Opening Prayer
Dear Lord, You have created us and given us talents and abilities. However, we know that we sin and do not use those talents and abilities to Your glory. Our sin separates us from You. Thank You for sending Jesus, the Word made flesh, to be our Savior from sin. We thank You for the Means of Grace that the Holy Spirit uses to renew, sustain, and sanctify us throughout this journey of life. By the power of the Spirit, make us bold to tell the Good News to those around us. Bless our study of Your Word. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

The Word of the Lord
Can you remember the first time you really heard the Word of God and knew it was for you? Since my dad was a pastor, I remember hearing the Word spoken in worship every Sunday. However, I probably was about 12 years old before I recall listening to that Word and really hearing what God was saying — to me — through its proclamation. I call that a milestone in my faith life. As I have grown in that Word through the years, I have also come to know the importance of the daily study of God’s Word, not just on Sunday morning! Each step along the route of being in the Word has strengthened and bolstered my faith.

A children’s anthem* uses phrases such as the following to define the Word of the Lord: “a lamp to my feet,” “a light to my path,” “the hope for the world,” and “forever will be giving life to me.” What do we know about God’s Word from the following Bible passages?

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<th>Passage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Luke 24:27</td>
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<td>John 1:1–2, 14</td>
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<td>John 20:31</td>
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<td>2 Timothy 3:14–15</td>
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<td>2 Peter 1:21</td>
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Read Hebrews 4:12. See also Psalm 119:25; 1 John 1:9; and John 17:17. According to these passages, what does God’s Word accomplish in us?

Read Hebrews 4:14–16. Discuss the following words and simplistic definitions. Do you agree? Why or why not?
Justice = getting what you deserve
Mercy = not getting what you deserve
Grace = getting what you don’t deserve

Faith Talk
Share with a partner or small group what the phrase the word of God is living and active (Hebrews 4:12a) especially means to your daily life.

Holy Baptism
Do you know the date you were baptized? How could you celebrate that date as one of the most significant events (milestones) in your life? If you don’t know the date, make sure to find out and then celebrate on that day!

What are the life-long benefits of Holy Baptism?
Acts 2:38a and 22:16
Romans 6:3–5 and Colossians 1:13–14
Mark 16:16 and Titus 3:5–7

The Sacrament of the Altar
A milestone of faith could certainly be the day when you, for the first time, partook of the Lord’s Supper. Do you remember that day? How did you celebrate? Share if you do!

Read 1 Corinthians 11:23–25. Who instituted the Sacrament of the Altar? When?

What are the life-long benefits of Holy Communion?
John 15:5 and Matthew 26:26–29
Romans 8:10 and 1 Peter 2:24
1 Corinthians 11:26 and 1 Corinthians 10:16–17

Our Heavenly Home
Paul writes in Philippians 3:13b–14: But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. As we daily use God’s Word and Sacraments — the Means of Grace — throughout our lives, what is our ultimate goal … toward what are we “straining”?

Read the word pictures of heaven given to us in Revelation 21:1–6a and Revelation 22:1–5. What feelings do these pictures invoke?

Faith Talk
If you were asked to draw a mental picture of heaven in your head, what would it look like?

Read Colossians 3:12–17. As we look forward to our final steps in life and our ultimate heavenly milestone, what advice does Paul give to us that might keep us from having our “heads only in the clouds”?

Make a list of the specific beneficial characteristics given in this Bible passage that might be used to walk this Christian road until we reach our heavenly goal.

Faith Walk
1. Praise God daily for His love and plan of salvation for us in Jesus Christ.
2. Rejoice in your Baptism and for the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.
3. Begin or continue a daily Bible reading plan.
4. Identify and encourage a fellow sister in Christ through the spoken word, cards, emails, and prayers.
5. For further study: Look at the life of the Apostle Paul (Saul) and identify the many milestones which marked his life. For starters, see Acts 7:54–60; 8:1–3; 9:1–31; and 22:2–21. See also Romans 1:1; 2 Corinthians 11:21b–33; Galatians 1:11–18; Philippians 3:2–11; and Colossians 2:14–29.

Closing Prayer
Leader: Your Word, O Lord, is a lamp to my feet
Group: And a light to my path.
Leader: Guide my steps on this road of life.
Group: Direct and lead me in Your Word.
Leader: Lord, remind me through Your Spirit that there is
Group: One hope, one faith, one baptism, and one Father of all.
Leader: Thank You for making all things new
Group: Because of our Savior Jesus Christ.
Leader: We pray in the name of our Alpha and Omega,
Group: The beginning and end! Amen.

[Psalm 119:105; Ephesians 4:4–6; Revelation 21:5–6]

Closing Hymn
Sing together: “May We Thy Precepts, Lord, Fulfill” (LSB #698; LW #389; TLH #412)


Shari Miller, wife of Rev. Larry and mother of Joshua and Johanna, has served LWML in many capacities, recently as LWML Strategic Planning Facilitator and as the past District President of the LWML Montana District. She lives in Helena, Montana, and has written numerous articles and studies for the LWML.