

LUTHERAN WOMAN'S QUARTERLY

WINTER 2017

GRANTS
AT WORK:
IN THE
MIDST
OF THE
STORM
Hurricane
preparations
in Dominican
Republic

HEART TO
HEART
SISTERS
IN CHRIST

BIBLE STUDY:
ROSA YOUNG,
LIVING A
GOD-SIZED
DREAM



Each issue of the *Lutheran Woman's Quarterly* is a trust issue. The *LWQ* staff begins its work with a blank slate (actually, a poster tacked to a wall) and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we pray each issue into existence.

The Lord God hears those prayers. We trust Him to guide the magazine's production from start to finish. He does!

You provide the rest. Emails arrive in my inbox from people around the globe, offering to submit Bible studies, devotions, feature articles, and news stories. Expert doctrinal review refines each page. The result is an intricately woven and sensitively designed resource at your fingertips that clearly conveys the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

It doesn't stop there. You have the opportunity to reach out to others by sharing the *LWQ* and the Good News with others. The *Quarterly's* motto sums it perfectly: Knowing Christ and Making Him Known.*

This is His magazine; make no doubt. This is also your magazine: the magazine for, by, and about you — each Lutheran woman. Among these pages may your spiritual needs be met, may your heart cries be heard, and may you know that you do not struggle alone.

Above all, may you trust how deeply you are loved by the Babe of Bethlehem whose blood was shed for you, who calls you as His own child, and in whom you can trust wholeheartedly to walk beside you through the pages of your life.

Nancy

Nancy Graf Peters, Editor-in-Chief

A warm thank you to LWML Pastoral Counselor Rev. Robert Mundahl for his expertise, graciousness, and spiritual support as he completes, with this issue, his two-year term as doctrinal reviewer for *Lutheran Woman's Quarterly*.



Kaye Wolf (right) at work on the LCMS film, *The First Rosa*, based on the life of Dr. Rosa Young (left).

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Cover: Volunteers at Concordia the Reformer Mercy Center and Seminary, Dominican Republic, bag emergency supplies in the wake of Hurricane Irma. (See page 14.) Photo courtesy of Jana Inglehart, LCMS Regional Communications Specialist—Latin America



Praying the Psalms

A prayer based on Psalm 86 *By Sheila Lutz*

Are you listening, Lord?

Spend some special time with me today — please.
I need You this day. I need to feel Your love surround
me. Answer me, for even in the seasons of celebrating
Your Son and new beginnings, I feel needy.

My soul yearns for Your energy and Your Spirit.
I mourned with two different friends whose
spouses went to live with You. I spoke with a
friend whose cousin has inoperable cancer. I
worshipped with Your people while one youth
shot another ten miles away. I held my sobbing
child when her aged dog, who was growing
more ill each day, had to be put to sleep. My
granddaughter's best friend just moved away.
And the busy-ness of life lets me make excuses
not to exercise and eat as I should.

Some trials seem to come out of the blue; some
come out of my own sinfulness; some happen
each day even to me, one of Your people. I
feel alone and bereft — lost. When one thing
happens, I trust in You. But when trial upon trial
comes, are You saying, "Will you trust Me this
time? With even this trial? With all of your trials?"

Sometimes I forget to be grateful to You for
being my God in whom I can trust. Why do I do
that? I know it's not the right thing to do, but I
still forget! Forgive me, O Lord. Gladden the

heart of this, Your servant. Thank You for being so
gracious to me — for forgiving me — for loving
me — for showing me Your favor. There is none
like You, O God.

You are so good. Your grace and Your steadfast
love abound to me. You see me as I am, and You
love me, Your created child. Thank You for hearing
my prayer. Thank You for being the God I can call
upon in the days of my troubles, in my sleepless
nights, and when the troubles of Your people
overwhelm me. Thank You for Your Word, which
revives my soul. Thank You for being there for me
and hearing me. You do answer me. You will lift
me up each time I need You — even when I don't
see the problems coming.

Set my feet upon Your path for my life, dear
Father, that I may walk in Your truth. Set my
mind — and keep it set — on Your Word. Set me
to respond in faithfulness, with self-control, as
Your child and as the temple of Your Holy Spirit.
When my wayward heart would stray into doubt
and fear, You will deliver my soul from the pits of
depression in which Satan would have me dwell.
You strengthen my soul.

I will ever thank You, Lord, for turning to me and
comforting me. I will sing praises and glorify Your
name with my whole being, for You are the God
who loves me — my God in whom I trust. **Amen. Q**

btw is the
acronym for
"by the
Way (Jesus)."
It sets the
tone for the
current issue.



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Knowing Christ & Making Him Known

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Nancy Graf Peters • editor@lwml.org

BIBLE STUDY EDITOR

Sharon Rapp

CHRISTIAN LIVING EDITOR

Sheila Lutz

FEATURES EDITOR

Becky Wehrspann

MISSION EDITOR

Cheri Fish

NEWS EDITOR

Linda Guteres • newseditor@lwml.org

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Amy Gill

LWML EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT

Patti Ross • president@lwml.org

VICE PRESIDENT OF CHRISTIAN LIFE

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MEETING MANAGER

Leslie Jaseph

PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTOR

Michelle Zollinger

STRATEGIC PLAN FACILITATOR

Carol von Soosten

LWML MATERIALS

(800) 252-LWML(5965) • lwml@lwml.org
3558 S Jefferson Ave • Saint Louis MO 63118-3910
TDD/TTY through Missouri Relay
(800) 735-2966 • FAX (314) 268-1532

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Trust Me

By Shari Miller

In life, we encounter
those who encourage
us to trust.

"Trust me, this will be the best vacuum cleaner you have ever owned," said the salesman — words you remember as the vacuum burns out in three short months. Mom or dad might promise to be at a special recital or event. "Trust me, I'll be there on time," they say, only to show up 30 minutes late. Or, "Trust me, I will not share this confidence with anyone," says a friend. Weeks later, you find your reputation damaged because that confidence was shared. Perhaps, sadly, a spouse has promised, "Trust me, I will be faithful to you forever" — only to stray and dabble in infidelity.

The "trust me" phrase often is regarded as frivolous by our cynical world. Very little in life is worth our trust and faith. The object of trust can be faulty, unstable, or unfaithful — not worthy of trust.

The Lord God reminds us in Isaiah 43:1: *But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine."*

Think of it! Our heavenly Father and Creator stoops down and uniquely makes us. He gives us gifts and

talents, family and friends, food and drink, house and home. Our Lord and Savior Jesus willingly came down in the form of a human to live a perfect life, suffer, die, and rise again to redeem His own from the bondage and fear of sin, death, and the devil. Our God and Comforter — the Holy Spirit — makes us His own and pronounces, "you are mine" through the waters of Baptism and His Word. He gives us faith in Jesus and enables us to live lives of service to our God. Our God has intentionally accomplished all this — just as He planned and promised.

Enlightened by the Spirit, we hear from the Savior in the Gospel of John: "*I am the bread of life*" (6:38), "*I am the light of the world*" (8:12), and "*I am the good shepherd*" (10:14). Jesus says to us, "*I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me*" (14:6). He victoriously declares, "*I am the resurrection and life*" (11:25)! He promises nurture and gives us opportunities for service: "*I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing*" (15:5).

Yes, we may have friends and family that have proven trustworthy. Thank God that He has given us those very special people in our lives. However, our God *always* keeps His promises. He *always* loves us in Jesus and gives us faith by the power of His Spirit. His is the voice that can say to us with unwavering certainty, "Trust. Me." Q

THEN & NOW

LWML Districts

Lutheran Women in Mission continues to celebrate its 75th Anniversary, honoring our past and imagining our future. Our basic purpose ... MISSIONS ... is changeless! LWML districts keep 75% of the mites they collect and send 25% to LWML to support the organization's operations and grants, which are chosen at biennial conventions by delegates from all districts.

THEN: At the 1942 LWML organizational meeting, 15 districts sent delegates. Since then, new districts joined, while others combined, changed boundaries, split, or changed names. Today, the LWML comprises 40 districts.



More than half of our LWML Presidents formerly served as district presidents. A 1965 photo of district presidents at an LWML Board of Directors meeting includes four future LWML Presidents: Florence Montz, North Dakota (1); Alberta Barnes, Ohio (2); Helen Morris, Minnesota South (3); and Helen Gienapp, Michigan (4).



NOW: CELEBRATING DISTRICTS AT THE 2017 LWML ALBUQUERQUE CONVENTION

LWML SELC District is the smallest district, with three zones, 24 societies, and an estimated 240 members. It's also the youngest district, having been formed in 1986. Current president is **Sharon Roegge**.

Measuring more than 736,000 square miles, the LWML Washington-Alaska District covers the most territory. **Marie Chow** currently serves as district president.

With an estimated roll call of 6,500, the LWML Florida-Georgia District claims the largest number of members. **Trish Aamoth** is their current president.

LWML Michigan District contains the greatest number of societies (327) and zones (29). The current president is **Susan Gruber**. Susan's mom, Vi Gruber, began her term as LWML Michigan District President in 1976, exactly 40 years prior.

“As I travel to the various districts, it is exciting to see the many different characteristics existing in each one! As we all come together in the national organization to tackle bigger mission grants, leadership training, and Bible study, it reminds me of the many members of the body of Christ with their unique properties, but brought together as one Body — the Church!”

LWML President, Patti Ross, who also served as LWML Oklahoma District President from 2004-08.

Continued donations for the LWML 75th Anniversary Thank Offering, supporting the LWML Endowment Fund, may be given online or mailed:
www.lwml.org/donate-endowment-fund
LWML Office 3558 S. Jefferson Ave.,
St. Louis, MO 63118.

Please note the donation as LWML 75th Anniversary Thank Offering.

ROSA & KAYE

Sisterhood OF SERVICE

By Christine Scheele Weerts

Dr. Rosa J. Young, often referred to as the Mother of Black Lutheranism, was confirmed at Christ Lutheran Church in Rosebud, Alabama, on Palm Sunday 1916, in response to hearing the “pure Gospel” from Rev. Nils Bakke. Dr. Young worked with Lutheran mission pastors and helped found 35 Lutheran churches and 30 schools to serve “her people” living in isolated communities in some of the poorest areas of Alabama. Her love for Christ and the Good News of the Gospel has touched — in some way — most of the leading African American pastors and teachers in the LCMS since the 1930s, when the first pastors graduated from Immanuel Seminary, and teachers from the Alabama Lutheran Academy.

Decades after Rosa’s confirmation, an infant girl named Kaye Dumas was given new life in Christ through Holy Baptism at the same Christ Lutheran Church in Rosebud. That was just the beginning of the intrinsically woven pattern between Kaye and Rosa Young.



Kaye spent her early years in Alabama, and even after moving to Michigan as a child with her family, she spent every summer and holiday she could with her grandmother in Alabama. "I returned to Rosebud each year on school breaks and summer vacations. Whenever school was out in Michigan, I was down in Alabama," Kaye says. She often returned to Christ Lutheran Church and School, helping her cousin, who was teaching in the one-room school house, by working with younger children in reading and writing.

Kaye grew up knowing Rosa Young as "Aunt Rosa," because they were distantly related by marriage (her grandfather's brother married Rosa's youngest sister). "But I did not realize the depth of her accomplishments until I was almost grown," Kaye said.

"When I traveled around doing witnessing workshops for Lutheran Hour Ministries, most often people would ask, 'When did you become a Lutheran?' There are still many people in our Synod who think that only Germans are born as Lutherans," Kaye says. "Thanks be to God for Rosa J. Young that I was born a third generation Lutheran."

Kaye's favorite Bible verse reflects her Aunt Rosa's early influence, as well as her family's dedication to serving others in Christ-centered ministry: *Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms* (1 Peter 4:10).

Her Rosebud and Aunt Rosa connections culminated three years ago in the filming of the movie, *The First Rosa*. Produced by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), this dramatized biography told of Dr. Young's life and ministry. Kaye played a key role in bringing the film into reality, as well as working in production. (See page 6.)

Her First Mite Box

Just as Rosa Young loved the "ladies aid societies" who greatly supported her church and school planting in Alabama, Kaye also follows an impressive lineage of faithful LWML women. Kaye grew up following her own mother, Susanna Ramsey Dumas, to church as a child, where both her mother and aunt were active in the LWML.

"I had no idea what it was, but I was a part of it because I went to meetings with my mom," Kaye says. "I asked my mom for a Mite Box of my own. Then I asked her for some money to put in it, and she told me that I had to put my own money in my Mite Box. It was an early lesson on cheerful giving. The part I liked about the LWML was hearing about the help it was providing for people all over the world with the money from the Mite Box."

Kaye's aunt, Dr. Iri Skinner, was the first African American woman to serve with the International LWML Executive Committee as Vice President of

Mission Inspiration, elected at the 1993 convention in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Despite being involved with LWML for many years at the local level, Kaye said she was not completely familiar with the structure and strength of the national organization until she started working on a national committee.

Kaye has served in the LWML for the past 10 years, as a member of the Mission Advocacy and Grants Committee, the Gospel Outreach Committee, and the HOPE Committee. She has served as the LWML Michigan District Leader Development Coordinator and, in 2015, was elected LWML Vice President of Special Focus Ministries, a position she still holds.

Special Focus Ministries committees are updating programs that reach out to younger women (Young Woman Representatives) and women from different cultural backgrounds (Heart to Heart Sisters) to encourage them to engage in the mission of LWML. Kaye wants the mission of LWML to reach from the national level to the woman in the pew through the LWML website, devotions, and news releases.

Servanthood

Christ Lutheran Church in Rosebud, Alabama, the mother church of Lutheran ministry to African Americans in rural Alabama, was founded by Rosa Young in 1916.

Kaye still visits Christ Lutheran Church at Rosebud. An annual worship service is held there in September to remember Dr. Rosa Young's ministry. Kaye enjoys the time to reconnect with her extended family as well as to be surrounded by her faith family: those students from Rosa's schools across the Black Belt who attend the celebration.

Rosa Young often referred to one of her favorite Bible verses from Mark 10:45: *For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many*. Encouraging her family and students to serve the church, Rosa urged them to "do something worthy for mankind. Give light to those who are in darkness; sustain the weak and faltering; befriend and aid the poor and needy. There is nothing more reputable to a race or nation than Christian service."

That light still shines brightly in Alabama and around the world in those who follow Christ's call to servanthood, including a woman born again in the waters of Holy Baptism in the church Aunt Rosa built.

"I am grateful every day for the ministry of Aunt Rosa," Kaye says. "While we were filming the movie about her life, I was deeply moved when the narrator said that Rosa was a theologian the Lord used to grow the Lutheran Church in Alabama. She grew the church, he said, in ways so spectacular that it set records in modern American mission history." Q

Christine Sheele Weerts, who wrote *Heroes of Faith: Rosa Young*, is managing two state grants to digitize the history of Rosa Young's extensive church and school work in rural Alabama. She is a member of Bethlehem Lutheran, Prattville.



Bringing Rosa to Life:

THE MAKING OF THE MOVIE

By Christine Scheele Weerts

The movie of Rosa J. Young's remarkable life and ministry in some ways began in Neenah, Alabama, a community that is all but forgotten.

That's where she posted her October 27, 1915, letter to LCMS Mission Director Rev. C.F. Drewes in St. Louis, asking for help running her Christian school in Rosebud, Alabama, just three miles away.

"I began teaching here in 1912 with seven pupils in an old hall where cattle went for shelter," she wrote to Rev. Drewes, after having gotten his name from Booker T. Washington at Tuskegee Institute. "Since then I have bought with money collected in the community five acres of land and erected a four-room school house, besides a chapel which we are working on now ..."

Rev. Drewes, hearing a "Macedonian call" in her earnest letter, sent Rev. Nils Bakke to Alabama in 1916 to work with Rosa to develop a ministry to African Americans. Rosa's original school and chapel became Christ Lutheran Church and School, serving "her people" with an education of "heart, head, and hands." Rosa was the first one confirmed there.

Two generations later, Kaye Dumas was born in Neenah, was baptized at Christ Lutheran Church in Rosebud, and became the key to persuading the LCMS to help finance the production of the movie, *The First Rosa*, detailing the remarkable life and ministry of her "Aunt Rosa" J. Young.

Kaye shares, "The Rosa J. Young story was not simply a story about a black woman who started some Lutheran schools in the South, but how Rosa's intense reading of the Bible, much like Luther's, and hearing the preached Word, led her to realize it is by grace through faith that we are saved. She felt compelled to teach and confess that life-saving Good News to all 'her people.' This movie is an LCMS history lesson."

Susan Hill, a pastor's wife and LWML member who was inspired by Dr. Rosa Young's autobiography, *Light in the Dark Belt*, dreamt of turning her story into a movie. Susan and Kaye had met at the Greater Detroit LWML Zone Rally in 2004.

"Susan attended a concert where the choir sang 'Give Me Jesus' — a song quoted by Rosa in her book — and she knew then that the movie had to be made," Kaye says. "She started asking questions and sending letters to many in Black Ministry. She asked me to join the task force to help with fundraising for a movie trailer that would then raise money for the film."

"We hosted lots of spaghetti suppers, prayer breakfasts, and Gospel concerts, but I could see we would have a hard time raising the amount of money we needed for the film."

They decided to ask the Synod for financial assistance. "I have been friends with Rev. Matt Harrison (LCMS President) since my serving as chairman of the Church Planting Task Force for Black Ministry. I visited him on my many visits to the International Center in St. Louis when he was director of the Synod's World Relief—Human Care," explained Kaye.

"I felt comfortable asking him for support because I knew he was responsible for a reprint of Rosa's book while he was a pastor in Fort Wayne, so he was very familiar with her story."

That year, 2012, President Harrison sent Al Dowbnia and Ardon Albrecht to Rosebud to interview 20 former Rosa Young students. At the 2013 LCMS Convention, Resolution 3-09 (a resolution to promote Black Ministry) was amended to support the movie project. In February 2014, the movie project got the go ahead from the Office of National Mission.

"Ardon Albrecht called us 'Holy Harassers' for the persistent way we kept checking in with Synod on the progress of the funding request, before it was formally approved," Kaye said.

Then began the weekly — sometimes daily — planning meetings with Albrecht, who wrote the script and directed the film, while Kaye recruited people to help. Kaye became the Unit Production Manager, and Susan handled the wardrobe. Kaye asked LWML members Janet Jackson (Holy Cross, Camden) and Gracie Hollins (Trinity, Selma) to help with props. Rev. Dr. McNair Ramsey, a longtime pastor in the Alabama field, handled locations for the shooting.

Filming began in Alabama in September 2014. While volunteers filled many of the small parts, they used professional actors for the major roles. Kaye was in charge of keeping up with all the paperwork for the Screen Actors' guild, as well as multiple other details that go into movie production on a tight budget.

"It was interesting, exhilarating, and exhausting," she said.

"Ardon was a great director. The first day we had to flip the schedule because it rained in the morning. I had to call the caterer to change the location to drop off the food and an actor to come in earlier. There was a funeral on the day three teachers were scheduled to be at our filming of 35 children in Rosebud, so the teachers could not come. We were blessed to have three teachers on site, so I enlisted the services of Mrs. Jackson, Mary Jones Wise (Rosa's great niece), and Otelia Gray."

Kaye herself assumed a small part in the movie, when a filming delay meant there was no crowd to welcome Rev. Nils Bakke at the train station. She got to step into the crowd in period dress and makeup, along with a few others who never expected to be on film, including the makeup artist, and Dr. Roosevelt Gray.

One of the most touching moments of filming was at Christ Lutheran Church in Rosebud, Kaye's early home church. When the children sang in the classroom, Kaye was reminded of children singing during her days of helping out at the school when she was visiting her grandmother.

Today the singing can be heard on film — and in churches around the U.S. that were founded by pastors, teachers, and laypeople whose lives were touched by Dr. Rosa J. Young and her legacy.

So while the community of Neenah has nearly vanished, Rosa's work lives on, showing the power of the Gospel to reach from a forgotten community in rural Alabama to *Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth* (Acts 1:8). Q



Kaye, day one on location



Susan Hill sporting her crew shirt



Right to left: Director Rev. Dr. Ardon Albrecht, Kim Vieker, Jon Vieker (out of focus), Ben Desousa (standing)



HEART TO HEART *Sisters* IN CHRIST

By Kaye Wolff, LWML Vice President of Special Focus Ministries

Many of our Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod congregations have welcomed our Hispanic, African, and Asian brothers and sisters, but a long-time perception has been that LWML groups were elderly, white-haired ladies. However, for as long as there have been predominantly black congregations, there have been women of color in the LWML. (LWML President Lillian Preisinger canceled the 1955 LWML convention because of segregation policies in New Orleans).

I was a Heart to Heart Sister for the Tampa Convention in 2005. I didn't know why I was chosen to participate in the program; I thought I knew all about the LWML. But I now realize my participation prepared me for the position I now hold. As Vice President of Special Focus Ministries, I oversee the Heart to Heart Sisters (H2H), which is an intentional outreach to multicultural women in LCMS congregations, welcoming them into the LWML. This outreach is exciting for me because I have always loved the diversity of other cultures. The H2H Sisters have so much to share about their love for Christ as well as how that love sometimes meant facing persecution. When we meet, we share our prayer concerns and take time to thank Him for our many blessings.

Our sinful nature often tells us we have nothing in common with women of a different culture or skin color; we are too different. Perhaps their English is broken and communication is difficult. If needed, help them to learn English, and be patient. Show an interest in their language. Sometimes women of other cultures are unsure how they might be received in their native dress. They may not be comfortable joining in because they don't know how or if they will be welcomed. Loving the Lord and having a heart for mission outreach is what we have in common. We all have so much to offer and so much to receive from one another.

The way to a H2H Sister's heart is through a welcoming hug. When we hug, we lean in. That way our hearts meet, heart to heart.

The H2H Sisters are lot like the YWRs (Young Woman Representatives), eager to learn, with much to offer, and a willingness to serve as they are able. This outreach, invitation, and mentoring should also extend to our young women who will be the white-haired leaders in the future.

I encourage you to visit our website at LWML.org and learn the complete history of the H2H program. Q

Spotlight ON A YOUNG WOMAN

Kristin (left)
next to sister,
Katie, and
her family



Kristin's life turned upside down when her sister, Katie, was killed in a car accident recently. In her 29 years, Katie turned the mundane into adventures for everyone around her. She loved with all her heart.

Sometimes Kristin misses Katie so much she can hardly breathe. Though brokenhearted, she is lifted up in prayer and loved by God on whom she depends for every ounce of strength.

How will the rest of her life be without Katie? Trusting that God will carry her through is the only thing that helps. God is bigger than her sorrow, more powerful and all-knowing than what she doesn't understand.

Knowing God is good helps Kristin see Him working goodness through even this. A Katie Memorial Life, Love Scholarship was created to help students attend a Concordia University. Kristin prays that God would be glorified, the scholarship be funded to support future Kingdom builders, and that Katie's life, light, and love from and for Christ would be celebrated. The #Kindness for Katie movement was inspired by Katie's trademark smile and kind heart. God has used this earthly tragedy for His divine glory.



A Time for Praise

*On your feet now — applaud GOD!
Bring a gift of laughter,
sing yourselves into his presence.
Know this: GOD is God, and God, GOD.
He made us; we didn't make him.
We're his people, his well-tended sheep.
Enter with the password: "Thank you!"
Make yourselves at home, talking praise.
Thank him. Worship him.
For GOD is sheer beauty,
all-generous in love,
loyal always and ever.*

Psalm 100:1-5 (MSG)

Dear Young Woman,

Hearing how much you enjoyed the LWML convention in Albuquerque last summer makes my heart sing! Wasn't the worship a little taste of heaven? I never cease to be inspired by the processionalists and speakers. Seeing the big picture of LWML is life-changing! Knowing you want to be part of that big picture fills my heart with joy.

Think about sharing your convention story with your congregation or your friends. Share the amazing accounts of the Mites In Action speakers. Stay connected by reading the *Quarterly* magazine, visiting the LWML website, and following LWML and LWML Young Women in Mission on Facebook. Ask your society leader to take you to zone and district events.

Don't think you need to do everything at once. Pray for God's guidance and choose what works best for you. I'll pray for you as you continue to keep Jesus Christ Above All.

*Blessings,
A More Seasoned Woman*

Hearts Woven for Service



We are pleased to introduce you to four of the Heart to Heart Sisters who attended the 2017 LWML Convention in Albuquerque, New Mexico.



Yeng Yang

I believe everything is possible through God — by trusting and believing in Him. The best thing about being able to serve is to spread the Gospel and to get things done by the working of His Spirit. While serving

Him, I notice that it not only helps me reflect on what I can do for others, but also what others can do for me.

Life is short. You never know what could happen the very next second. To have the pleasure to breathe every day is a blessing to me. I would love to use any opportunity as much as I can to live life to the fullest and fulfill God's plans for me.

I believe everyone was created beautifully, and we are all different from one another. However, because of hatred, the world has been twisted and is filled with judgment. My favorite verse in the Bible is James 4:12: *There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?* We would all benefit by keeping this verse in mind.



Pang Yang

As a young child, my family sometimes attended a Baptist church, but we were Shamans. My dad was one of the big Shamans that performed rituals. At one point my dad got really sick; his doctor told us he didn't

have long to live. Dad wanted my siblings and me to ask our Christian friends and the Baptist pastor to pray for him, and they did. The very next day a wonderful thing happened. My dad was able to get up and walk around like there was nothing wrong with him. He gradually got better. My family converted to Christianity after that.

Teaching younger children and seeing them remember God and what Jesus has done for us gives me great joy and satisfaction.

For personal spiritual growth, I read the *Devotion Bible*. It breaks down the Bible into smaller sections, so it's easier to stop and review what I've read.

The body of believers should accept everyone wholeheartedly. If you deny the diversity among us in the Body of Christ, it's like denying the teaching of Jesus for all. Instead, embrace and learn about the diversity among us.



Toyin (Oluwatoyin) Akinde Fakuajo

I am from Nigeria, though I inherited my U.S. citizenship from my parents. I was born into a Christian family; I grew up attending a non-denominational church once or twice a week. I am a product of Christian-based education. I was baptized when I was about 13 years of age. After my father returned to Nigeria from the U.S. in 1987, we joined a Lutheran church that was started by missionaries. Through this, I learned about the Gospel of grace, which has shaped my worldview.

I am a member of Grace Lutheran Church in Brooklyn Park, Minnesota, where my children were baptized. Before joining Grace, I attended Zion Lutheran Church in Hopkins. My husband, Johnson, and I are committed to daily reflection and prayer together as a family. We are avid users of the *Portals of Prayer* for daily reflection. We spend time every day reading and discussing the Bible. Working at a Lutheran-based university (Concordia, St. Paul) has also allowed me to bring my faith to my work. It is truly a privilege to live out my faith in the process of my vocation.

I think we are all called to the Body of Christ. Our differences help me to see and appreciate the blessing of God to us as His people, to live and flourish together. Hence, sharing the love of Christ is part of who I am. It is part of my fellowship with others and in service to humanity. Therefore, my work, my home, and my community are all mission fields. My life is not compartmentalized — my values as a Christian are reflected in my parenting, in my community efforts, and all spheres of my life.



Senait Gonfa

I was born into a Christian family in West Ethiopia, though my brother and I were orphaned as children. Growing up I saw churches close down and Christians who were prosecuted and jailed.

Because of this danger, we would gather in homes for prayer every evening. Though I missed going to church, prayer and Sunday School continued in homes, according to age. I finished Sunday School and confirmation class and was trained to teach Sunday School in a home church. Later, the Ethiopian government allowed churches to open again. It was amazing how churches boomed in every part of the city. God is good all the time. Emanuel, God with us.

But by God's grace, I am who I am today. When I look back, I am reminded of God's goodness and mercy. *The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know your name trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you* (Psalm 9:9–10).

I find joy and satisfaction in serving others, sharing the abundance of life God gave me, and encouraging those who are down with the encouragement I have received from the Lord.

Every morning I read my Bible, just a verse, and meditate on it for the entire day. It is like medicine for me. I also pray with my husband and kids every evening before bed. In addition to this, my husband and I fast and pray as God helps us.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son (John 3:16a). I think we should learn to accept that God loves all, and He already paid the price for our salvation. We can do nothing but trust in Him. We must intentionally pray for unity. We need to wake up to the truth — nothing is too difficult for God. May God bless all of us.

"We must intentionally pray for unity. We need to wake up to the truth — nothing is too difficult for God."

Senait Gonfa



Trusting to Forgive When You Don't Want to

By Jill K. Dodge

Recently I heard a survivor of the Rwanda Genocide speak of her harrowing experience during a horrible civil war in which the Hutu slaughtered more than 800,000 Tutsi in the space of 91 days. Immaculee Ilibagiza, along with seven other Tutsi women, hid in the 3-by-4-foot bathroom of the home of a pastor while soldiers constantly conducted raids on the house. By the grace of God, the soldiers never looked in the bathroom, which was hidden behind a closet, and the women all survived. Unfortunately, Immaculee's family did not.

While in that cramped bathroom, Immaculee repeatedly prayed the Lord's Prayer but found that she kept wanting to skip over "forgive us as we forgive those who trespass against us." Not only did she not want to forgive those who murdered her family, but she also spent many hours plotting revenge. "Can't I just leave out that part of the prayer?" she kept bargaining with God over that petition.

Finally, one night she thought, "You can't be wrong if You are God," and decided to trust that His Word must be true. After she began to include that petition in her prayer, she started to remember the words of Jesus on the cross, "Forgive them for they know not what they do." That Scripture somehow brought her more peace and, through the Holy Spirit, she was able to trust His Word and begin the process of forgiveness.

One of the most difficult challenges of our faith is to forgive. We want to hang onto our hurts and resentments. There seem to be several basic reasons we don't want to forgive: we don't know how, we are afraid to, or we don't want to let go of our anger.

Many of us have never learned what it really means to say "I am sorry" or "I forgive you." We think if we forgive someone, it justifies the wrong they did to us or removes accountability from the offender. It doesn't. Rather, forgiveness is "surrendering my right to hurt you back if you hurt me" (definition by Archibald Hart). Forgiveness is choosing not to remember a wrong done to you (definition by Don Baker). It's deciding "I'd rather be right with you than right."

Some of us hang onto our anger because we are afraid to let it go. Our anger serves as a protection. We are afraid to trust or be vulnerable again. Because anger is such a powerful emotion, we would rather feel anger than hurt, stating, "I am never going to allow myself to get hurt again!" So we put up a shield of anger.

Many of us hang on to our anger because we feel justified in doing so. Like Immaculee, we say, "You can't expect me to forgive them after what they did to me and my family" or "It's unforgivable!" Most of the atrocities, like the Rwandan Genocide, would appear to come under the heading of unforgivable. And yet Jesus says to "love your enemies ... and pray for those who persecute you." (Matthew 5:44).

Often in the deep recesses of our souls we wonder, "Where was God. How could He let this happen?" We don't understand His ways and sometimes we even blame Him for our difficulties. Job suffered enormous losses, yet in

Job 1:21–22 (RSV) we read: *Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return; the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord. Through all this Job did not sin nor did he charge God.*

How I wish I could maintain Job's perspective. Job knew that everything he had was a gift from God and that God had the right to take them away, just as He had the right to give them.



Life isn't fair, but God is. He shows no partiality. God *wants everyone to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth* (1 Timothy 2:4) — the truth was revealed in His Son, Jesus. His death and resurrection won forgiveness, life, and salvation for all.

Forgiveness is a perspective of faith. We can be led to forgive even if we don't feel like forgiving because God is at work in us giving us the desire and ability to forgive.

Back to the beginning of the story: After many years of learning about forgiveness by the power of the Spirit, Immaculee was ready to do the ultimate and personally extend forgiveness to the man who murdered her family. Arrangements were made to visit him in prison. You can imagine

her shock when she discovered that the man who killed her family turned out to be a friend of the family who used to have a great job and family before he got caught up in the war. You see, the Hutu government encouraged and even forced ordinary citizens to become part of the militia. As she remembered that time in the bathroom years ago when the Holy Spirit reminded her of Jesus' words, "for they don't know what

they do," she broke down in tears of compassion for this broken down old man.

That is what being willing to forgive resulted in for Immaculee. It took her a long time to work through her feelings. Her family and friends were brutally murdered, and she felt the full brunt of her anger and heartbreak. She brought all of those raw and genuine feelings to the Lord. He didn't chastise her, but comforted her and helped her to see what was happening, through His eyes.

Like Immaculee, most of us find that forgiving others is a process rather than an instantaneous thing. God walked her through every step of the way, and He will do the same for you when you are moved to forgive. Q

Jill K. Dodge, a Christian counselor and staff member of LCMS-sponsored Shepherd's Canyon Retreat Center in Arizona for church professionals, attends Christ Lutheran Church, La Mesa, California.

Mercy in the Midst of the Storm

By Rev Dr. Ross Johnson, Director Disaster Response LCMS Office of National Mission, with Cheri Fish, Mission Editor



Seminarians walk to class greeted by Junior (see page 28) at Concordia Reformer Mercy Center and Lutheran Seminary. Photo courtesy of LCMS Communications/Erik M. Lunsford

Hurricane Irma put the recently completed Disaster Response Center in the Dominican Republic, to its first test. Funded by a \$100,000 grant from the ladies of the LWML, the solid, reinforced concrete edifice is centrally located in a fertile valley, protected on all sides by mountains. Deadly hurricanes and earthquakes target the Caribbean on a regular basis, making this an ideal location for the multipurpose facility. The Regional Office for LCMS Latin American Missions, located just six miles away, serves not only as the nerve center of mission work in Latin America, but also as the command center for disaster relief.

Thanks be to God that Hurricane Irma was much less destructive than anyone imagined. However, preparation for this storm provided the perfect opportunity for a trial run, an opportunity to formulate a plan and execute it, while under the real life duress of an impending category five hurricane — the most powerful ever to come out of the Atlantic.

Hand-in-hand the Body of Christ in the Dominican Republic worked. People from different countries, languages, abilities, ages, and skin colors came together with joy to accomplish the task at hand. Indeed, the intensity and camaraderie was something most people never see in a lifetime.

Supplies were hauled in by the van load. Water, rice, canned meat, sugar, oatmeal, dry beans, hygiene supplies, and other items were packaged and prepared for mass distribution following the hurricane. Hours passed in the ninety-plus degree heat. Electric fans would have been a welcomed luxury, but cooling came only from sweat soaked shirts and gulped bottles of water.

Near the end of the day, as energy was waning and hands were faltering, the singing began. Throughout the building, the sounds of happy voices singing praises to our God rang out loudly and clearly. The joyful sounds could be heard until the last of the supplies were packed safely away or loaded and hauled to other mission sites nearby. As the hurricane approached the island, the

Disaster Response Center was made available for anyone in the community who needed assistance or shelter from the storm.

This, the first of many coming disaster preparations, would not have been possible were it not for this structure, large enough for massive preparation, while also solid and secure enough to be a shelter in the storm. We thank God for the dear ladies of the LWML for providing such a facility, so that God's goodness and mercy could be shared with those in Latin America. Indeed, so we might also teach others what we do as the Body of Christ: we show love to our neighbor.

Concordia the Reformer Mercy Center and Seminary also serves as a center for training deaconesses for human care and mercy ministry. More than 100 women across Latin America are enrolled in deaconess classes, many of whom receive training here. In addition, on September 11th, the first class of seminarians attended the opening chapel service in this facility. We pray these students will become faithful shepherds.

Dedication of Concordia the Reformer Mercy Center and Seminary was held on October 1, 2017. No doubt, future generations of faithful pastors and deaconesses, and the people they serve, will look back and say, "Thank God for the forward-looking, generous, and godly women of the LWML." Indeed, each little mite, lovingly collected, and each prayer spoken in faith, was blessed by Our Father, who does all things well. Q

MISSION GOAL: \$2,075,000

2017–2019 MISSION GRANTS

Mission Grant updates are frequently posted at www.lwml.org.



CURRENT MISSION GRANT HIGHLIGHTS

Completion of Luonda Lutheran School Building, Uganda — \$48,000


This grant helps complete Phase II of two schools in the villages of Kakika and Lukonda in Uganda, through the Lutheran Church Uganda. These schools will educate 100 to 200 children between the ages of 4 to 12. Each school will have four classrooms, with two of the classrooms being used for weekly Lutheran worship services.

Mercy House for Women and Children — \$100,000

The Franklin Avenue Mission in Flint, Michigan, has purchased a residence to house six to eight homeless, pregnant and/or abused women and children. Funds from this grant will help to renovate, refurbish, and furnish this residence. This grant attempts to help break the cycle of poverty and decreases the potential for abuse by housing women and children in a safe, caring, Christian environment, where the best practices of parenting and relationship building can be modeled and taught.

Christ for Veterans and Their Families — \$27,750

Through the LCMS Ministry of the Armed Forces, this grant will be utilized to host national training events for Operation Barnabas. The Ministry of the Armed Forces uses Operation Barnabas to provide a network of care through trained congregations that want to reach out to members of the military, their families, and the veterans in their congregations and communities.



1. Providing Food and the Gospel to Starving Children	\$40,000
2. Mercy House for Women and Children	\$100,000
3. Christ for Veterans and Their Families	\$27,750
4. Tanzanian Sewing Center	\$25,000
5. Current Missionary Need	\$100,000
6. Lutheran Children's Books for Families Worldwide	\$100,000
7. Christian Hope Through Mass Media in Egypt	\$100,000
8. NOLA 4H: Hearts for the Hungry, Homeless, and Hurting	\$100,000
9. Lutheran World Relief Quilt and Kit Shipping Fund	\$80,000
10. Christian Eldercare Home in Haiti	\$100,000
11. Training Lutheran Middle Eastern Missionaries	\$93,000
12. Completion of Lutheran School Buildings in Uganda	\$48,000
13. Equipping Youth to Witness for Life—Y4Life	\$25,000
14. Laborers of Love	\$100,000
15. Sharing Jesus with People with Disabilities	\$100,000
16. Education Loan Repayment Assistance Grants	\$100,000
17. Nursing Students Serving with Mercy Medical Team	\$25,000
18. Restoration Programs for Native Hawaiians	\$75,000
19. RECONNECT to the Body of Christ, Circuit 28	\$50,000
20. Prison and Jail Ministry 2018 Synod-wide Conference	\$36,500
21. Family Scholarships for Short Term Mission Trips	\$60,000
22. Raising Pastors and Deaconesses	\$97,000

●—grant partially paid; **purple highlight**—grant paid in full



Listen to the Sounds!

By Shari Miller

At Christmas time, we can hear carols being sung, exclamations and shouts of joy and delight, and the rustling and tearing of gift wrapping. During this Bible study, we will look at the Christmas Gospel in Luke 2. As we review the miracle and wonder of our Savior's birth, our focus will be on the sounds of Christmas heard during the holy night of Jesus' birth.

Share with a partner or small group a favorite Christmas carol and why it is your favorite.

NOTE: Please do not use the "if time permits" sections when study session time is limited. These sections could be done by the participant in private.

Opening Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, You created us and sustain our earthly lives with blessings and grace. Because of the perfect life, suffering, death, and resurrection of the Babe of Bethlehem, we rejoice in the forgiveness we have in Him. You give us Your Holy Spirit who gives us faith in Jesus as our Savior and keeps us in that faith. Your Spirit emboldens us to tell the great Good News of salvation in Jesus alone to those in our broken and hurting world. We look forward to eternal life with You in the glories of heaven. Be with us as we study Your Word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Busy Town and Baby's Cry

Read **Luke 2:1–7**. When Mary and Joseph entered Bethlehem, they could have encountered the noise and bustle of a tiny town (300 to 1,000 residents) whose population had suddenly swelled for the census. What noises do you think they might have heard? _____

Why did both Mary and Joseph need to travel the approximately 90 miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem? See **1 Samuel 17:12** and **Luke 1:26–27**. (Note: Jewish betrothal was more binding than a modern-day engagement and lasted about nine months. The families of both the man and woman signed a marriage contract at the time of betrothal.) _____

What promise had God made to David in **2 Samuel 7:16**? _____

What had the prophet Micah foretold in **Micah 5:2**? _____

In this bustling town of Bethlehem *and while they were there, the time came for her [Mary] to give birth* (Luke 2:6). Perhaps family and friends lived here and could have housed them, but as the New International Version states in Luke 2:7b: *there was no guest room available for them*. Since Mary was pregnant and about to deliver, they were asked to go to the stable — perhaps for privacy. What sounds might they have heard in the stable? What do you think the first cry of breath from Baby Jesus sounded like? _____

Faith Talk: Do we get so busy during the Advent and Christmas season that we fail to recognize the wonder of the birth of the Savior? _____

Name specific traditions or ways that you can focus on the Babe of Bethlehem's birth. _____

Bleating Sheep and Running Feet

Read **Luke 2:8**. List some characteristics of sheep according to the following Bible passages:

Isaiah 53:6a _____

Jeremiah 50:6a _____

Ezekiel 34:6 _____

Zechariah 10:2 _____

Matthew 9:36 _____

Why do you think that the Bible compares God's people to being like a sheep? _____

Faith Talk: What specific characteristics about sheep can you relate to in your spiritual life and why? _____

The Bethlehem shepherds were probably Temple shepherds, making sure there would be unblemished lambs to sacrifice to God during the morning and evening sacrifices in the Jerusalem Temple not far away. They lived with their flocks in the fields just outside of Bethlehem. In Jesus' time, smelly shepherds had become unwanted, left out, and pushed to the side. They were social outcasts.

Faith Talk: Why do you think God would choose to first reveal the birth of His Son Jesus, the Savior of the world, to these lowly shepherds? _____

Read **Luke 2:15–16**. How did the shepherds respond to hearing about the Baby's birth? Imagine you were one of the shepherds on that night. How do you think you would have responded and why? _____

Faith Talk: Read **Luke 2:17**. Who first shared with you about the birth of Jesus? _____

Who in your life needs to hear about the birth of the Savior? _____

If time permits: Read **John 10:1–15**. Jesus says clearly in **John 10:11a**: *I am the good shepherd*. Compare the following duties of a shepherd with those that Jesus identifies as His in John 10. Be specific.

How does Jesus love and feed us? (**Psalm 23:1–2**; **100:3**)
How does Jesus lead and guide us? (See **Psalm 78:72** and **Isaiah 40:11**.) How does Jesus guard and protect us? (See **2 Thessalonians 3:3**.)

Celebration and Good News!

Read **Luke 2:9–14**; **20**. Who praises the Lord in the Christmas Gospel? _____

Look back to **Luke 1:44–55**. Mary, who has been told that she will be the mother of Jesus and has this confirmed while visiting her pregnant (with John the Baptist) relative Elizabeth, praises God in her Magnificat. Share specific phrases of praise and celebration that are meaningful to you.

Faith Talk: What was the Good News that the angels shared with the shepherds? Be specific. See **John 1:1–5**, **9–14**; **John 20:30–31**; and **1 Peter 1:25**. _____

Read **Romans 10:8–15**. How is the Good News of salvation in Jesus proclaimed and shared with "everyone, everywhere" today? _____

If time permits: God's Spirit engenders and strengthens faith in hearts through His Word, Holy Baptism, and the Lord's Supper. Why is it important for Christians to be in the Word and participate in the Sacraments?

Read **Luke 2:19**. Mary pondered the wonder of her Son's birth. The familiar hymn, "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty" (*LSB* 790:4), reminds us to "ponder anew what the Almighty can do." How can each one of us take the time to ponder anew the wonderful and awesome things of God?

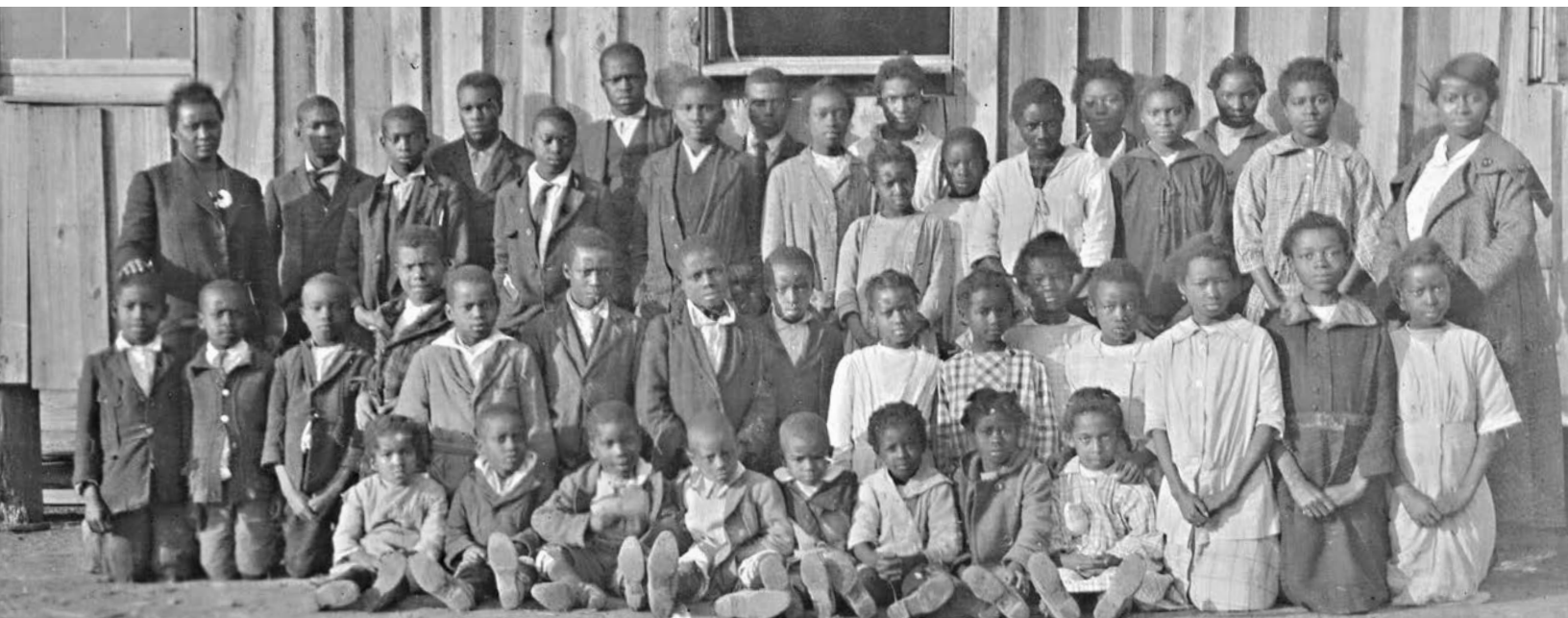
Does it just come as a response to all God has done for us in Christ Jesus or must we schedule the time and place? A familiar prayer urges us to "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" God's Word. How is that done?

Faith Walk:

1. Celebrate the birth of the Baby Jesus. Take advantage of Advent/Christmas worship and fellowship opportunities.
2. Praise God for His daily blessings to you, especially His mercy and grace.
3. Enabled by the Holy Spirit, share the Good News about Jesus and what that means to you with someone special in your life.
4. Ponder anew the wonders of our awesome God and the hope that you have of eternal life in Christ the Lord.

Closing Prayer: Sing or speak together "Joy to the World" (*LSB* #387; *LW* #53; *TLH* #87).

Shari Miller, wife of Rev. Larry and mother of two grown children, is a freelance author and musician living in Helena, Montana, where she attends First Lutheran Church. Shari is the LWML Montana District President. She has written numerous articles and studies for the LWML.



Midway School in Mobile, Alabama, in 1918. Rosa Young on left. Courtesy of Concordia Historical Institute

Living a God-sized Dream By Christine Scheele Weerts

Rosa Jinsey Young had a dream so big only God could make it happen. And He did.

Rosa was born in 1890 in Rosebud, Alabama, a tiny backwoods community in the heart of cotton country, the fourth of 10 children. Rosa always knew she wanted to be a teacher, to educate “her people.” But what may seem an “average” dream for hundreds of women and men her age was nearly impossible for Rosa: an African American woman living one generation out of slavery, in an impoverished and isolated rural community in the sin-sick, segregated Deep South.

With absolute faith in the almighty God, Rosa overcame inconceivable obstacles to keep her dream alive. Poverty, segregation, discrimination, illiteracy, isolation, Klan violence, sickness, and even a cotton-destroying insect couldn’t stop her.

“If you ask me anything in My name, I will do it’ seemed to have been written in large print upon my heart, she once wrote. Whenever I wanted anything or undertook anything, I prayed to God. I would steal away and talk to Jesus. I believed in prayer, prayer, prayer.”¹

Lutherans answered her call for help educating her people, resulting in the establishment of 35 churches and 30 schools in some of Alabama’s poorest counties from 1916 to 1940.

Children who had never owned a “pretty book” before received a Christ-centered education, while thousands of “her people” who heard the Gospel of salvation were baptized and confirmed. Ex-slaves, who had lived long, hard years, heard the Good News of salvation and rejoiced in the freedom of Christ eternally. Today hundreds of pastors, teachers and lay leaders — second, third, and fourth generation — serve in LCMS churches and schools across the United States.

Opening: Say or sing together verses 1–4 of “Rejoice, My Heart, Be Glad and Sing,” (LSB #737; LW #424; TLH #535), closing with “Amen.”

Have you had a dream so big only God could make it happen? Describe it in light of the verses below:

Philippians 4:13 _____

Job 42:2 _____

Jeremiah 32:27 _____

Name one person you know who has forged a God-given gift/ministry. _____

Can we help others realize their God-given dreams? _____

How often obstacles and hardships stand between our dreams and us. Rosa faced overwhelming odds: Most families were illiterate and still living on the plantations where their families had been enslaved, farming as dirt-poor sharecroppers who could barely keep ahead of the rent. Because of Alabama’s odious Jim Crow laws of segregation and discrimination, at that time, there were few schools for blacks to attend.

Rosa, who didn't go to school until she was 10, taught herself — and her siblings — with nothing but a bluebook reader and the Bible. She picked cotton for the fees to attend a teacher training school; she started each school year late and left early to work in the fields, yet graduated at the top of her class. After graduation, Rosa taught her people in isolated schools around the state, returning to Rosebud when she was 21. Using her money and donations from blacks and whites, she built her school in 1912. Within a few weeks of opening she had 200 students.

Two years later, the boll weevil arrived. The dream-busting insect devoured the cotton crop and destroyed Alabama's economy. Rosa had to close her school, shuttering her dream.

What are some of the obstacles you have faced in pursuing God's will in your life? _____

How did you keep going? _____

What is the importance of prayer in facing tough times? How can you encourage others who are struggling?

Isaiah 41:13 _____

Romans 5:3–5 _____

But God.²

Rosa knew she needed help. With encouragement from Booker T. Washington, she wrote the Lutherans in St. Louis. Rev. C.F. Drewes heard her "Macedonian call" and sent pastors to serve her mission field. Rosa was the first African American Lutheran confirmed in rural Alabama — at Christ Lutheran Church in Rosebud on Palm Sunday 1916. Her Bible verse: *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* (Philippians 1:6).

Her life reflected the beauty of Paul's letter: As she heard the pure Gospel message, she was deeply committed to sharing this Gospel light with her people.

“*I had an ambition to work for the Lord and my race. I had great enthusiasm to serve my people; my heart was overwhelmed with compassion for them. This compassion for my people has remained with me throughout life. Every morning I rose early, prayed the Holy Spirit be with me that day and through his Word to cause the pure Gospel message to touch the hearts of all I see ... So I set out on my mission tour, seeking souls for Jesus all along the way.*”¹

She walked hundreds of miles every summer: through dense swampy forests, flooded creeks, and rain to reach the simple homes of elderly ex-slaves deep in the piney woods; through steamy-hot cotton fields that stretched for miles, to “reach my people and deliver a Gospel message.”

Often the poor she visited had no food, nor bed for sleeping. She walked on.

“*My desire to work for Jesus grew stronger. My mental picture of all the little neglected children of my race was in my memory, and the Great Commission.*”¹

Read: **John 20:21; Acts 13:47; 2 Thessalonians 2:14; 2 Timothy 4:5.**

What can we learn from Rosa about the importance of sharing our faith? _____

What “formula” did she follow? _____

What can we do to prepare to share the Good News? _____

What is the importance of prayer and Bible study through it all? _____

Rosa's love for her people transcended her physical illness, discomfort, and distress. Her love of the Gospel compelled her to share the Good News in the community and in her schools, where she encouraged her students to become pastors and teachers. She helped start a college to prepare Lutherans for service.

“*Having a burning zeal to be a witness for Christ wherever I was needed, I answered the call. With all the hardships, I knew that I was about my father's business and Jesus was with me. Since the Lutheran Church has come ... with the pure Gospel and lighted these dark places, people's eyes have been opened to the true way of salvation. Just think what would have become of the 3,211 souls listed on our mission records if He had not sent the Lutheran Church!*”

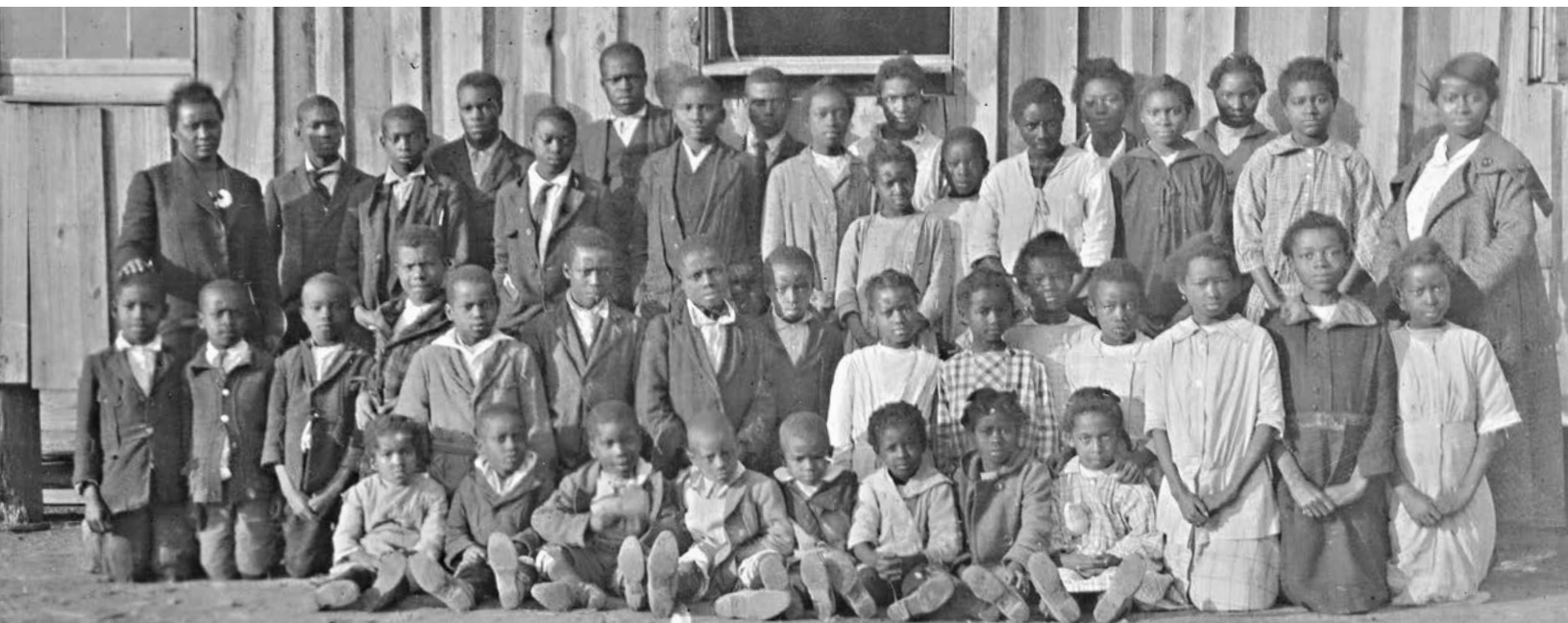
Just think ... what happens when your dream is so big only God can make it happen.

Closing: Say or sing together the final two verses of the opening hymn, followed by the Lord's Prayer.

¹Rosa Young's memoir, *Light in the Dark Belt*, is available from Concordia Publishing House (CPH). A children's book about her life, *Heroes of Faith: Rosa Young*, is also available.

²An African American religious saying. When talking about impossible odds, they remind others that they are counting everything.

Christine Scheele Weerts, a fourth generation Lutheran, is a member of the LWML at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Prattville, Alabama. She has a Master's degree in Religion from Concordia University–Chicago and is the author of the June 2018 Portals of Prayers devotions, published by CPH.



Escuela Midway en Mobile, Alabama, en 1918. Rosa Young está a la izquierda. Foto cortesía del Instituto Histórico Concordia.

Viviendo un sueño “tamaño-Dios” Por Christine Scheele Weerts

La joven Jinsey Young tenía un sueño tan grande que sólo Dios podía hacerlo realidad. Y Él lo hizo realidad.

Rosa nació en 1890 en Rosebud, Alabama, un pueblito rural en la tierra donde cultivan algodón. Nació número cuatro de diez hijos. Rosa sabía que quería ser maestra, para educar a “su gente.” Pero lo que parecía un sueño “normal” a cientos de mujeres y hombres de su edad era casi imposible para Rosa: una mujer afroamericana viviendo solo una generación después de la esclavitud en los Estados Unidos, en un pueblo rural pobre y aislado, en un lugar enfermizo por el pecado en el Sur del país que todavía vivía bajo la segregación de razas.

Con fe absoluta en el Dios poderoso, Rosa superó obstáculos inconcebibles para mantener a su sueño vivo. La pobreza, segregación de razas, discriminación, analfabetismo, aislamiento, la violencia del Ku Klux Klan, enfermedad, y aún un bicho que destruía el algodón no podía refrenarla.

“ *Cualquier cosa que ustedes pidan en mi nombre, yo la haré parecía que fuera escrito en letra grande sobre mi corazón, Rosa escribió alguna vez. Cuando yo quería hacer algo o emprender algo, oraba a Dios. Me apartaba y hablaba con Jesús. Yo creía en la oración, oración, oración.* ”

La petición de Rosa era para ayuda en educar a su pueblo y fueron Luteranos que respondieron a su plegaria. Esto resultó en el establecimiento de 35 iglesias y 30 escuelas en algunos de los más pobres condados de Alabama durante los años 1916 a 1940.

Niños que nunca habían tenido un “bonito libro” propio ahora recibieron una educación Cristo-céntrica, mientras también miles de “su pueblo” que escucharon el Evangelio de salvación fueron bautizados y confirmados. Ex-esclavos, quienes habían vivido vidas duras, escucharon las Buenas Nuevas de salvación y regocijaron en la libertad eterna que Cristo ofrece. Hoy día, cientos de pastores, maestros y líderes laicos — segunda, tercera y cuarta generación — sirven en iglesias y escuelas de la LCMS a través de los Estados Unidos.

Apertura: Canten o digan juntos versos 1 al 3 del himno “Venid con cánticos, venid” (*Culto Cristiano* #85), terminando con un “Amén.”

¿Alguna vez tuviste un sueño tan grande que solamente Dios pudiera hacerlo realidad? Descríbelo a la luz de los versos siguientes:

Filipenses 4:13 _____

Job 42:2 _____

Jeremías 32:27 _____

Nombra a una persona que conoces que ha llevado a cabo un don o ministerio que Dios le ha dado.

¿Cómo podemos ayudar a otros a realizar sueños que honran a Dios? _____

Cuántas veces se pueden presentar obstáculos y dificultades entre nosotros y nuestros sueños. Rosa confrontó obstáculos abrumadores: La mayoría de familias en su tiempo era analfabetas y todavía vivían en las haciendas donde antes vivían esclavos, trabajando como pobres aparceros que apenas lograban pagar su renta. Porque el estado de Alabama en ese entonces vivía bajo la ley de “Jim Crow” de discriminación y segregación, habían pocas escuelas en que podían estudiar los afroamericanos.

Rosa, quien no asistió a la escuela hasta que tenía los 10 años, se enseñó a sí misma y también instruyó a sus hermanas y hermanos con solamente un libro de lectura y la Biblia. Ella trabajaba en los campos de cosecha de algodón para sostener los gastos de asistir a una escuela para maestras; empezó el año escolar tarde y salía temprano de las clases para volver al trabajo en los campos. Aún así se graduó primera en su generación de estudiantes. Después de su graduación, Rosa enseñaba a “su pueblo” en escuelas aisladas y rurales a través del estado, regresando a Rosebud cuando tenía 21 años. Usando su propio dinero y donaciones del pueblo blanco y también afroamericanos, construyó una escuela en 1912. Después de pocas semanas de haber abierto la escuela, ya tenía 200 estudiantes.

Dos años después, llegó el bicho destructivo gorgojo del algodón. Este bicho que comía el algodón destruyó la economía de Alabama. Rosa tuvo que cerrar su escuela, rompiendo su sueño.

¿Cuáles obstáculos has confrontado tú mientras seguías la voluntad de Dios en tu vida? _____

¿Cómo seguías adelante? _____

¿Cuál es la importancia de la oración cuando confrontas tiempos difíciles? ¿Cómo puedes apoyar y animar a otros quienes están confrontando tiempos difíciles?

Isaías 41:13 _____

Romanos 5:3-5 _____

Pero Dios.²

Rosa sabía que necesitaba ayuda. Booker T. Washington le animó a que se pusiera en contacto con los Luteranos de San Luis, y ella escribió al Reverendo C. F. Drewes y él atendió a su “llamado de Macedonia,” y mandó pastores para servir en su campo misionero. Rosa fue el primer afroamericano Luterano confirmado en Alabama rural — en la Iglesia Luterana Cristo en Rosebud en el Domingo de Ramos en 1916. Su verso bíblico fue: *Estoy convencido de esto: el que comenzó tan buena obra en ustedes la irá perfeccionando hasta el día de Cristo Jesús* (Filipenses 1:6).

Su vida reflejó la belleza de la carta de Pablo cuando Rosa escuchó el mensaje del Evangelio puro. Ella tuvo el compromiso profundo de compartir la luz del Evangelio con su pueblo.

“Yo tenía una ambición para trabajar para el Señor y por mi raza. Tenía gran entusiasmo para servir a mi gente; mi corazón estaba rebozando con compasión para ellos. Esta compasión para mi pueblo se ha mantenido conmigo durante toda mi vida. Cada mañana me levantaba temprano, pedía que el Espíritu Santo morara conmigo ese día y por medio de Su Palabra que causara que el mensaje del Evangelio puro llegara a tocar a los corazones de todos que veía ... así que embarqué en mi tour misionero, buscando almas para Jesús en todo el camino.”¹

Ella caminaba cientos de millas cada verano, a través de florestas densas y pantanosas, ríos desbordados, y lluvias para llegar a las

casas sencillas de personas ancianas ex-esclavas en los bosques de pinos. Viajaba a través de campos de algodón que extendían por millas para “alcanzar a mi gente y llevarles el mensaje del Evangelio.” Muchas veces las personas que visitaba no tenían comida, ni cama para dormir. Ella seguía en su camino.

“Mi deseo de obrar para Jesús crecía aún más fuerte. En mi mente veía a todos los niños descuidados de mi raza y se mantenían en mi memoria y la Gran Comisión.”¹

Busca a estos versos: **Juan 20:21; Hechos 13:47; 2da de Tesalonicenses 2:14; 2da de Timoteo 4:5.**

¿Qué podemos aprender de Rosa acerca de la importancia de compartir nuestra fe? _____

¿Qué “fórmula” usaba? _____

¿Qué podemos hacer para prepararnos para compartir las Buenas Nuevas? _____

¿Qué importancia tiene la oración y el estudio de la Palabra de Dios para cumplir este trabajo? _____

El amor de Rosa para su gente transcendía toda enfermedad, toda incomodidad, y toda angustia. Su amor para el Evangelio la obligó a compartir las Buenas Nuevas en la comunidad y en sus escuelas, donde animaba a sus estudiantes a prepararse para ser pastores y maestros. Ella empezó una universidad para preparar a Luteranos a servir.

“Tenía un celo ardiente a ser testigo para Cristo donde fuera necesario; yo respondía al llamado. Durante todos mis sufrimientos, yo sabía que tenía que atender a los asuntos de mi Padre y que Jesús estaba conmigo. Desde que llegó la Iglesia Luterana ... con el Evangelio puro que ha iluminado a los lugares oscuros, los ojos de las personas han sido abiertos al camino verdadero de salvación. ¡Nada más piensan en qué hubiera pasado con las 3,211 almas nombrados en nuestra lista de misiones si no hubiera mandado a la iglesia Luterana!”¹

Piensen ustedes también ... ¿qué sucede cuando tu sueño es tan grande, que sólo Dios puede hacerlo realidad?

Clausura: Digan o canten juntos “La doxología” (Culto Cristiano #104) y terminen con la oración “Padrenuestro.”

¹La historia de la vida de Rosa Young, *Light in the Dark Belt*, está disponible en inglés por medio de la casa de publicación Concordia. Un libro de su vida para niños, titulado *Heroes of Faith: Rosa Young*, también está disponible allí.

²Este es un dicho religioso entre el pueblo afroamericano. Cuando hablan de probabilidades imposibles, ellos recuerdan a otros que nada es imposible para Dios.

Christine Scheele Weerts, una luterana de cuarta generación, tiene un título de Maestría en Religión de la Universidad Concordia en Chicago y es autora de *Portales de Oración en inglés* (junio de 2018) que será publicado por la Casa de Publicaciones Concordia.

Knowing Jesus Gives My Life Balance*

By Kay Meyer

Opening Mixer: Our purses or wallets tell secrets. Find a partner and spend 3 to 5 minutes discussing one of the following: look for something in your purse or wallet you can share that makes you laugh or gives you great joy; or makes you angry, anxious, afraid, or puts your life out of balance; or shares your faith in Christ.

Opening Prayer: "Forgive our sins as we forgive; You taught us, Lord, to pray; But You alone can grant us grace To live the words we say." Amen. (LSB #843, verse 1)

Baptized and Growing Spiritually

Many of us were baptized as infants and were brought to the waters of Baptism by our parents or grandparents. Most of us don't remember our Baptism. Thankfully, God does remember!

Read these verses and discuss the following questions: **Acts 2:38–39; Romans 6:3–4; Colossians 2:11–12; 1 Peter 3:21.**

What happens at our Baptism? _____

Are these God's actions or ours? _____

Who is the promise for? _____

How does knowing Jesus as our Savior and Lord give life balance? _____

As we grew up, many of our parents and grandparents took us to church, Sunday School, and Vacation Bible School. As youth most of us took instruction at our congregation and were confirmed in the faith. During these years we learned more about God's Word and what it means to have faith in Jesus Christ.

Discuss

When did you come to know Christ as your Savior and Lord? _____

Why do we need a Savior? See **Romans 3:23** and **1 John 1:8–10**. _____

Who is Jesus in **Luke 1:31–33; Luke 2:10–11; John 1:1; Colossians 2:9**? _____

What has He done for us? Read **Isaiah 53:5** and **1 John 5:20**. _____

Read **Ephesians 2:8–10**. Why do you think so many women think they have to do something to be saved? How can believing this put life out of balance? _____

Although we don't do good works to earn God's favor or forgiveness, He has prepared good works for us to do in advance. How does this fit into our Christian walk? _____

Balanced and Content

Why is it that some women are content, while others never seem to be satisfied? _____

One important aspect is recognizing that a balanced life does not mean we are perfect or have a perfect life. It means learning to manage the physical, emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual needs of yourself and your family. This is quite a task for any woman — in fact, impossible. We will sin and fail at times to have a balanced life.

Women content with life learn to be prepared for traffic jams, computer problems, and family challenges. Many issues of life will cause imbalance, including: a car accident, the illness or death of a loved one, the adult child you love who is turning his or her back on the Christian faith, the rebellion of your child, depression, or discovering your beloved child or grandchild has gotten involved with or addicted to alcohol or drugs.

Kay Meyer is the founder and president of Family Shield Ministries and host of Family Shield, a weekly radio program heard on 52 stations in 27 states. She and her husband, Tjaden (Chad), have been married for more than 40 years. They have three children (their two sons are now with the Lord) and three grandchildren.

*This study is an excerpt from the LWML Bible study, *Balance: Christ Filled Living*. See Shop LWML (page 24) #LWML20441 \$4

Discuss

Do you agree it is possible to have a balanced life? Why or why not? _____

How does the perfection infection (thinking you have to be perfect as a woman, wife, or mother) cause problems in your life? _____

What do you do when you are stressed out or in a difficult situation? _____

Share with the women in your group a time when your faith and life were tested. _____

What can you do to have a more balanced life? _____

A woman with a balanced life is at peace. She feels secure in the Lord. She allows the Lord to control all aspects of her life. As I began to write this study, I asked women of all ages what they struggled with most to keep a positive balance in their lives. Time management came up again and again. How do you manage your time? What suggestions might you offer others? _____

Mary's Life Not Always in Balance

Often the Bible only gives us the facts about a situation. It doesn't tell us about the emotions that an individual has experienced. Although not discussed in the following Bible story, imagine what types of emotions the parents experienced when they discovered their twelve-year-old son had been left behind in Jerusalem. Read **Luke 2:41–46a**.

Betty's Prayer Request

The weekly Family Shield radio program had just ended when the office manager said, "Kay, you have a call." "Hello, Mrs. Meyer, are we off the air?" "Yes."

"Good. You talked today about prayer. I really need your prayers. Would you pray for me and my husband?"

Then this woman shared her story with me. Some months before, she learned that her husband had been involved in a long-term affair. She was understandably hurt, angry, and upset.

"Mrs. Meyer, he was my best friend! I feel so betrayed! I don't know what to do or where to go for help. I just can't seem to get over the hurt," she uttered.

She wanted to learn how to forgive him and rebuild their shaky relationship. As we talked, I learned she and her husband had

Discuss

Why do you think Joseph and Mary didn't realize Jesus was missing from the caravan? _____

How long was it before they discovered he was missing? _____

How much longer was it before they found him in the temple? _____

What emotions do you think Mary and Joseph experienced during these days? _____

How would you feel if your 12-year-old son or daughter were left behind by accident in a large city like Chicago or St. Louis for three days? _____

Have you ever forgotten one of your children? What happened? How did you feel? What emotions did you experience? _____

When you are worried, anxious, or upset, what do you do? What does God want you to do? _____

There were other times when Mary's life was out of balance. What were other challenges she experienced? _____

not attended church for years. I couldn't help but ask, "If you never go to church, why are you listening to a Christian radio program?" She responded, "Because I need help, and I thought you might be able to offer some answers and help."

What an open door for the message of God's love through Christ. Toward the end of the conversation I shared the Gospel and prayed with her. Later we referred her to a Christian counselor and to a congregation near her home. The last time we spoke she and her husband were still married, in counseling, and attending church together. Situations like this often seem impossible to you and me, but God performs miracles every day. He is in the business of restoring broken relationships! After all, isn't that what He sent His Son into the world to do?

Closing Prayer: Father, thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus Christ, to be my Savior and Lord. Forgive me when I sin against You and others. Continue to give my life balance as I trust in You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Closing Hymn: Sing or say together "The Will of God is Always Best" (LSB #758; LW #425; TLH #517).



Warm up this winter with LWML!

welcome
WINTER!



Warm up with hot coffee or cocoa using our **LWML Purple Mug**. Or, fill it with something, attach a ribbon, and gift it to someone special! **LWML#10180 \$7.00**

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Warm cuddles await from 'Dazzle' the **75th Anniversary bear**! These make great gifts for kids of all ages! **LWML#10023AB \$6.00**

Keep warm with our **Cardigan Sweater** sporting the new LWML logo and non-button front closure. **LWML#10094 Medium, Large, XL: \$45.00 | 2XL, 3XL: \$50.00**

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BALANCE
Christ Filled Living

BALANCE
Christ Filled Family Living

BALANCE
Christ Filled Living with Adolescents

Featured Bible study on page 22!

NEW! Balance Bible Studies will warm your heart as you share God's Word with your friends and family! **\$4.00 each**
LWML#20441 Balance Christ Filled Living
LWML#20442 Balance Christ Filled Living with Adolescents
LWML#20443 Balance Christ filled Family Living

For extra warmth, try these **Radiant Reflections**. Featured at convention, their popularity demanded a second printing. This soft cover book is filled with 75 reflections and devotions from LWMLers everywhere! **LWML#24001 \$8.00 each**

NEW! Write warm notes with our **Purple Pen** sporting the new LWML logo. These black ink pens have a gripper and are sold in packages of ten. Another nice gift to all of your family, friends, and LWML sisters! **LWML#18932 \$7.00 package of ten**

Place orders at www.lwml.org/store, or by phone at 800.325.3040. Prices good through March 31, 2018.

Gifts of Love Legacy Circle Launched

In Honor of Past and Present
National LWML Presidents

By Pat Bilow



“Is this something new?”

That was a frequent question raised at the Gifts of Love Planned Giving booth at the recent LWML Convention in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Yes, indeed, it is something new! After 10 years of God blessing LWML's Gifts of Love ministry, the time was right to create an initiative called **Legacy Circle**. Established to honor of LWML's past and present national presidents, its purpose is to give glory to God for donors who have remembered LWML in their estate/gift plans.

More than 180 individuals and couples have worked with LWML Gift Planning Counselors Linda Gage and me over the past 10 years in partnership with LCMS Foundation. These faithful stewards are located throughout the United States and, collectively, have earmarked over \$82 million — not only for LWML, but other LCMS ministries as well (approximately 35 percent is designated for LWML). Praise God!

But who else may have remembered LWML in their estate plan? Mailings have been sent to LWML leaders and participants throughout the country to determine exactly that. Others not yet known are encouraged to complete a Legacy Circle enrollment form to join more members in their love for LWML and its work for the Lord. Those joining prior to the end of 2019 are considered founding members.

And what might Legacy Circle donors expect as members?

- Spiritual blessings knowing they have returned to the Lord a portion of what He first blessed them with.
- Connections with others who also have given witness to the value of LWML in their lives.
- An invitation to a lunch/brunch with a keynote speaker at the 2019 LWML Convention in Mobile, Alabama, June 20–23, 2019.
- Future Legacy Circle events to be held regionally throughout the United States.
- A Certificate of Appreciation and a periodic Legacy Circle briefing — yet to be named — highlighting donor stories and articles of special interest.



For a brochure with an enrollment form or help in creating a charitable estate plan, contact Linda Gage at linda.gage@lfn.org, or Pat Bilow at pat.bilow@lfn.org, or call (800) 741-4138.





The **Ladies Aid of Zion Lutheran Church** in **Accident, Maryland** (Chesapeake District), have embarked on a new endeavor. They are creating quilts for Quilts of Valor, a non-profit foundation. Its goal is to cover all physically or psychologically wounded service members with a freedom quilt, honoring them for their sacrifices. During a special ceremony publicly thanking them for their service, each personalized quilt is given to a man or woman who has served our country. Korean Navy War Veteran and Zion's first honoree, **Mr. Harvey Gurney Kolb**, had served four years in the Navy aboard the USS Putnam DD757 and the USS Leyte CV32. Mr. Kolb has himself sewn 1,024 quilt tops, and Zion's Ladies Aid has completed those quilts for Garrett County charities. Please see QOVF.org for further information regarding this program.

Pictured left to right: Karen Leese, Jan Leese, Helen Harman, Gurney & Lois Kolb, Linda Oester, Peggy Close. Photo taken by Rita Kolb Fitzwater



Reed City, where Michigan's main north/south and east/west railroads intersected — formerly known as Michigan's crossroads — is the epitome of small-town life with a population of less than 3,000. Nestled in this town is **Trinity Lutheran Church**, where a small group of women are doing mighty acts in the name of Jesus. The small group of about 10 women was able to donate 131 quilts to five different areas! Peggy Graham shares, "The group is so active that we even had to order additional copies of the *Quarterly*, which we share with our congregation and community."

SUMMER 2018 THEME: OVERLOAD

Please share your stories and photos of joyful, mission-minded service with News Editor Linda Guteres: newseditor@lwml.org or 3 Timber Trail, Medford, NY 11763

Deadline: January 15, 2018

Include: name, address, phone, and email



Founded by past LWQ Editor-in-Chief Dr. Donna Streufert, the **Women's Leadership Institute** (WLI), associated with Concordia University, Wisconsin, has been encouraging, and equipping women to use their God-given gifts of servant leadership since 2003. The WLI conference in September featured topics such as teaching Scripture, caring for volunteers, and sharing Christ in the workplace. Workshop leaders included author and speaker Deb Burma; author and educator, Ruth Koch; and Linda Arnold, WLI Executive Chair and past LWML Vice President of Communication. LWML Vice President of Organizational Resources, Debbie Larson, staffed the LWML booth and remarked, "The presence of the LWML exhibit was appreciated. It allowed for networking and sharing information about LWML missions and resources."

LWML Vice President of Organizational Resources, Debbie Larson (right) and LWML Mission Grants Committee member, Nikki Tyrell



Is your LWML society looking for an innovative way to repurpose denim jeans? Well look no further! The **LWML Mission Circle of St. Paul Lutheran Church** in **Lester Prairie, Minnesota** (Minnesota South District), was able to enhance 15 school bags for distribution throughout their surrounding community. Jean pockets were embroidered and then sewn to the front of the bag. Each bag contained a religious devotion as well as notebooks, pencils, and pens. Thank you, LWML Mission Circle, for this great idea!



The LWML of **St. Peter's Lutheran Church** have been working hard in **Forestville, Wisconsin** (North Wisconsin District). They were able to collect 54 huge boxes of Christian literature, which will be sent throughout the world via an organization named Love Packages. Love Packages exists to glorify God through the distribution of Christian reading materials. They hope to bring the Word of God to people who are hungry to hear His message of salvation. Organizations can send unused Sunday School materials, Bibles, and books to Love Packages; they will disseminate the materials throughout the world. The women of St. Peter's hope these boxes of information will help encourage believers, build up His Church, train leaders, and shine God's light in dark places. Great job, ladies! Visit lovepackages.org for further information regarding this ministry.



Over the course of several months, LWML **Suffolk Zone** (Atlantic District) asked their sister churches to participate in a Scarf Sister Mission. This small request resulted in 440 scarves and a number of hat and glove sets that will be delivered to five different

agencies within their community (Lighthouse Mission, Having Friends Inn, Maureen's Haven, St. Joseph's Soup Kitchen, and the I.N.N.), helping keep people warm during harsh winter months. Honey Pabst, President of the Suffolk Zone, extends her thanks to all the women who participated in this great project.

Pictured from left to right: Virginia Wirsing, Maureen Consiglio, Linda Guterres, and Deborah Graybosch



The ladies of **Okawville Immanuel Lutheran Church** (Southern Illinois District) are working hard to complete at least 25 quilts for the **Almas Unidas-Hearts United Foundation**. *Almas Unidas-Hearts United* is a foundation in El Salvador started by optometrist Dr. Lisa Greene, who organized medical clinics to visit the country. This mission work has now expanded to include building a house for the local residents. The LWML of Immanuel was able to give this mission more than 30 beautiful quilts during 2016, in addition to the quilts they will complete during 2017.

Pictured: Adeline Blumhorst, Judy Hevner, Evelyn Borremphohl Luhrs, and Verdell Unverfehrt



More than 35 women, girls, and boys of **Christ Church Lutheran, Phoenix, Arizona** (Pacific Southwest District), completed eight fleece blankets for the *Agua-y-Mas* orphanage in Guaymas, Sonora, Mexico. Since this was the group's third year of tying fleece blankets for the children in Mexico, their skills were honed for business! They whipped out these beautiful blankets in about an hour, with time for fellowship and dessert. LWML member, Fayola Schwab said, "It is such a delight to work alongside our youth and watch them having fun and working hard to provide warmth and comfort for others! I would definitely encourage other LWML groups to host an intergenerational event."

The Family that Your Mites Helped Build

ORPHANS WITH DISABILITIES BECOME A CHRISTIAN FAMILY

By Terry Putnam

Junior, Frances, and Moises can often be seen wrestling on the floor of the group home and having a great time. Ramona, the big sister, knows just where to look for Moises's lost shoe so he can get to school in time for opening devotions. Estefani loves to greet visitors to their home and practice her English. The tias and tios (caregivers) of the children are members of the congregation who have been given extensive training so they can help the children in all areas of their lives, including having devotions and prayers as well as teaching them basic self-care and social skills.

It is a great joy to see how these teenagers love being together with their tios and tias, "working" and having fun as a family. Randy loves having neighborhood kids stop by to play. If the kids see activity at the church, they are down there to check out what is going on in their church family. All the

children have ways to serve in worship, which they take very seriously — lighting candles, passing out bulletins, and praying with the pastor.

Previously these children lived in a government institution, where they were fed, bathed, and diapered. No skills were taught, and no tables or chairs at which to sit to eat. No toys to play with or opportunities to learn, and no medical attention.

In January 2011, custody of the children was given to Dominican non-profit, *Hogares Luterano el Buen Pastor* (HLBP), formed by the LCMS mission team and the Dominican Lutheran Church congregations. The children were baptized Easter Sunday 2011. Church members and mission teams built the beautiful, spacious group home with funds from an LWML Mission Grant. The kids love living next to the school, church, and playground and being involved in the community!

Do these kids feel loved? You bet! Do they give love! For sure, even though they had to learn first by receiving love and then learning to trust the ones loving them. When they were told Jesus loves them just like their tias and tios do, they understood and were able to love the Lord Jesus in return. *We love because He first loved us* (1 John 4:19).

The board of HLBP continues to work with the government to emphasize the need to improve care of people with disabilities and accept the financial responsibility for their care. Until then, funding comes from individuals and congregations in the U.S.

If you would like to help support the group home, send donations to the LCMS. On the memo line, note "Palmar Arriba-HLBP #65019," and send to LCMS P.O. Box 66861 St. Louis, MO 63166-6861. Donate online at www.lcmsorg/givenow/palmar-arriba-HLBP.



Estefani's social skills are amazing. She sings solos at church and helps count the offering. She has learned sign language so she can communicate with Frances. She may be able to live on her own, in a wheelchair accessible house. Her cerebral palsy has left one hand so twisted that she can't use a walker safely.



Frances attends the school for the deaf. He loves playing basketball with his brothers and neighbors, but had to learn how to share the ball, as he had never played a game like this, knowing that the ball would be passed back to him. He is a real joker. As his use of sign language improves, he will eventually be able to live on his own.



Junior is a friend to all. He has volunteered at a hardware store in the community, and the owner was delighted with his help. His kindness extends to his brothers and sisters, and he is ready to help his tias and tios with chores around the house. He and Frances are competing to see who will grow the tallest and wear the biggest shoes.



Abandoned to the streets, Moises was taken to a government orphanage. With speech therapy, a few words are starting to be said. He loves to run, even though his cerebral palsy has left him with a distinctive gait. He keeps up with his much bigger brothers, even though he is probably older than they are.



Because of his autism, Randy is being taught at home. He can carry on simple conversations and does household chores quite well. He loves going to church and repeating what the pastor is preaching as it is being said. He likes music and playing with his brothers. He and Ramona are "buddies" and have a special relationship.



Ramona is the big sister who helps take care of everyone. She loves to be the center of attention, and even though she is non-verbal, she can make her wishes known. She loves wearing dresses, looking pretty, and being with people. Her "job" at church is to pass out the worship folders to everyone.



FROM PRESIDENT PATTI

Praying and Trusting

“Rosa Young is a wonderful role model, but she would probably be the first to say she is not the role model — the role model is Christ Jesus.”

In this issue of the *Lutheran Woman's Quarterly*, we see the trust Rosa Young had in God. We see her constant use of prayer. We see her submission to God's will for her life. Rosa Young is a wonderful role model, but she would probably be the first to say she is not the role model — the role model is Christ Jesus.

Disappointments and failures did not stop her. How many of us today would do what she did? I'd venture to say not many. However, that does not negate the value of what you do as you pray to God, trust His will for your life and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, submit to what He wants you to do.

Along the way, Rosa received small things, seemingly unimportant contributions from others that enabled her to keep going: encouragement, food, a place to sleep, financial help, and sound advice from people we will never know about. No headlines for these people. No recognition.

It's a little like our Mite Boxes. As you add your offerings to your Mite Box, they may be small, and no one will ever thank you or recognize you, but you are enabling the work of people — like those missionaries who do wonderful things in our Disaster Response Center in the Dominican Republic, our featured mission

grant in this issue. God has blessed you and given you generous hearts to produce big things! Things that help people and advance the Gospel.

I highly recommend watching the movie, *The First Rosa*. After you view it you might want to contact LWML Vice President Kaye Wolff about sharing some interesting and funny episodes during the filming. In all seriousness, I recommend reading the book, *Light in the Dark Belt*. It goes into more detail about Rosa's life and her work. It is an eye-opener to the times she lived in and the conditions in rural Alabama in which she worked.

As *Lutheran Women in Mission*—LWML, we pray and trust God to guide us in the way we are to go. We continue to Serve the Lord with Gladness.

Patti Rasmussen

Patti





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2018 LWML PRAYER SERVICE

Living as God's People

The Prayer Service, written by 2013–2017 LWML Pastoral Counselor Rev. Dr. Robert Roegner, is based on 1 Peter 2:9–12.

Many factors come to mind when we think of who we are — our identity. In his first letter, Peter continually reminds his readers of their identity. Rather than focus on inane worldly details, he zeroes in on what's most important: our standing in the eyes of God or our place in His kingdom. Peter reminds his readers of who they were prior to being made part of God's family, contrasting that non-status with the present reality of what God had made them. This was especially important for Peter's readers as they compared themselves to the unbelievers around them, and as they fought to retain hope in what may have seemed like hopeless times.



Rev. Dr. Robert M. Roegner states that he has been blessed and befriended by every LWML President since Past President Helen Gienapp mentored him as he began his calling as pastor and missionary. Rev. Roegner respects their great leadership and focus for mission.

Pastor Bob, as he's sometimes known, hails from the English District where he has served as LWML District Pastoral Counselor. He and his wife, Kristi, are blessed with four children and five grandchildren. In his 35 years of serving the LCMS in a mission capacity, Rev. Roegner has traveled to 89 countries. He and Kristi will be serving in new mission work in Israel with Apple of His Eye Ministry. In addition to traveling, Pastor Bob enjoys hunting, shooting, coin collecting, gardening, and watching sports.