats are horrified that the White House will be occupied by a Republican.

The hope that we have as Christians is that, no matter who is in the White House, we have a ruler who reigns over all things.

"Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world.'" — **John 18:36**

Christ's kingdom is ruled by forgiveness, grace and mercy. It is ruled by a King who wears a crown of thorns and reigns from the throne of a cross. By His blood, Jesus has made you His loyal subjects through faith in His forgiveness, life and salvation. These gifts give you peace — even in the midst of political turmoil and presidential unrest.

The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy:

"First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way." — **1 Tim. 2:1-2**

And to the Romans, he wrote:

"Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God." — **Rom. 13:1**

Paul wrote these words at a time in which Christians were brutally persecuted by some of the most heinous, ungodly and terrible emperors of the Roman Empire.

Thankfully we don't live under such horrific circumstances and have the religious liberty to worship Jesus and proclaim His truth. As Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz, director of the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty in Washington, D.C., reminded us during his Fall Christian Life Workshop presentation, no matter who the president is or if our religious freedoms are taken away, Christ our King makes us free to proclaim the truth of His kingdom.



Rev. Steve Weispfenning
LWML District Counselor



Rev. Dr. Seltz

MITCHELL ZONE report

It is hard to believe that my first year as zone president has come to a close. But what a wonderful year it has been. The privilege of working with the women of the LWML, serving as our zone delegate at the national convention and participating in the preparation and implementation of the Lord's work are among the countless blessings that our gracious Lord and Savior has bestowed upon me. It is amazing to experience the commitment of the women of the LWML! I have learned so much and, with the Lord's blessing, will continue to learn throughout the upcoming year.

The Mitchell Zone has had a busy fall. In October, Zion, Delmont, hosted the Christian Life Workshop in which Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz presented "God at Work, Two Kingdoms — One Mission." Pastor Seltz, former speaker of "The Lutheran Hour," described his work at the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty in Washington, D.C., as "talking religious liberty for the sake of the mission of the church".

Throughout the year, the Mitchell Zone worked diligently to sew, collect and prepare items for the Pine Ridge and Rosebud reservations. These items were collected during the Fall Rally at Zion, Mitchell, and delivered to Rev. Andrew Utecht. The focus of the rally was "Living Faithfully in a Culture of Death." The Witness of the Crosses was displayed on Zion's property to represent the lives lost to abortion and, more importantly, as a testament of God's grace, forgiveness and unconditional love to all.

An informative message was given by Lynette Auch, president of the Lutherans For Life (LFL) Board of Directors. A special offering collected at the rally was presented to LFL. We installed two officers for the upcoming year and look forward to 2020.

Heb. 12:1-3 has always been one of my favorite Bible passages. We are encouraged to continue the race while keeping our focus on Jesus. We know that there is much work to be done, but we also know that God will provide all that is necessary to accomplish His will. I consider it pure joy to be among God's "great cloud of witnesses" and pray for His continued guidance in this new year.

"Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? ... Here I am! Send me." — **Is. 6:8**

Julie Kaufman • Mitchell Zone President

With love from Lisa

When the routine goes awry

As part of the Christmas gift we were giving to our son, who came home from Denver, I included some containers and marked them “for treats to take home.”



Lisa Asmus
LWML South Dakota District President

I asked him what he would want them filled with — meals, sweets, snacks? He wanted them filled with a hot dish that he loves, made with pasta, chicken, cream of chicken soup, cheese and peas.

The day he was leaving, I got up a little early to make the hot dish. As I poured the pasta into the boiling water, I noticed the pan was getting very full. But I was thinking — in my foggy brain after little sleep — I always put a whole package of macaroni in this pot, so it will be fine. Not this time.

After it was all in the pot, I noticed that it was a 32-ounce package instead of a 16-ounce package of macaroni. So I quickly got out my larger pot, put in some water and salt, heated it to boiling

and then added the macaroni from the smaller pot. Now, how long do I cook it? Well, I thought I’ll try five minutes. I checked it at four and it was already done!

Then I mixed up the sauce and realized I forgot to add the cheese. I ended up making it differently than “normal” and to my surprise, it turned out just fine. I had my secret ingredient — love — in the hot dish, so all was good, in my opinion (Andrew hadn’t tasted it yet).

Isn’t that how life goes sometimes? Even routine things can get all messed up. When this happens how do we handle it? Do we get all worked up or do we deal with situations as they happen? I was all ready to get upset with myself and tell myself how stupid I can be sometimes. Then I took a deep breath, thought how can I fix this and gave thanks to God for my son who had been home for 10 days and who wanted to take a taste of home cooking back with him.

“Set your eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith” (Heb. 12:2).



I love the theme for our convention in May. We are in the year 2020, and we often hear of having 20/20 vision. As baptized believers in Jesus, our 20/20 vision comes from being called children of God and studying His Word.

I hope you will come to the convention May 29-30 as we set our eyes on Jesus as the focus of our lives. We will have early registration starting at 6 p.m. on Thursday, May 28, before our mission walk that evening, followed by a devotion and fellowship. Look for more information on the convention in next month’s *HiLites*.

Next time you have that terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day ... instead of talking yourself into how bad you are, take a step back and set your eyes on Jesus. You are His child, and He will walk with you and hold you in every situation.

PIERRE ZONE report

The Pierre Zone had an exciting fall! We were very blessed to be a host for the Christian Life Workshop in September. Over 50 people came to Emmanuel, Gettysburg, to hear Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz speak about religious liberty. He was very knowledgeable about our country’s constitution and how we as Christians can enjoy our freedoms. It was a wonderful day!

We held our Fall Rally at Holy Cross, Onida. Our speakers were Dennis and Carolyn Rykmann from Faith, Pierre. They spoke of their many mission trips to Mexico and their Power-Point presentation was on their most recent trip to serve Ysleta

Lutheran Mission Human Care (YLM) in El Paso, Texas. This was of special interest as a national LWML mission grant for YLM is being funded during this biennium. This mission grant will be used to help begin a music ministry with children living in Juarez, Mexico.

The election of officers was held at our meeting following the rally. Yours truly was blessed to remain president, Melissa Brock is vice-president and Marla Mosiman is our secretary/treasurer. Lisa Asmus, district LWM president, extended greetings from the district board and presented on “Taking It to the Streets,” which promotes the LWML in our churches. Marla and I also worked on updating the zone by-laws.

Enjoy the rest of this season of winter!

Jan Larson • Pierre Zone President

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

'Right around the corner'

March is a favorite month of mine, perhaps because sometimes spring begins by the end of the month, or at least there's a glimmer of hope and promise.

I love those first warm days of spring, when the snow is still on the ground, probably in big giant heaps yet, but the sun is out, the air is warm and it feels good to get outside and go for a walk and enjoy the early spring air.

I often reflect on how life as a Christian in this world is a lot like those early spring days. If the dark cold of winter and the snow represents sin and death, it makes a beautiful picture of life as it is for us in the moment. When you step out to enjoy that first walk, you can feel in the air that the season is beginning to change. But it's just a beginning. You still see plenty of snow all around you, and while there is some sun, it will be some time yet before you're lounging by the pool. The signs of winter are still all around, but there is finally the hope of spring in the air. Oftentimes, it even snows again after those first warm days. But you're not as bothered by it because you know it won't last. The corner has been turned and in a little while, summer will be here with its warmth and joy.



Our life in this world is a little like that. We are really living in an in-between time, when the season of the world is changing. Before Jesus became a man like us to take on all our sins and go to the cross and grave, this world was in the bleak winter of sin and death and the power of the devil. There was little hope to sustain God's people of old, save for His gracious promise of the coming Savior. But now that Jesus has finished our salvation through His blood shed for us on Calvary, now that He has burst out of the tomb and conquered death, there is hope!

To be sure, there is still plenty of the effects of sin and death in this world. The snow is still piled up all around. Sickness, violence, depression, malice, addictions and even death are still around us. But because we live in the death and resurrection of Jesus, applied to us in our Baptism, we live as people with eyes set on the future. In Jesus we see that there is a change in the air. His final victory really is right around the corner. We have hope because we know that salvation is nearer to us than when we first believed.

As I write this, I have no idea if it will be warming up at all in March this year or not. If it's snowing, just hang on! Spring is right around the corner! But also take comfort in knowing that the life and salvation that Jesus is preparing for you is coming soon too. Amen! Come Lord Jesus!



Rev. Daniel Grimmer
LWML District Counselor

Young women welcome to convention

Looking for an opportunity to involve young women in the LWML? Now's your chance!

The LWML South Dakota District will hold its district convention — "Set Your Eyes on Jesus" — May 29-30 in Yankton. We encourage you to encourage a young woman or two from your congregation to join us.

"Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith" (Heb. 12:2).

Melissa Brock
Young Woman Representatives
Chairman

Mites report

It is hard to imagine the plan the Lord has for our coins and dollars as we prayerfully put them in our mite boxes. The LWML South Dakota 2018-20 biennium will end on March 31 and a shortfall is seen in our mission goal.

Some of the items included in this mission goal is the funding of the biennium mission grants, the *HiLites*, the *Lutheran Woman's Quarterly*, our ongoing district missions (including the Puppet Place, Prison Ministry and Student Endowment fund) and more.

When sending in your mites, you may use the new Financial Secretary Remittance form found at sdlwml.org/SD_LWML_Forms.htm. Please continue to pray for the mission outreach of the LWML and if you are able, feed you mite box with an extra serving.

Ann Cruse
VP of Gospel Outreach

MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

knowledge of trusted mental health counselors in the various regions of the state. Since our workers do refer church members to mental health professionals from time to time, the list provided by LFS will be a great help to them.

- ▶ Workshops, referred to as Congregational Services Training, for South Dakota District congregations on various subjects of LFS expertise such as marriage enrichment, culture and media-wise parenting, identity and self-esteem in youth and caring for caregivers.

Your congregation will receive information throughout the year about our partnership with our friends at LFS. Keep watch for the information. When an LFS workshop is offered in your area, you'll want to attend.

We Lutherans are Means of Grace people, grateful that God works through His Word and Sacraments to bless us with Christ's forgiveness, life and salvation. In His wisdom He uses people to serve people. They are His hands and feet — His means of helping — in other areas of the blessed life God gives. Our new friends at LFS of Iowa are among God's means of helping us.

Thank God today for our friends at LFS, and pray for a fruitful ministry partnership between our church district and them in 2020 and, we hope, in years to come.



Send submissions for the district supplement to:

Vonda Sturzenbecher

- ▶ vsturzenbecher@yahoo.com
- ▶ 8605 Woodland Dr.;
Black Hawk, SD 57718

The deadline for the **May** issue is **March 15**.

MORE LWML



The Chamberlain Zone has provided cookies for Rev. Andrew Utecht's ministry at the Rosebud/Parmelee Reservation for many years. Each society selects two months to provide 40 dozen cookies. Among those from St. John's, Gregory, who recently baked are, from left, Betty Vaughn, Dianne Althoff, Darlene Horst, Sharon Zeller and Bonnie Stiner.

Time to collect for ingathering

Please start collecting items for the LWML district convention ingathering.

MOST Ministries will appreciate donations of:

- ▶ Adult and children's glasses
- ▶ Non-prescription sunglasses

Please bring glasses that are in good condition only. Broken glasses cannot be used.

Used eyeglasses can enable an adult to secure a job to support his or her family, a child to succeed in school, a senior to continue to live independently and a mother or father to see their child's face clearly for the first time. People can also hear the Gospel while they are being fitted for glasses.

We will also collect items for the **River City Domestic Violence Center** in Yankton. River City provides a safe haven for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking and child abuse. River City exists to break the cycle of

these traumas in the community through survivor empowerment, advocacy, education, awareness and social change. The wish list includes:

- ▶ Diapers
- ▶ Laundry detergent
- ▶ Baby wipes
- ▶ Tissues
- ▶ Household cleaners (Lysol wipes)
- ▶ Body wash

For **Orphan Grain Train (OGT)**, we will collect hygiene kits. OGT is a Christian volunteer network that ships donated food, clothing, medical supplies and other needed items those in need in 69 countries. Instructions for the hygiene kits can be found at ogt.org/special-projects/hygiene-kits. Click "Hygiene Kit Instructions" in the middle of the page.

I can't wait to see all the items we collect for ingathering!

Nyla Jurrens

VP of Special Focus Ministries

With love from Lisa

Almost time for convention!

I recently attended the first LWML Presidents Assembly, held in St. Louis.

Being a part of the former Board of Directors during the national LWML restructure. I was wondering how time spent at the Presidents Assembly would be different. After my experience, I can tell you that I am very excited for the future of the LWML with our new structure.

There was a mixture of business, training and question/discussion time. I think this assembly will benefit future district presidents with preparing for their responsibilities in leading their districts.

Many times throughout our assembly, Debbie Larson, LWML president, shared her theme for her first term: "Thanks Be to God! We are HIS! We are Held by God's Word; Inspired to share HIS Gospel; and Surrounded by HIS Grace."

In one activity we were given a paper wheel with "CHRIST" in the center. Between all the spokes we were to list activities that we were having at our upcoming district conventions. As we plan each activity, we are encouraged to find Christ in the center. How will doing this activity give glory to God? How will it share His love or show His grace with someone? I encourage you to let Christ's love motivate all your activity as you remember that you are His!

As we prepare for our district convention, to be held May 29-30 in Yankton under the theme "Set Your Eyes on



Lisa Asmus
LWML South Dakota District President

Jesus," I am happy to share with you a few items of interest.

First, we are planning a few pre-convention activities for those of you who can arrive a little early. On Thursday, May 28, there is an opportunity for you to carpool with some of your friends to Mission Central in Mapleton, Iowa, for a tour, lunch and to listen to a presentation from a missionary. There will be no cost to you, just your own transportation to Mission Central. Then, early registration will begin at 6 p.m., followed by a mission walk and Vespers by the river, and some snack and fellowship time. We pray that it will be a time for you to reflect on who you are as

God's child and to "Set Your Eyes on Jesus" before the busyness of the convention begins on Friday morning.

On Friday and Saturday, we will take care of business with Bible study, service and speakers.

We look forward to hearing from President Debbie; Carol von Soosten,



LWML gift planning counselor; Rev. Dr. Brian Friedrich, president, Concordia University, St Paul, Gary Thies, Mission Central director; and Mites in Action speakers.

Friday luncheon options include one for YWRs with Larson and past district presidents, and another with von Soosten. The Saturday luncheons include one with Kay Nelson, district Heart to Heart leader. This is for societies and groups with multi-cultural ladies in your congregations. Another luncheon will be with Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch.

Friday evening after our worship service, we will gather for "LWML's Got Talent." The convention *Call Letter* can be found at sdlwml.org and will be sent to all the societies and local groups.

Delegates need to register with our secretary, Heather Miller, by April 30. I pray that when your local group/society is asking for delegates, you will consider serving in this way. To God be all praise and glory!



Remember two years ago when members of the Yankton Zone put on those big glasses and invited you to the district convention: "Come to Yankton in 2020!" "Come and improve your vision!" "Come get 2020 vision in Yankton!" We sang "Open Our Eyes, Lord" and "Be Thou My Vision" and more.

We had fun doing that invitation and now we are actually looking for you to come to the convention. Our host committee and all the women in our zone are seeing clearly hundreds of you in Yankton with 2020 vision. We see:

- The mission of the LWML in our mission grants.

Continued on next page

- ▶ Young women joining with all ages in the LWML vision;
- ▶ A Mission Pledge Walk with a view of two states as we walk across the historic Meridian Bridge over the Missouri River, to cross into Nebraska and back to South Dakota;
- ▶ Pastor Steve (Weispfenning) completing six years as our district counselor as he leads Bible study and worship here in his own church.
- ▶ Us improving our vision with other Lutheran women and pastors gathered together in singing, serving, praying enjoying fun and fellowship.

The Yankton Zone invites you to St John's Lutheran Church, Yankton, May 29-30. Come be a part of the LWML 2020 vision as you "Set Your Eyes on Jesus."

Dianne Diekmann
Yankton Zone President

Candidates for office

The Nominating Committee is pleased to announce the slate of candidates for the LWML South Dakota District Convention. We thank these ladies (and gentlemen) for their prayerful consideration and willingness to serve the Lord with gladness. We also thank committee members Elaine Hankel and Arlene Naasz.

President

- Patty Peters

Vice-President of Christian Life

- Susan Buxcel
- Bev Johnson

Vice-President of Gospel Outreach

- Dianne Hemminger
- Jan Larson

Treasurer

- Melissa Brock
- Vonda Sturzenbecher

Nominating committee

- Nancy Bogenhagen
- Ann Cruse
- Jean Haselhorst
- Joyce Kasuske
- Pat Reichert

Pastoral Counselor

- Rev. Doug Slavens
- Rev. Clint Thorson

Praise our Lord!

Bobbie Bierman

Nominating Committee Chair

COUNSELOR'S CORNER



My kids have always enjoyed seek-and-find books. We have a variety of these on the bookshelf at home. The pages are filled with cluttered and crowded pictures in which the reader tries to find objects that are hidden in plain sight throughout the picture.



Rev. Steve Weispfenning
LWML District Counselor

In one puzzle from our Disney's *Frozen* seek-and-find book, there is a hidden wishbone. For the longest time, I was convinced that the wishbone was not there — that it was missing and that the illustrator must have simply forgotten to include it. Finally, after dozens of attempts, we were able to find the wishbone. Oh what joy!

On the first Easter Sunday, some women went to the tomb where Jesus was buried. They went there expecting to find the dead body of Jesus. Only upon arriving, they found the tomb open and the body was not there! Then two men in dazzling apparel said to the women:

"Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen." — **Luke 24:5-6**

Oh, what joy!

Like our family and the *Frozen* book or the women and the empty tomb, we do not always see what is hidden in plain sight. I was frustrated that I could not find the wishbone and convinced myself that it was not there. The women were sorrowful that Jesus had died and perplexed that His body was not there at the tomb. We often go through life frustrated, sorrowful and perplexed because of our sin and its consequences. We fail to see what is hidden in plain sight.

The living and risen Jesus is the object of our faith, who solves all the problems of our sin. What joy and relief there was for the women, the disciples, the apostle Paul and more than 500 people who all at once saw Jesus alive! Alleluia! Christ is risen! Jesus conquered that last enemy to be destroyed — the enemy of death. Because Jesus lives, we too shall live. That's our hope. That's our confidence. That's our peace. And that's our joy!

When we look to the living Jesus with eyes of faith, we find comfort, peace and joy in the midst of our frustrations, sorrows and perplexities caused by sin. The risen Jesus said to Thomas:

"Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." — **John 20:29**



61st LWML South Dakota District Convention

May 29–30, 2020

St. John's Lutheran Church, Yankton, SD

Registration Form

Deadline for registration and meals—April 30, 2020



Set Your Eyes on Jesus

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____
 Email _____
 Church & City _____
 Zone _____
 Emergency contact name & Phone number _____

Registration Status

(check one)

- ___ Voting member of Board of Directors
- ___ Delegate
- ___ Past LWML District President
- ___ Non-voting member of the BOD
- ___ LWML Member
- ___ Pastor
- ___ Guest
- ___ Exhibitor

Please check all that apply:

- First time attending a District Convention
- Young Woman Representative
- Heart to Heart Sister
- Choir Member (please include your email to receive information and music)

I Plan to attend

- Mission Central-Thursdays, 10:30 am
- Mission Pledge Walk-Thursdays, 6:45 pm

Housing Information—You are responsible for making your own hotel arrangements. Ask for the LWML rates. Rooms are blocked at:

- **Holiday Inn Express: \$115** plus taxes
605-665-3177
- **Kelly Inn: \$119.99** plus taxes (King bed)
\$129.99 plus taxes (2 Queen beds)
605-665-2906 *deadline April 23*
- **Days Inn: \$70** plus taxes
605-665-8717
- **EconoLodge: \$80** plus taxes
605-689-3400 *deadline May 14*

Luncheons: Select one for each day

- ___ **Friday:** YWRs with President Debbie, President Lisa, and Past District Presidents.
- ___ **Friday:** Gifts of Love with Carol von Soosten
- ___ **Friday:** General Lunch with Friends
- ___ **Saturday:** Heart to Heart with Kay Nelson
- ___ **Saturday:** Dakota Boys & Girls Ranch
- ___ **Saturday:** General Lunch with Friends

Registration Fee

	Quantity	Cost	Fee Total
Registration	_____	\$40.00	\$_____
Friday Lunch	_____	\$10.00	\$_____
Friday Supper	_____	\$12.00	\$_____
Saturday Lunch	_____	\$10.00	\$_____
Total Enclosed			\$_____

I need my meals Gluten-Free

***Pastors please choose gratis meals.**

Make check payable to: **LWML SD District Convention**
 Mail check and registration to:
 Cheryl Saylor
 114 Wayne St
 Yankton, SD 57078

District Convention canceled

After much prayer and consideration of the women in the LWML South Dakota District, and with the recommended social distancing and isolation happening all over the world due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the LWML South Dakota District Executive Committee has decided to cancel our 61st convention.

Visit the district LWML website at sdlwml.org, and Facebook page at facebook.com/sdlwml, for:

- ▶ A Mission Grants video
- ▶ Updated information for delegates
- ▶ Other convention business information

- ▶ Voting results (to be posted in June)
- ▶ Ways to serve on a district committee in 2020-22 (fill out the "Ways to Serve" form on the website; these are two-year terms with the option to serve again).

We are also starting a memory book of names of LWML women from our district who have died. If you know of someone who you would like to have included in this book, send the information to Lisa Asmus, 6509 S. Mogen Ave., Sioux Falls, SD 57108 or email at lwmlsdpres@gmail.com. Please include their name, society and town, and birth year and year of death.

With love from Lisa

Thanks, mom

My mom had a significant impact on my life. When I was in third grade, she came to my school with our pastor to tell me that "daddy died." Life changed drastically that day for my mother, five older siblings and me.

It was not easy growing up without a dad, nor was it easy for mom as a single parent to six children. A constant impact for all of us was Christ in our lives. We went to church each Sunday, attended Walther League–Youth for Christ (as teenagers), attended Lutheran school and had family devotions. Mom would attend the Ladies Aid, which later became LWML.

We didn't have a perfect family, or live perfect lives, but we always knew that



Lisa Asmus
LWML South Dakota District President



Lisa's mom, Shirlee Tesch

mom loved us — and even more, that Jesus loved us and forgave our sins.

Although I didn't know any different at that time, I didn't always appreciate having my life so centered around the church. Now I am thankful for the foundation that was given to me as a baptized child of God, and how that was nurtured throughout my childhood.

When I visited mom at a rehab unit in February, she asked me about this year's LMWL prayer service. I looked it up on my phone and asked if she would like me to read it since her eyesight is not

good enough for her to read anymore. She did. I read it, we discussed the questions and we prayed. What a blessing it was to have that time with her. At 92, my mom still makes an impact on me. Now she encourages me as I serve God by serving others in my role as a pastor's wife and as a Lutheran Woman in Mission.

Mighty Mites

Your mite offerings have made an impact! All 13 of our 2018-20 mission grants have been paid! I praise God for the blessing you and your Mite Box offerings have been to the 13 organi-

zations our district chose to support during this biennium.

At the end of the month, we have the awesome opportunity to choose new mission grants to support. You can visit sdlwml.org to view a PowerPoint presentation with the next biennium's mission grant selections (the proposals appear on page 5). As you watch it, say a prayer for God to bless the work of each organization and for our delegates, who will be selecting the mission grants.



zations our district chose to support during this biennium.

Set your eyes on Jesus – the author and perfecter of our faith (Heb. 12:2)

This was to be the theme for our 2020 district convention at the end of this month. However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the uncertainty of when groups such as ours will be able to meet again, the Executive Committee made the decision to cancel our convention (*see above*).

There is still business that needs to be taken care of by our voting delegates. All voting delegates will be contacted with information needed for this process and it will be posted on the website.

To God be the glory!

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

'My eyes have seen your salvation'

May is now here. This brings me both joy and sadness.

Joy because who doesn't love springtime and the promise of warmer weather, even if we can't fully enjoy it now because of the pandemic?

Sadness because we were looking forward to gathering together in Yankton for our district convention at the end of May, which we will no longer be able to do. Our theme for the convention was "Set Your Eyes on Jesus." We were eagerly looking forward to doing just that through several days of fellowship, worship and prayer together.

But there is still joy for us today because, of course, we can still set our eyes on Jesus! In keeping with that theme, I'd like to turn your attention to one of my favorite accounts in the New Testament. In fact, I like this story so much, I named one of my own sons Simeon. To get the full context, I'd encourage you to take a minute to read Luke 2:22-35.

I'll summarize briefly: Simeon is an old man who had been given a unique promise from the Holy Spirit. He was told that he would not die until he had seen the Christ. When the baby Jesus is brought by Mary and Joseph to the temple, Simeon too is led there by the Spirit and is shown Jesus. His prayer of thanksgiving to God is so beautiful, it's been included in our Lutheran liturgy as a fitting prayer of thanksgiving for us in response to the gift of Jesus' very own body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins.

The part of Simeon's prayer that has



Rev. Daniel Grimmer

LWML District Counselor

always stood out to me the most is verse 30:

"For my eyes have seen your salvation."

Although the Bible does not tell us when Simeon died, it is reasonable to suppose that he did not live long enough to see Jesus accomplish salvation in His bloody death on the cross, and His victorious resurrection on the third day. When Simeon says he has "seen salvation," he only means that he has seen Jesus. But for him, that is enough! He recognizes that in seeing Jesus, even as a baby, he is seeing God in the flesh, who will sacrifice that body as an offering for the sins of the world.

I imagine as Simeon lay dying, the image of the baby Jesus was fixed in his mind, as he joyfully departed in peace having set his eyes on the salvation of God.

So we too set our eyes on Jesus because in Him we have seen God's salvation. We see His salvation every time the Holy Spirit brings the healing balm of His death and resurrection to our wounded and weary ears and hearts. We see His salvation every time we hear the pronouncement of forgiveness in the stead and by the command of Jesus to us. We see His salvation every time we remember that we have been washed and buried into Jesus' death and resurrection. We see His salvation when we taste Jesus' body and blood on our lips.

Our eyes have seen His salvation, and so we are able to depart in peace, confident of His forgiveness and mercy toward us, and free to joyfully serve our neighbors for all of the rest of our earthly lives until we set our eyes on Jesus in the flesh in the joy of His eternal kingdom.

**Looking to Jesus with you,
Pastor Grimmer**

2020-22 Mission Grant proposals

1. LCMS Missionary Support at just the RIGHT Time – Mission Central, \$5,000
2. I Was a Stranger: Lutheran Books for Immigrants in South Dakota – Lutheran Heritage Foundation, \$5,000
3. Eldercare Staff and Support at Jacmel Lutheran Home in Haiti – Ministry in Mission (RSO), \$5,000
4. Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., Food and Clothing Co-Op, \$5,000
5. Graduate School Support for International Students – Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, \$5,000
6. Equipping and Strengthening the Early Learning Center Ministry to Children and Families – Hot Springs, \$4,000
7. Worship Furnishings, LCMS Mission to Spain, \$3,250
8. Worker Wellness for Chaplain Families, \$3,000
9. Christ's Mercy in Russia, \$5,000
10. Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty, \$4,000
11. Deaconess Training in Latin America, \$3,000
12. Nursing Student Mercy Medical Team Scholarships, \$3,000
13. Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, Chapel Audio Equipment (RSO), \$3,000
14. Sioux Falls Lutheran Schools, Playground Equipment and Musical Instruments, \$5,000
15. Lutheran Books for Schools in Papua New Guinea, \$5,000
16. Community Outreach Mission at Trinity Lutheran – Belle Fouche, \$5,000

With love from Lisa

FOR HIS GOOD

For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Rom. 8:38-39

By Lisa Asmus

LWML South Dakota District President

This COVID-19 pandemic will not be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord!

As I write this, school buildings have been closed for the rest of the school year. Teachers are working online with their students, making sure the children get the education needed to advance to the next grade. Churches are holding services through Facebook Live and YouTube. High schools are being creative as to how to hold graduation — I've heard of some having online ceremonies, and some drive-thru.

Restaurants have either closed or they are offering carry-out, curbside or delivery service. Malls are closed. All sporting events are canceled.

I've also noticed that families are spending time together. Bible stud-

ies are being done online. Some are making masks for hospitals, making phone calls, sending notes, completing puzzles, playing games, making meals and eating together, cleaning closets, worshipping together — and realizing what is important. We don't know what the future holds, but we know who holds the future. God can use this situation for His good!

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. — **Rom. 8:28 NIV**

SAYING FAREWELL AS PRESIDENT

It is amazing to believe that four years have passed by since you elected me as your district president. God has used this time for His good in so many ways. Conventions are always a highlight for me as we choose new mission grants, hear how our mite offerings have bless-

ed people around our state and world, build relationships with LWML sisters, participate in Bible study, worship with Holy Communion, to name a few of my favorites. It was disappointing to have to cancel this year's convention, but I know God will bless us through it all. I want to thank the Executive Committee, Lori Hoffmann (meeting manager) and the Yankton Zone host committee for all the time and effort that was put into the planning.

Other highlights for me have been attending events with so many of you, serving with you at Orphan Grain Train, the road trip to Harvest Winds sewing factory in Parmalee, delivering mission grant checks to so many organizations on your behalf, working with your amazing and talented Board of Directors, praying for you, communicating with you through the *HiLites*, representing you at the LWML Presidents Assembly, and carrying the banner at the LWML conventions in Albuquerque and Mobile.

I know I wasn't a perfect president, but I was honored to have the opportunity to grow in His love as I answered His call.

And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me." — **Is. 6:8**

It always warmed my heart when people would see me at a store or an LWML event and stop to say hello or tell me that they enjoy reading my article each month. Each of you is an important part of God's family as Lutheran Women in Mission in the South Dakota District, and I am thankful to have served with you.

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. — **Phil. 1:3-6**

Continued on next page

Lisa Asmus, right, chats with Mary Hamilton, Grants and Foundations coordinator for LCMS Mission Advancement, in 2018 while Lisa visited the LCMS International Center in St. Louis to provide monetary gifts from South Dakota District mission grants.



COUNSELOR'S CORNER

Thank You

“

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.”

— Phil. 1:3-5

Dear Lutheran Women in Mission of the South Dakota District,

I have to admit, I'm struggling to come up with the appropriate words to express my gratitude for allowing me the opportunity to serve you as pastoral counselor for the last six years. It's hard to believe that my term of service is coming to a close, even as I was afforded a bonus two years to be your "senior" senior counselor.

The LWML has been a part of my life for such a long time, with my mom's involvement when I was a kid. Who would have thought that an 8-year-old boy attending his first LWML convention in Rapid City would eventually serve as LWML South Dakota District pastoral counselor?

Your love for our savior, Jesus, and the mission of God to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19) has invigorated a renewed spirit and focus on mission and outreach for me. The LWML has opened up a whole new world of opportunities and resources to share the love of God in Christ Jesus through creative mercy and mission projects, both near and far. For that, I thank you!

The LWML has been such a huge support for me, as my home district helped put me through college and seminary



Rev. Steve Weispfennig
LWML District Counselor

en route to becoming a pastor. My wife has fondly referred to the LWML as my "girlfriends" since our seminary days, when we would get random checks in the mail from some LWML group or society, simply because of their love for Gospel ministry. It will be different not getting together with my "girlfriends" for LWML weekends, events and conventions — at least not in the same way as I have for the last six years. I am grateful for all the different women that I have gotten to serve with, and for their influence in shaping my continued growth and development as a pastor.

As I write this, we are in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has canceled our district convention. As a result, I won't be able to thank you and say farewell in person. We were looking forward to "seeing" you in Yankton to "set our eyes on Jesus." But no virus, social distancing or death can ever "separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:39).

So this does not mean that this is goodbye — rather, it's *aufwiederssehen*. This formal German goodbye literally means "until we see again." I look forward to that day when we will once again be able to gather and see each one another.

Thank you again for your love, dedication and focus on serving the Lord and His mission for "all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:5).

In Christ • Pastor Steve

WITH LOVE FROM LISA

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

My prayer for our district moving forward is that no matter what we do, we are led by the Holy Spirit as we set our eyes on Jesus and share His love with the world. I encourage you to continue to be "Held by God's Word" and Sacraments (when you are able to participate in Holy Communion again); be "Inspired to share His Gospel" with others; and look for ways to use your gifts and talents to serve the Lord as

you are "Surrounded by His Grace."

Set your eyes on Jesus as you collect your mite offerings, pray that it will bless the recipient. Have the list of district mission grants and LWML mission grants near your mite box so you can pray for one of them as you add your offering, and as you welcome others to join you for your Bible study or servant event. If others aren't available

when you meet, consider changing your time or starting another group at a time that works for them. It is easy to get stuck in the "this-is-the-way-we-have-always-done-it" mode. You need to ask yourself which is more important. Set your eyes on Jesus.

While none of us is perfect, we are forgiven! Jesus bore the price of our sin on the cross. Let us give thanks to the Lord by responding to His love with love!

I look forward to seeing you at future LWML South Dakota District events. To God be the glory!

Meet the new president

A primary focus of the LWML for 2019-21 is *Sharing Encouragement*. We are to value each other in Christ and we are to accept and encourage each woman to grow in her relationship with others.



Patty Peters
LWML South Dakota District President

For several months we have lived in the midst of fear and isolation because of the COVID-19 pandemic. At first there was hoarding, then isolation, and then the grieving and disappointment of many planned events never held.

Love and kindness seemed to abound! Then the tragedy happened in Minneapolis that shook us to our core. Where is the love for our neighbor that Jesus taught? What can we do or say? We need to really read and take to heart what Jesus says in the Scriptures — to love God and our neighbor. Examine your heart and mind, see what you need to change and ask for God's help through prayer.

As the new LWML South Dakota District president, I want to introduce you to my family. Scott and I married in 1977, went to law school and medical school, respectively, and then had three beautiful daughters. Katherine and Anthony have two little boys. Kristen and Billy have four children, and Sarah and Johnny have two small children. I am grateful for their faith in Jesus Christ.

You will learn more about them as the time goes on!

I look forward to what God has in His plans for the LWML South Dakota District!

STATE FAIR, HERE WE COME!

Welcome to the 2020 South Dakota State Fair, which is still scheduled for Sept. 3-7 in Huron. The theme this year is "Perfect Vision of Fun." Our sight has been a bit distorted this year with the many changes in our normal routines, but our vision is always clear and focused on Jesus.

We hope you can come volunteer and share Jesus with us and the Utecht family at the Puppet Place.

The 2020 volunteer schedule is:

- Thursday, Sept. 3 – Aberdeen Zone
- Friday, Sept. 4 – Black Hills Zone
- Saturday, Sept. 5 – Brookings Zone
- Sunday, Sept. 6 – Chamberlain Zone
- Monday, Sept. 7 – Milbank Zone

We hope to see you all at the Puppet Place this year.



Special greeters made guests feel welcome to the Puppet Place in 2019.

PIERRE ZONE report

As I prepared this Pierre Zone report, we were just starting to get back to doing many of the activities that we have not been able to do for the last few months.

Today, our church held its first in-person service! It was so great to be together again in our sanctuary, seeing each other and our pastors face to face, even at a distance with masks on. Even as foreign or uncomfortable as this may be, God alone knows and sees how this will play out in our future. By the time you read this, I am prayerful that we are again free to embrace each other and meet concerning our mission work as a group.

However, even while we have not been meeting in our normal fashion for several months, the LWML has been at work in the Pierre Zone, and I am confident this has been the case in your zone too. We as individuals

have been checking in on each other through phone calls, Facebook and other social media. We have been sewing masks for our families and others in need. Two of our zone groups were able to collect and assemble many health kits to be given to Orphan Grain Train.

One group has started to carefully physically meet again. Each of our groups elected delegates to our convention, and the delegates were able to complete their duties of voting for our mission grants, updating the Bylaws, approving a budget and electing new officers. It was not in the traditional manner, but it was accomplished and God was still at the helm, guiding our decisions and actions. Even though we are not together physically, we are still, as individuals, serving the Lord with our hands, feet, voice, lips, money, wills and our energy to reach out to others in need.

We have all learned so many things through this experience. For me personally, it has been a time to dive more

See REPORT, page 6

COUNSELOR'S CORNER



Hello, my name is Clint Olaf Thorson. I am excited and humbled that you have chosen me to be your LWML district junior counselor. I look forward to working with and serving with you and getting to know all of you as we proclaim the name of the Lord to South Dakota and the world.

I was asked to write a little about myself for my first *HiLites* article to help all of you get to know me a little better, but before I get into that, I want to ask all of you to answer this question ... “Who are you?”

As I stated in the beginning of my letter, my name is Clint Olaf Thorson. I was born and raised on a wheat farm in eastern Colorado, north of a small town called Vona (between Burlington and Limon along I-70, if you are interested). We also raised beef cattle until I was a freshman in high school. I have attended way too much school, as I studied physics for three years at the Colorado School of Mines. I did not get a physics degree there, but transferred to Concordia University, Nebraska, and earned a degree in theology after another three years.

From there, I went on to attend Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. After four years, I graduated and then stayed an additional year for more education. Then, finally, after 11 years of “post-high school” education, I took a call to Garland, Texas, and served as the sole pastor at Tree of Life Lutheran Church. I served there for almost four years before taking the call to serve two congregations here in South Dakota, Our Savior Lutheran Church, Madison, and St. John Lutheran Church, Howard.



Rev. Clint Olaf Thorson
LWML District Counselor

“We get to serve our churches and state and even the world together. And together, we get to proclaim the freedom from sin that Jesus won for all.”

I am married to a wonderful woman named Amber Marie Thorson (Schwartz). We have three beautiful daughters — Aliyah Marie, 7, Anja Lynn, 5, and Ariana Nicole, 1.

Now you know more about me, but who am I? While these tidbits of information begin to fill in some of the picture, to know who I am, we have to come at it a little differently. I started where we all did, as a dead man because of sin. Then, on Aug. 26, 1984, something incredible happened. It was on that day that God called me through the waters of Baptism to be different. He called me to life. He called me to be His son. He chose me to join His family and promised to always be my God.

To be sure, I am a husband, father, pastor, life-long student and so many others things, but most importantly I am a forgiven child of God, bought by the blood of Christ and called by the Spirit through the Gospel. And that is what makes all the other things that I do and am so special, because I get to proclaim the excellencies of Him who redeemed me through all of those other roles that I fill. I get to be me because Jesus is who He is — my Lord, my Savior and my God.

Now, who are you? I asked you to think about that question before I got into my own life. What did you come up with? How did you answer that? Let me help.

1 Peter 2:9 gives you a great starting place by reminding you that:

You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.



God has called you to be His children. No matter what else has happened in your life, our Lord has called you to be His. He has paid for your sins with the precious blood of Christ. And now our Lord has put us in partnership. We get to serve our churches and state and even the world together. And together, we get to proclaim the freedom from sin that Jesus won for all.

That is who we are — God’s children called to proclaim His excellencies in our daily lives in both ordinary and extraordinary times. You and I get to bless others with the same sure knowledge that we have, so that they can know who Jesus is and who they are in Him. What a wonderful blessing for you and me.

I look forward to living that blessing and working with you all in the LWML South Dakota District.

God’s peace and blessings.

2020 convention report

The LWML South Dakota District convention was not held in Yankton as planned due to COVID-19. Convention elections were carried out via paper ballots. Following are the election results.

The proposed budget of \$127,073 which includes a mission goal of \$123,573, was approved.

The 2020–22 approved Mission Grants are (plurality ranking):

1. Concordia Theological Seminary Food and Clothing Co-op, Fort Wayne, Ind. – \$5,000
2. LCMS Missionary Support, At Just the Right Time, Mission Central – \$5,000
3. I was a Stranger: Lutheran Books for Immigrants in South Dakota, Lutheran Heritage Foundation – \$5,000
4. Equipping and Strengthening the Early Learning Ministry to Children and Families, Hot Springs – \$4,000
5. Community Outreach Mission at Trinity Lutheran, Belle Fourche – \$5,000
6. Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, Chapel Audio Equipment – \$3,000
7. Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty – \$4,000
8. Graduate School Support for International Students, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis – \$5,000
9. Christ's Mercy in Russia – \$5,000
10. Sioux Falls Lutheran School, Play-ground Equipment and Musical Instruments – \$5,000
11. Student Mercy Medical Team Scholarships – \$3,000
12. Lutheran Books for Schools in Papua New Guinea – \$5,000



Members of the Sioux Falls Zone enjoy a "convention" walk. Even though the walk didn't get to take place in Yankton, the ladies got the walk in anyway!

Officer elections

President: Patty Peters
VP of Christian Life: Susan Buxcel
VP of Gospel Outreach: Jan Larson
Treasurer: Melissa Brock
Pastoral Counselor: Rev. Clint Olaf Thorson
Nominating Committee: Ann Cruse (chairman), Nancy Bogenhagen, Pat Reichert

Officer installation was held via Zoom on June 14. A link has been posted at sdlwml.org for viewing. Click the "2020 LWML South Dakota District Convention" link at the top of the page and find the link under "Convention Resources."

All proposed **Bylaw revisions** were approved.

Convention offerings

1. 2020-22 Mission Goal – \$6,572
2. Bethesda Lutheran Home – \$2,000

The LWML South Dakota Board of Directors voted in May that the 2022 convention will be held in Yankton. This is a change from the previous schedule, but those in Yankton are anxious to host us since they missed out this year.



REPORT

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

deeply into a personal devotion time with my spouse. Phone calls are made and received from people who I have not talked to for a long time. Time with family is especially cherished.

I am sure that your experience has had some special high moments as well, along with some very lonely ones.

Through it all, God has been there. He will always be there, holding us tightly in His hands and using us wherever and whenever He has need of us. What an amazing God we serve!

In His service,
Jan Larson, Pierre Zone President

Celebrate LWML Sunday

LWML Sunday is traditionally the first Sunday in October, but it can be celebrated any Sunday. The theme for this year is “Kingdom People Produce Kingdom Fruit.” It is based on the words of Christ to the chief priests and Pharisees, found in Matt. 21:43.

As we listen to and study God’s Word, He gives us everything that we need to produce fruit for the kingdom. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we respond to God’s grace by doing the work that He asks us to do. Through our prayers, offerings and actions, we are bearing fruit. Even though we often don’t see the results of our work, God is still there doing work beyond our understanding.

Many materials are available for download at lwml.org/lwml-sunday. Free materials include bulletin covers, banner patterns, a children’s message, a coloring page, litany and a sermon written by Rev. Larry Krueger, senior pastor of St. Paul, Waco, Texas, who also served as pastoral counselor for the LWML Texas District. All the materials were approved by LCMS Doctrinal Review.

My prayer is that you may be “Kingdom People that Produce Kingdom Fruit.”



Patty Peters
LWML South Dakota
District President



Kingdom people produce
KINGDOM FRUIT

“The kingdom of God will be ... given to a people producing its fruits” (Matthew 21:43).

Greetings from our new officers

I am Susan Buxcel, the new vice-president of Christian Life for the district. I am happy to begin a new chapter in my life by being a bigger part of our LWML South Dakota District. I’m also a bit nervous about completing the work that’s ahead for me. I want to thank Debbie Sattgast, who completed her term as VP of Christian Life, for the wonderful work she has done in this position and for her help and encouragement to me as I begin my journey in my service to LWML and my Lord Jesus Christ.

I became a member of LWML many years ago when I joined the church with my new husband, who was a lifetime LCMS member. Dianne Diekmann, our past district president and a special friend of mine, asked if I’d like to join the Rachel Circle. I was delighted at the invitation and have been a member of our wonderful circle for over 40 years!

My husband, Virgil, and I were both teach-

ers. I taught second grade. Virgil, a high school teacher, taught business and was also vocational director at the senior high in Yankton. After many years and two children later, I joyfully helped to start and became the head teacher for our St. John’s preschool for 10 years. I retired and then served on the preschool board.

We enjoy our time with our two sons and family, including six grandchildren and one great-grandson, when we gather at our farmland in western South Dakota, where we also fish, shoot prairie dogs and ride 4-wheelers and camp. We also love camping in the beautiful Black Hills in the fall.

Susan Buxcel • VP of Christian Life

My name is Melissa Brock. I was born and raised in Pierre, where I currently reside and am a member of Faith Lutheran Church. I work as deputy treasurer for Hughes County and serve on various boards.

I really started getting more involved with LWML when I was chosen to represent our district as

a Young Woman Representative at the national convention in Portland in 2009. Since then I have served in a variety of positions on the society, zone, district and National levels.

Melissa Brock • District Treasurer



COUNSELOR'S CORNER

'But at YOUR WORD'



When I think about the work of the LWML South Dakota District, my thoughts are often drawn to the miraculous catch of fish in Luke 5:1-11. Jesus was standing by the shore of the Sea of Galilee, watching the two boats of the fishermen.

The fishermen had already disembarked and were cleaning their nets at the conclusion of a long night's work. Simon Peter and his companions were exhausted, but Jesus approached them and asked them to go out a little from the shore so that He could preach from the boat. And when He finished preaching, He asked these exhausted fisherman to put their boats out into the deep and let down the nets for a catch.

And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing!"

This is a picture of having missionary zeal without the word of Christ. The fisherman had labored hard all night, repeatedly casting out their nets and hauling them in. And they had caught nothing. Not one fish had been hauled into the boats by the zeal of these fisherman. It's not that the fish weren't



Rev. Daniel Grimmer
LWML District
Pastoral Counselor

in the lake, for soon at Jesus' word they would haul in a tremendous catch. They had labored hard, but their labor alone did nothing to catch the fish.

So too, our zeal for the lost does nothing if we do not have the word of Christ. Not one sinner can be brought into the church by our efforts, even if we should labor hard all night in the darkness of the world.

Without Jesus, even the best efforts to gather and grow the church are without effect. We can be as kind and compassionate, fun, entertaining, interesting and insightful as we can be (and we should have a zeal for these things), but they are not what gathers sinners into the church.

But when Christ says the Word, sinners are gathered into the church. After Simon Peter told Jesus that they caught nothing, he said, "But at your word I will let down the nets." And when they had done this, they took in so many fish that their nets began to break, and they had to use the other boat to help them take in the fish.

This is a picture of the mission of the church. Jesus calls and gathers sinners

to repentance and faith in His Holy church through the Word of the Gospel. It doesn't begin or end with our zeal. That would be nothing but toiling all night long and catching nothing. But the Word of Christ, without our efforts, is at work to bring to repentance, forgive sins and strengthen faith.

Our job is not to try to complete with our zeal what seems to be lacking, but rather simply to say with Peter, "Lord, at your word I will let down the nets," and to be ready to give an answer to those who ask about the hope that is within us, so that Jesus might preach His Gospel wherever He wills.

Fall workshops begin Sept. 18

The Fall Christian Life Workshops will soon be held and we hope that you will come with a friend and enjoy our presenter, Rev. Dr. Peter Kurowski, pastor of St. John, Montrose, and Zion, Canistota, who will speak on "Jesus in the Old Testament — The God Who Showed Up."

We will learn how Jesus appeared in the Old Testament to bring salvation to God's people. We will see in Jesus what God looks like, what love looks like and how we are to wear the look of love.

The workshop schedule is:

- ▶ Friday, Sept. 18, at Mount Calvary, Huron (688 Dakota Ave.)
- ▶ Saturday, Sept. 19, at Faith, Sioux Falls (601 N. Cliff Ave.)
- ▶ Friday, Oct. 2, at Zion, Chamberlain (314 S. Main)
- ▶ Saturday, Oct. 3, at Our Redeemer, Custer (744 Harney St.)

Registration begins at 9:30 a.m., followed by devotions and the main presentation. There is a one-hour break at noon for lunch, fellowship and visiting the LWML store. The workshop concludes at 3 p.m. Bring your Bibles and be inspired to reach out to others with the life-saving Word!

Susan Buxcel • VP Christian Life

Serving in love



gettyimages

Patty's Ponderings

Autumn is a beautiful time of year in South Dakota. Green leaves mysteriously turn to gold, brown, orange, red and yellow. I can't wait for the fresh, homegrown fruit and vegetables that include tomatoes, corn, cucumbers, apples, pears, pumpkins ... and the list goes on.



Patty Peters
LWML South Dakota District President

The farmers are taking in the harvest of soybeans and corn. Many of us enjoy that special day in October when we take to the fields to have a harvest of pheasants.

These are the physical fruits of someone's labor, but we all know about the fruit of the Spirit as Paul writes about in Gal. 5:22-23. They are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. In Gal. 5:13-14, Paul writes:

For you were called to freedom,

brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

We are to serve one another in love.

I know that people were kind to each other before COVID-19, but seeing so many acts of kindness since the pandemic hit us puts thankfulness

in my heart. Many of you reach out through phone calls, emails, letters, Zoom meetings and other platforms. We are supporting our loved ones in senior-living homes. I saw drawings on sidewalks and teddy bears in windows to show love for our neighbors.

I pray that you will ask the Spirit to fill you with the fruit that comes with reading and studying the Word of God. May kindness fill your hearts and lead to actions to show the love of Jesus to your neighbors.

'Looking to Jesus'

How have you set your eyes on Jesus during the pandemic? Did you write letters the old-fashioned way? Did you talk on the phone more? Or did you try something new like a Zoom meeting, a Facebook Messenger conversation or watching your congregation's worship service on YouTube?



Even though we did not meet in person for part of this year, we still functioned as a society. Staying connected is part of history. It doesn't matter how many are in your society. They add up to be a greater amount, just like the "Mighty Mites." Generations will want to know what you did to continue to stay connected to Jesus and share with your fellow sisters in Christ during this trying time.

Just a reminder — your yearly history zone and society report is due by Nov. 1.

Here are ways to stay connected to national LWML:

- ▶ Call 1-800-252-5965 or visit lwml.org.
- ▶ Visit facebook.com/theLWML, [Twitter.com/theLWML](https://twitter.com/theLWML) and YouTube.com/theLWML.
- ▶ Visit blog.lwml.org
- ▶ Read Mustard Seed Devotions at lwml.org/mustard-seed-devotions.

Stay connected to your district at sdlwml.org.

Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith. — **Heb. 12:2**

Lurene Mogler Denke • District Archivist/Historian

REMINDER: Send in your mites!

Please remember to get your mite offerings to your treasurer as often as possible — even if we are not meeting on a regular basis, or not at all.

With the COVID-19 pandemic affecting all of us, we are running behind in our mite offerings.

Treasurers ... please send in mites each month to me. Thank you!

Donna Harr • Financial Secretary

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

Rooted in the Reformation

October! What a month! The first Sunday is, of course, usually set aside for LWML Sunday as we gather our “Mighty Mites” to support missions around the world.

Then at the end of the month, we celebrate the Reformation. These two occasions are perhaps a little more related than it looks on the outside.

Remember, Martin Luther broke off from the Roman Catholic Church for many and various good reasons, but one was the way that the Catholic Church handled good works. For the Catholics, good works were a necessity by which people got ever closer to heaven.



Rev. Clint O. Thorson
LWML District Counselor

In his study of Scripture, Luther came to see that God had no need for our good works. On the contrary, Christ had done all the work of salvation and gave it as a free gift to people like Luther, you, me and all who trust in Christ alone for that salvation.

But Luther also knew that good works should not be forgotten. Luther knew that the good works of God's chosen and redeemed people were more ways by which God provides for the earthly needs of His creation.



In Galatians 5, we learn that Christ freed us from sin and the requirements of the Law so that we would not trust in outward actions for our salvation, but rather use them in love for the good of our neighbor. Trusting in Christ alone and rooted in His salvation, we are free to work for the good of those around us. Thus enter our mites.

These tiny little coins that don't amount to much alone are exactly the kind of good works God wants us to share with those around us. Those small little coins sent overseas or across the street, and all the acts of Christian love — big or small — that you do daily are

those good works by which God shares His love in the lives of your neighbors.

Being rooted in Christ and in His salvation, we can gladly take up the work of the Reformation so others might have the same freedom in Christ alone.

Meet your Executive Committee

The LWML South Dakota District Executive Committee (EC) is comprised of 10 officers and counselors elected by the voting assembly at district convention.

Along with **Patty Peters**, Faith, Sioux Falls (district president, page 4) and **Rev. Clint Thorson**, Our Savior, Madison, and St. John's, Howard (pastoral counselor, above), the 2020–22 EC consists of:



Heather Miller
Our Redeemer,
Sioux Falls
Secretary



Susan Swanson
Zion,
Chamberlain
VP of Christian Life



Susan Buxcel
St. John's,
Yankton
VP of Christian Life



Jan Larson
Faith,
Pierre
VP of Gospel Outreach



Nyla Jurrens
Zion, White
VP of Special Focus Ministries



Melissa Brock
Faith,
Pierre
Treasurer



Donna Harr
Faith,
Sioux Falls
Financial Secretary



Rev. Daniel Grimmer
Zion,
Mitchell
Pastoral Counselor



LWML
Lutheran Women in Mission

PATTY'S PONDERINGS



Lexington, Kentucky ... what does that bring to mind?

Many of you think of thoroughbred horses and racing. Now you can add the LWML 39th Biennial Convention, which will be held June 24-27, 2021, at Rupp Arena at Central Bank Center in Lexington.



Patty Peters
LWML South Dakota District President

The theme is “Running the Race ... Looking to Jesus.” The Scripture verse is Heb. 12:1-2 and the goal statement is “Looking to Jesus, we run the race set before us and proclaim the joy of the Lord.”

Convention attendees will:

- ▶ Focus on Jesus through God’s Word and Sacraments.
- ▶ Joyfully celebrate our salvation with song and prayer.
- ▶ Serve our neighbors through witness and mission.

It is a tradition for many South Dakota District LWML members to attend the national convention, and our prayer is that many of us can go again. Our district will have a banner that represents the theme of the convention. I hope someone has a great design idea and submits it by Jan. 5.

For more information, visit lwml.org/2021-convention. The convention flyer can be downloaded for your use. You can also read the explanation for the design of the convention logo (shown above). The Omega symbol is shaped like a horseshoe and the laurel wreath symbolizes our victory in Christ.

Please spread the news about the convention, and I hope to see you in Lexington!

YOUNG WOMAN REPRESENTATIVES

Apply to attend convention

What is it like to be a district Young Woman Representative (YWR) at the LWML national convention?

Emily Murray (see below) represented the South Dakota District as a YWR at the 2019 convention in Mobile, Ala. She states that her “eyes were opened to so many wonderful ministries that our mites go to support. It was so amazing to see all the different people joyfully serving the Lord.”

She knows that giving mites has an eternal impact on people’s lives.

Do you know a young woman that needs encouragement to be a YWR? The application is available at lwml.org/ywr and is due in December. Please find that young woman from your zone and have her apply.

The South Dakota District will send two YWRs to the 2021 convention.

A ‘refreshed heart’

Dear Sisters in Christ,

During the summer of 2019, I had the pleasure of attending the LWML convention in Mobile, Ala., as a Young Woman Representative. My heart was so refreshed with the fellowship of many other God-fearing women!



Emily Murray

As the book of Titus instructs us, the older generations of women have much to disciple and teach those of us that are in the younger generations. They can be a balm in this weary world, where it can sometimes feel isolating to stand up for Jesus.

In addition to the fellowship, my eyes were also opened to many wonderful ministries that our mites go to support. It was so amazing to see all the different women “joyfully” serving the Lord together, and it made me realize the eternal impact our seemingly small mites have.

If you want to grow in your love for Jesus and in serving the least of these, I would strongly encourage you to apply for one of the two spots for South Dakota YWRs. I hope to see you in Kentucky for our convention in 2021!

Travel with your sisters to Lexington

Plans are being made to have a bus transport LWML members from South Dakota to the LWML 39th Biennial Convention in Lexington, Ky., in June. Many of you know how much fun that can be!

Watch for more information to come in early 2021.



COUNSELOR'S CORNER



Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. — Heb. 12:1-2



You wouldn't expect it if you didn't know me back then, but I was an avid runner in high school. I competed in both cross country and track and field. I took racing very seriously and trained hard, especially during the summer so that I would be in top shape to race in the fall.

I remember when I was a freshman and new to racing, one of the things I didn't initially like about racing was the uniform. The shorts were very lightweight and extremely short! The shirts too were very small, and the shoes were small and light. The whole outfit made me feel a little bit exposed. But it served its purpose.



Rev. Daniel Grimmer
LWML District
Pastoral Counselor

The weight of heavier fabrics and bigger shoes slowed you down and made you less effective at the goal of finishing the race as quickly as possible. The purpose of the uniform was so that you would be as unencumbered as possible so that you could move swiftly to the finish line. Some of the more zealous runners even shaved their arms and legs so that they would be even more aerodynamic.

In Heb. 12:1-2, our life of discipleship in Jesus is described as a great race. The goal of course, is the eternal life and kingdom that Jesus has won for us and prepared for us from before the foundation of the world. Life in this world is a pilgrimage and a race to that

celestial finish line, where we will join with Jesus and the saints unnumbered in the place where sickness and sighing and death will be no more.

Like every race, this race requires focus. We must have the goal in mind above all else, and that requires us to unburden ourselves of anything that weighs us down or distracts us from running the race.

The author to the Hebrews exhorts us to lay aside our sin and our sinful pursuits, but also "every weight." This doesn't mean we need to live as ascetics, but we should consider how everything in our lives can be made into an idol that distracts us from the goal of entering the kingdom of heaven. Our possessions, our friends, our hobbies and even our jobs and families can be a weight that hinders us from running the race if we let them get in the way. We should take stock of those things from time to time and consider giving up those things which hinder us from following Christ.

But the best way we can run the race "with endurance" is to look to Jesus, "the founder and perfecter of our faith." When I was running races, it was always tempting to want to slow down or even stop. The pain and fatigue of the race sometimes got in the way. But the thing that kept me going was remembering the finish line.

So also, we run the race remembering Christ Jesus, who died to save us from sin and who has promised us every peace and joy at the end. We run with endurance because we know He is upholding us and helping us on through His Spirit.

These verses from Hebrews are the inspiration for the theme of the 39th Biennial Convention in Lexington, Ky., in June. Whether you are able to attend the convention or not, I pray that you run the race with endurance, remembering Jesus who endured the cross to save you from sin.

**Running with you,
Pastor Grimmer**

Ministry goes on at state fair

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the Puppet Place at the South Dakota State Fair, held Sept. 3-7 in Huron, went on as usual, or at least as usual as possible. Social distancing was practiced for the duration of the fair.

A group from the Huron Zone helped clean and set up the Puppet Place for the shows ahead of opening day. Benches were removed and the chairs were appropriately distanced. There was no air conditioning, and windows and the front door remained open throughout the performances. Surfaces were disinfected between each of the five shows. Then there was more cleaning again in preparation for the next day.

With all these extra tasks, it would have been very helpful to have a larger than normal work crew at the Puppet Place, but alas, the virus kept most of our workers away. However, Rev. Andrew Utecht, his brother, Rev. Peter Utecht, their families and some friends kept the ministry going. The number of people attending the fair was down this year, and there were 414 people who attended the shows.

The Bible story for this year's show was "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego." As you recall, these were the three Israelites who stood up for their faith and were then thrown into the fiery furnace. God intervened though as only He can and spared their lives, and they exited the furnace without even a scent of fire or smoke on them or their clothes. What a powerful story to tell to today's culture of fear and discord. The Gospel of the Lord Jesus was proclaimed, and visitors were blessed by hearing the Word. The theme of the magic show was centered on getting rid of division between people with the forgiveness from Christ and the fruit of the Spirit.

A new feature this year was an app people could download to access a welcome statement of faith, a Bible study on racism and a poster explaining the goals of the LWML. This app also allows people to contact Pastor Andrew so there is the possibility for witnessing. Stickers were given to the children in place of our famous cross whistles. The Bible studies on racism were also



handed out to the people who attended.

We are grateful to the Utecht families for again taking on the task of spreading the Gospel to those searching for truth, comfort and hope in this world. We are hopeful next year will find more of us at the Fair to help with this great ministry of the LWML.

Jan Larson
VP of Gospel Outreach
LWML South Dakota District



Top, Isaac Utecht (left) is the illusionist as he performs with the help of his father, Rev. Andrew Utecht.

Below, guests were able to sit together as families. Others were distanced six feet apart.

PATTY'S PONDERINGS

WANTED: Ideas for convention banner



The LWML 39th Biennial Convention will be held June 24-27 in Lexington, Ky. The theme is “Running the Race...Looking to Jesus.”



Patty Peters
LWML South Dakota District President

The women of the LWML Indiana, Ohio and Michigan districts are thrilled to welcome us to the convention. The banner procession will set the tone for the convention as it beautifully expresses the convention theme and highlights the God-given talents of our districts.

I know that there is a lady or group of ladies in our South Dakota District who will make a beautiful banner that incorporates the convention theme and also shows the wonders of South Dakota. Please see the guidelines on making the banner at sdlwml.org. Scroll down to “Events” and click “LWML Convention.” Then click the “District Banner Information” link.

Please submit your ideas for the banner to me by Jan. 1.

We are also working on having a bus to take us to the convention. Registration information will soon be given to the zone presidents.

Please keep the host districts in your prayers as the planning proceeds for this convention.

CHRISTIAN LIFE WORKSHOPS



Rev. Dr. Peter Kurowski presents at the Christian Life Workshop at Mount Calvary, Huron, on Sept. 18.

CHRIST *in the* OLD TESTAMENT

The LWML South Dakota District 2020 Christian Life Workshop was held at Mount Calvary, Huron, on Sept. 18; Faith, Sioux Falls, on Sept. 19; and Zion, Chamberlain, on Oct. 2.

Our guest speaker was Rev. Dr. Peter Kurowski, pastor of St. John, Montrose, and Zion, Canistota, who spoke on “The God Who Showed Up — Jesus in the Old Testament.” Using 11 exhibits and featuring Old Testament readings, Pastor Pete showed how Jesus appeared as the angel of the Lord in the fiery furnace, wrestling with Jacob, and as the talking donkey, to name a few. There were 200 prophesies in the Old Testament about our Lord, and at least 70 times we learned that the Savior appeared to people.

Jesus found in the Old Testament is

“the angel” as opposed to “an angel,” which refers to a messenger of God. Our inspiring workshop experience taught us that Jesus is not bound by time and space.

Pastor Pete also wrote a hymn titled “Jesus Came, His Heirs Adoring” about Jesus’ “wonderful work of redemption reaching back throughout all history.”

Some comments from the ladies who attended the workshop included:

- ▶ “Pastor Pete was so illuminating on Scripture truths.”
- ▶ “He is a pious scholar.”
- ▶ “Amazing new thoughts about how Jesus showed up.”

Susan Buxcel
VP of Christian Life

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

Living in true joy

A blessed Advent season to all of you!



Right now, I imagine that the majority of you are spending much of your days preparing for the next big thing — Christmas. We have no more than recovered from Thanksgiving than we are off and running, changing decorations, making arrangements for more company and finishing up the last of our shopping before the big day.

This time of year is so busy for everyone! What's more is that there is this expectation that everyone and everything has to look and act a certain way. After all, it is the Christmas season, so we all ought to be cheery and put together, right?

Well, not exactly. Make no mistake, I hope that you are joyful and that Advent and Christmas are enjoyable for you, but that doesn't mean we must fake it or put on a false front. Re-



Rev. Clint O. Thorson
LWML District Counselor

member why we celebrate Christmas: because Christ came to the world, took on flesh and suffered all things that humans normally suffer and more in order to redeem us from a fallen world. He came to us to meet us where we are.

Christmas is not about making everything just right or meeting some made up expectation. Instead, it is about hearing once again how Christ came into the world for you. He came, born of a virgin, in order to reach into the darkest reaches of your lives and pour forgiveness for your sins, heal your hurts and even give you eternal life.

Though the world weighs on us, though sin saps our strength and though the devil deceives us by trying to make us think we aren't enough, especially at busy times like Advent and Christmas, Christ came and proved all of that wrong.

Paul reminds that Christ is the power and wisdom of God that opposes and defeats the power and wisdom of the world (see 1 Cor. 1:23-24). Jesus came to reach into the busiest, most difficult parts of your life to heal you, to forgive you and to love you. That is the joy we live in and proclaim at Christmas.

In Christ • Pastor Thorson

YWRs, H2H leaders sought for national convention

December is always a race at my house to get everything done for the holidays. It also reminds me that a new year is approaching and the application deadline to be a Young Woman Representative (YWR) and a Heart to Heart (H2H) leader is approaching. The deadline is Dec. 15, so please put on your racing shoes and apply.

If you are a young woman between the ages of 22 and 35 and have not previously attended a national LWML convention, here is an opportunity for you! We are looking for two YWRs to attend the LWML 39th Biennial Convention June 24-27 in Lexington, Ky. All expenses are paid, except for souvenirs.

Contact your group president if you or anyone you know would enjoy this opportunity. Applications for YWRs may be found at sdlwml.org. Find the link under "Special Focus Ministries." Mail applications to Tina Lenz, 701 W. Shady Hill St., Sioux Falls, S.D. 57108 or email them to tmhoytlenz@yahoo.com.

The leaders of the H2H Sisters want to motivate, equip, challenge and provide mentoring opportunities for women of diverse ethnic backgrounds to serve the church and participate in LWML activities, including Bible study and missions. We would love to have you attend the H2H leader training on behalf of the South Dakota District during convention. Expenses are also paid, excluding souvenirs.

Applications for H2H leaders may be found at sdlwml.org. Find the link under "Special Focus Ministries." Mail applications to Patty Peters, 215 W. 25th St. Sioux Falls, S.D. 57105 or email them to lwmlsdprespatty@gmail.com.

Also, please say a prayer for those who are considering being a YWR or H2H leader, that they may "run the race" with Christ and LWML.

Nyla Jurrens • V.P. Special Focus Ministries