

LUTHERAN WOMAN'S QUARTERLY

FALL 2018



FALL BIBLE STUDIES

HIS BLESSING OF SHOWERS
SU BENDICIÓN EN LLUVIA
GRACE UPON GRACE
ABUNDANT SPIRITUAL TREASURES

ON THE COVER

HARVESTING A GARDEN OF HOPE



*Surely, it is God who saves me;
I will trust in Him and not be afraid.
For the Lord is my stronghold and
my sure defense, and He will be my Savior.*

Psalm 31
paraphrase

The Lord has cared for me in the past year, in ways small and big, thanks to His infinite mercy and through the people He placed, and continues to place, in my path at my exact time of need.

When the cupboard started to get bare, because I spent most of my days with Richard at the medical facility, church friends showed up at my doorstep with just the groceries I needed! A sweet church friend continues to check that I have enough fresh fruits and veggies.

Last winter when my house lost heat (three times!) during sub-zero, wind-chill temperatures — including on New Year's Eve — the repairmen came fairly quickly, and I was never cold for long.

Squirrels, hungry and desperate for warmth, bit through my roof and took up residence in my attic. Each day, at the crack of dawn, it sounded as though I had a horseracing track in my attic! Eventually, the icy rain stopped long enough for the roofer to extricate them and repair the roof.

I wish he had taken the mice with him too.

Upon leaving a funeral home for the visitation of a dear church friend one wintry night, my car's brakes made a squealing, ear-splitting sound. I knew I could not risk driving home 16 miles. My wonderful pastor and his wife came to my rescue! My pastor met me where I had stopped, recommended a local repair shop where my car could be towed, and his wife drove me home and picked me up the next morning so I wouldn't miss the funeral service at church.

So very thankful for:

- My faithful neighborhood friends: my former Girl Scout co-leader and her husband who roll my trash cans down my driveway each week, and my new next door neighbor who rolls them back the next day.
- My safety-conscious handyman who straightened my wobbly stone path, installed four smoke alarms, and always made sure my driveway was plowed in time for church on Sunday.
- Your cards and calls and emails, Bible verses and especially prayers — please know they came at just the time I needed them!

Above all, my greatest blessing is my brave daughter, Elizabeth, whose generous sacrifice of time, hard work, and love for me — at a time when she is still adjusting to her own loss — makes it possible for me to manage on my own and move forward. (And by the way: She is a master mice killer.)

With gratitude to God from whom all blessings flow,

Nancy

Nancy Graf Peters, Editor-in-Chief



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Showers of Blessings

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Praying the Psalms

A prayer based on Psalm 65

By Sheila Lutz

Today I praise You for the everyday blessings. You created them all: the air I breathe, the ground I walk on, and the water that cleanses and terrifies and soothes and refreshes more than any concoction made with it.

Outside, You awaken my senses — touch and smell and sight — as I look at the beauty of each flower; and, then there is the color — what an enveloping blessing color is! Your world can gleam with a rainbow of colors in the sunlight or amaze me with all the blue and grey shades that accentuate Your rain-soaked world — a rain which can start with the roar of thunder but end in mesmerizing whispers.

Your seasons bless: Winter with its snow and crisp air; Spring with its bursting beauty and fresh scent; Summer which warms the bones and grows our crops; Autumn that crackles and gives hints of days past and days to come. Indeed, You are due all praise for the blessings You bestow!

Your blessings are endless! I can walk in shoes to keep my feet dry and warm or take them off to relish the soft grass, the shifting sands, or the squishy mud under my feet and between my toes. You make each one of us with the same

My God from Whom all blessings flow, I am blessed! You grant me salvation, strengthen me with Your Word, and choose to walk daily with me because You chose to live with me, Your child. You created the mountains, and You created me.

I am in awe of Your splendor and majesty.

features on our faces but individually blessed us so we can recognize one another. You give muscle memory to play or dance or type or recite. You intricately made bodies think and bend and move and digest and receive — receive all Your blessings.

My taste buds make me prefer peaches while You gave my friend ones for strawberries. The voices I hear in Your people can be melodic, soothing, cacophonous, alarming, or just even-keeled. You're smiling, aren't You, God?

You created different foods for us to eat and growing seasons and geography for each one. You give us joy and laughter, and You bless us with Your presence

when trials, betrayal, or hurt comes.

Disappointment, sickness, and brokenness come with blessings too. We learn to endure, to push through, and that we can only do these things with Your presence in our lives.

The softness of Your mighty hand is in the showers of blessings You send to make us grow. You crown each of us with Your bounty. Your blessings clothe us in sheer joy. I will shout and sing and make music to You, O Lord, my God! Amen. *Q*



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Listening to Your Story

Upon reading the Summer 2018 *LWQ*, Irene Gehring of Seattle, Washington, responded with a story of her own.

Dear Sister in Christ, Patti,

This morning I read your President's article, "Someone Took Time to Listen." As I read the last paragraph — "I'd love to listen to your story. Send me an email" — I just knew that I had a story to share with you.

In June 1992, Patrick Gehring enlisted in the United States Army and was immediately sent to Kosovo. His first letter home began with "Dear Mom and Dad: The kids here don't have warm clothing. With winter coming, could you round up some clothes and send them?"

Soon after, Patrick emailed a detailed list of 128 children, including ages and genders. Patrick's dad, Dave, shared this information with their church, Hope Lutheran, telling the congregation of the need and asking for their help. Each child would receive an individualized package containing a coat or jacket, three shirts, two pair of pants, gloves or mittens, scarf, warm hat, and a new pair of shoes.

Immediately, a man handed us a \$20 bill for postage. This act was followed by an overwhelming response from the congregation. In just one month, people donated more than enough clothing and money for postage to ship everything overseas!

There were many suggestions of charities that might ship the packages for us. In the end we decided that the best way to send it was to our son's APO address. The totals were amazing! It cost \$2,000 to send 1000 pounds of clothing!

The shipment took about a month. After all 21 boxes were received, the three village schools were closed for the distribution to take place. Despite some confusion, the day went well and the boxes were greatly appreciated.

In honor of Pat's celebrating his 20th birthday while in Kosovo, and realizing his heart for helping the children of the three villages, his parents decided to send Pat sports equipment for the children. We sent basketballs, baseballs, soccer balls, and Frisbees for him to distribute to the village children. Needless to say, these gifts were cherished!

Several years later our son and his wife visited the villages. The distribution was still remembered by the citizens. It was exciting to see young people still wearing Seattle Mariner and Seattle Seahawk shirts and hats! This proved that the items were still around and being used!

This heart-warming memory is very special for many people — the people of Kosovo who received the gifts, the people of Hope Lutheran Church who donated clothing and money, and especially for us, Dad and Mom, who are so humbly proud of our son, Pat — who retired from the Army as a Major three years ago — who cared and served so well! *Q*



A joyous reunion for mother and son, after Pat returned home from Iraq in 2009. Top photo: distributing the boxes of winter clothing to 128 children in Kosovo in 2001.



Showered With Blessings

By Rev. Larry Schaefer

Blessed be
the God and
Father of our
Lord Jesus
Christ, who
has blessed us
in Christ with
every spiritual
blessing in the
heavenly places.

Ephesians 1:3

Rev. Larry Schaefer serves
at Our Savior Lutheran
Church in Orlando, Florida,
and is also the assistant to
the Executive Director at
Rebecca's Garden of Hope.

When I greet members of my congregation with the usual "Hello" or "How are you?" their response is often spirit-directed: "I am blessed and highly favored." This, in turn, has become my response to others.

Blessings are God's way of lovingly providing what we need — not what we want — in alignment with His will. *For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure* (Philippians 2:13).

Everything He gives us is good. *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change* (James 1:17).

Saint Paul reminds us of our overflowing blessings: *The grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus* (1 Timothy 1:14). *God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work* (2 Corinthians 9:8).

God's grace in Christ overflows for you and for me, and out of God's generosity, we are prompted — as was the Good Samaritan (Luke 10) — to help and bless those around us, including those who are not a part of our group of family or friends.

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others (Philippians 2:1–4).

John writes in his Gospel: *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth ... And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace* (John 1:14, 16).

It is because of God's free-flowing agape love that we are able to love others, loving as we want to be loved. Loving not just in word but in our actions toward each other. That is how we are truly blessed and become a blessing to those around us.

Dear Father of our Lord, and Savior, Jesus Christ, through studying your Word, help your Spirit grow in us each day. Use me to share the overflowing blessings of your grace, always looking for opportunities to help others on our journey. Amen. *Q*



Harvesting a Garden of Hope

By Becky Wehrspann

Rebecca's Garden of Hope Ministry is alive and well in Yerington, Nevada.



There is a sense of urgency as it relates to my passion for getting out there and telling people about Jesus,” affirms Sanya Parson, Executive Director of Rebecca’s Garden of Hope. “I believe every congregation should have a Rebecca’s Garden of Hope. We need to provide those platforms and opportunities to have intergenerational connections, fellowship, and unity in the body of Christ. We remember 1 Corinthians 15:58: *Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.*”

Rebecca’s Garden of Hope (RGOH), based at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Orlando, Florida, was the recipient of a \$100,000 LWML Mission Grant in the 2013–2015 biennium. With those funds, their model of tutoring and mentoring to further Christ’s Kingdom has been shared with more than 200 partnering congregations. For 12 years, RGOH has been reaching out to youth in communities across the United States and beyond.

Sanya brought news to the Albuquerque LWML Convention of the successes of Rebecca’s Garden of Hope. She is passionate about encouraging others to reach out in their congregations and communities with the love of Jesus. I’ve had several opportunities recently to be in conversation with her, and I now invite you to learn more about God’s working through the volunteers of this growing organization.

What is Rebecca’s Garden of Hope?

“Rebecca’s Garden of Hope is an outreach ministry that uses after-school tutoring and mentoring to invite more children and families to know Christ. It is a platform that provides a unique way for churches to develop long-term relationships with the local neighborhoods and teaches young people how to be servant leaders in those churches and communities. The core of why we do what we do is so our children know Christ as their Savior. The tutoring program is about improving education outcomes, decreasing drop-out rates, providing essential life skills for young people and strategies to develop social, civic, and Christ-centered discipleship. Mark tells us in chapter 10 that Jesus said: *‘Let the children come to me ... for such belongs the kingdom of God.’* Our passion is huge!”

How did Rebecca’s Garden of Hope get its name?

“To come full circle and be able to work with a ministry named after my mother is humbling and a reminder that God’s hand is always working in every aspect of our lives. My mother was a teacher for many years with a passion for helping students excel. She blessed many with her kindness and compassion before dying of breast cancer when she was only 56. My father, the Rev. William T. Parson, recently went home to heaven. He was an LCMS pastor for more than 40 years and an advocate and trailblazer who worked to equip and train youth to become Christ-

centered leaders in the community. It is their love, strength, courage, and support that started my wheels turning in the area of serving.

“My parents will be remembered for teaching and showing me the importance of serving others in need. At a very young age I wondered why they were always so eager to help other people. At the time I did not understand it, but looking back, I truly appreciate the life lessons they both taught me. I feel blessed by the examples they set for me along the way, and we continue those through our ministry at Rebecca’s Garden of Hope.”

Why is youth ministry important to you?

“My passion for helping children started in my youth as I grew up watching my father and mother actively engaged in ministry with youth in the community, most coming out of pretty tough environments. They were focused on giving everyone access to the gift that money can’t buy — Jesus Christ. My dad was serious about teaching the importance of building on a foundation in Christ. He taught my sisters and me Greek and Hebrew as we studied God’s Word together. I saw them not just talk about making sacrifices and helping others but get right in the trenches with people who were in some pretty tough situations and tirelessly forging ahead, despite their means or circumstances.

“Because my father was the pastor, I remember being at church before anyone else arrived and the last ones to



close the doors almost every day of the week. When we were younger, we didn't necessarily like that arrangement, but in hindsight, I can see how those boundaries probably kept us out of a lot of trouble and gave us a view into the value of focusing on others and not ourselves. My mother and father taught my sisters and me the importance of never making life about us but always keeping the focus on God."

How did Rebecca's Garden of Hope get started?

"Rebecca's Garden of Hope was born out of a desire to bolster Sunday School attendance by reaching out to children in the neighborhood. Putting feet to faith, we canvassed the neighborhood, and the response was unbelievable. Over 100 children came just a few weeks into our efforts. Deciding there was a need to keep them engaged, a tutoring program was born. But this is not just about tutoring and mentoring. It's about reaching our neighbors with the love of Christ. Tutoring and mentoring is just the hook.

"There are very few platforms that give communities and congregations a chance to make long-term impacts. It is an opportunity for mentors to sit down and talk to the kids, find out who they are, and develop those relationships. We (at Our Savior) require that our children who are in

our tutoring program attend church. In our tutoring schedule, we also have youth Bible study. We teach them about Baptism and the Ten Commandments. We encourage them to talk to Mom and Dad and be part of this loving family. We encourage their desires to come and actively worship and be a part of Sunday School. It is designed to engage them in ways they had not been engaged. We keep it exciting and fun for them!"

How has this ministry grown since its beginning?

"Our Savior is the beta site for new approaches to empower our young people to succeed. Out of that setting, a template was developed. Soon, Rebecca's Garden of Hope was helping other congregations, providing them insight, training, assistance, and program materials to allow them to begin their own ministry.

"Through generous gifts from LWML, Rebecca's Garden provides a toolkit and other resources to congregations at no cost. We teach our partners how to use these tools to invite young people into God's family. At Our Savior, more than 300 children have been baptized since the program started. Six years ago we became an RSO (Recognized Service Organization) with the LCMS, which is how we could apply for the grant from the LWML."

How are the partner churches involved?

"More than 200 churches have signed our memorandum of understanding, with an intent to start an outreach program. About 65 of those partners currently have active ministries. Churches have the flexibility of using the information they need from the toolkit; there are a variety of ways to run the ministry. Some might have a couple tutors, others have 30 or 40 tutors. Some might be working with colleges or other congregations in a community.

"Our prayer is that all churches will consider this ministry to connect with their neighbors. Our partner churches have access to training and program materials; we will come out and canvas; and we will provide video support. We are actively sending out information to keep our partners abreast of some of the new things being introduced from an educational perspective and from a spiritual perspective."

How are individuals involved?

"RGOH partner congregations use many talented people to reach their neighbors. Our goal is to get more members of our congregations and local communities involved. There are needs for leaders to guide the program, cooks to feed the children and teach meal preparation, individuals to help teach life skills,

tutors to assist with learning, others to grade papers, and teachers and mentors to mirror the love and compassion of Christ, and so much more! That takes love from just saying, 'I love you,' into engaging in behavior that reflects what we're saying, because that's what Christ did for us."

How many persons are on staff?

"Rebecca's Garden of Hope operates with a voluntary director and voluntary governing board. I appreciate every opportunity I'm given to share information about this ministry with more people, which helps the ministry get the support it needs so it can continue to grow. My background is not education, and I have no formal training in working with non-profits, so this has all been Holy Spirit-driven and a series of trial and error. It's God working through me to accomplish His will. The ultimate goal is to share God's message of love with more youth and families through this ministry.

"The ten-member board is responsible for disseminating funds that we receive and staying in compliance with what a non-profit is supposed to do. Pastor Gregory Manning is the liaison between our partners and our board of directors. Our assistant to me, as director, is Pastor Larry Schaefer. We have several others who serve as support staff. These are all volunteers, but our strategy includes monetary support for these individuals down the road. Matthew 9:37 comes to mind when Jesus said to his disciples:

'The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.'"

How do volunteers contribute?

"I get up each day thanking God for each experience this ministry provides, and I am always asking God to involve more people in this ministry so more children and families can know Jesus. He is the ultimate gift we can share with others that keeps on giving for eternity.

"Each partner ministry has volunteers to support their ongoing efforts. For example, in our 65 active programs, there is an average of 10 tutors at each site. That's already 650 people! Add support staff to that, which includes van drivers, food preparers, and others, and we are easily into the thousands. Those individuals are impacting our communities and churches through this ministry. It's a ministry about combining the gifts God has given each of us to glorify Him. It is awesome!"

How has LWML impacted Rebecca's Garden of Hope?

"The support from LWML has been essential to the growth and development of our ministry. LWML has provided not only monetary support, but also other needed support to Rebecca's Garden of Hope in the form of gifts, supplies, and volunteers. The LWML is an

example of an outreach ministry that understands the value of coming together and being unified under one umbrella — Christ — so that we can accomplish His will. I'm humbled that you would not only pick us for this huge grant, but also that you would continue to provide support along the way as we've taken baby steps to understand what our purpose is through this ministry so that we can help more congregations reach more people in their communities. It doesn't get any better than that!



"Although I could go on and on, I will conclude by saying the most important part of my story is really my love for my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is out of that love that God calls me to love my neighbor as myself. That means I will continue to enthusiastically go wherever He leads me and continue to serve in His harvest field with great passion." Q

continued





The blessings of Rebecca's Garden of Hope reach far beyond the tutoring of underserved youth. The volunteer mentors and tutors return day after day, week after week, bringing the love of Jesus through word and action to children of all ages. Many tutors and support staff discover there are reciprocal blessings through interactions with the youth.

God continues to provide opportunities for Garden of Hope ministries to expand and reach into congregations and communities across the country:

- Incarnate Word in Tucker, Georgia, recently started a Garden of Hope ministry by inviting youth and families from the community to their first tutoring orientation. They were excited to get started.
- Mount Calvary in Warner Robbins, Georgia, has seen the impact of their ministries in their community. Pete LeBoriosis has been an important part of leading the charge with the church's outreach efforts to youth in the community.
- Pastor and Beth Wipperman have a Garden of Hope ministry at Our Savior Lutheran in Lake Worth, Florida, that includes a blanket ministry and various levels of support for those in need.
- Staff from Rebecca's Garden of Hope visited Lamb of God Lutheran Church in Slidell, Louisiana, which resulted in two more congregations signing up to start a Garden of Hope Ministry. To God be the Glory!

- Our Savior Lutheran, Orlando, Florida, has more than 20 youth in confirmation class. Confirmation is a great way to teach our youth about Christ. Equipping youth to go out and share God's message of love is what we are called to do. Having this level of commitment each week from these children, many of whom did not grow up in the church and don't have parents that make sure they come each week, says a lot about what God is doing in their lives. We are watering and planting, knowing God will cause the increase. What an awesome God we serve!

More information can be found at www.rebeccasgardenofhope.org.



Three youth recently baptized at Our Savior in Orlando

Dear Sanya and Pastor Larry,

The Rebecca's Garden of Hope Ministry is alive and well at Faith, Yerington! We are seeing the fruit of our labors, and it is soooo exciting! We have eight committed tutors, and our church was just selected to receive a DCE intern! I strongly believe that because of our well-rounded outreach programs that we already have in place, including RGOH, our church's application for a DCE Intern stood out from the pack.

I just survived one week of VBS. We had a record-breaking attendance this year — 52 kids! Eleven of those were kids from tutoring. We ended the event with one of our attendees wanting to be baptized, and we welcomed him into the family of God!

*Sincerely and in His Service,
Laura Tomac, Yerington, Nevada*



Two children [pictured above] were baptized at a recent Wednesday evening worship service a couple of weeks ago. They have been attending our tutoring program for a couple of years.

Roger Rehbein, St. Paul, Minnesota



Craft Idea

Are you always trying to rack your brain to find something new and fun for your group? Maybe a new craft or a service activity? Did you know the LWML has its own Pinterest account? Here's an activity you could do any time of the year. Provide each person with a container (a pail or a mason jar), tongue depressors, and a permanent marker. Ask the women to write down people or situations on their prayer list. Include the names of mission grant recipients. With these simple reminders, women can pray throughout the day until the container is empty. This is a different way to remember to pray!



Spotlight on a Young Woman



Meet Lydia Landes. This Young Woman Representative from the 2017 Albuquerque LWML Convention hails from the Gulf States District. Lydia and her husband, Logan, live in Florida, where she is the music director at their church (Grace Lutheran Church, Destin), owns a music studio, and teaches music. Her favorite Bible verse is Joshua 1:9: *Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.*

Lydia has been involved in the LWML for as long as she can remember. Her mother would bring her to meetings

as a child, and the other women would welcome her. It wasn't until attending the convention in Albuquerque, however, that Lydia became passionately involved. When asked how LWML has blessed her life, Lydia said, "The LWML has given me the opportunity to form relationships that have lasted and, I hope, will continue to last a lifetime. From my adoptive church-grandmas to my new church family, LWML is something that brings together women of all ages who really have a desire to be in the Word and to serve the people in their community and around the world."

Lydia's advice to other young women: "Don't be afraid to get involved. Try new things. Form relationships with the women in your congregations (especially those with more life experience than you); they are worth more than their weight in gold. And invest in some purple ... it may come in handy!"



I am showered with blessings each time I come to the Benediction in our worship. Psalm 67:1 (ESV) says: *May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine upon us.* In the uncertainty of my daily life, this sure blessing comes to me as I begin my week in the worship of our Lord. His face shining on me gives me blessing and deliverance from the sinful life I lead. May I be reminded each day of that forgiveness, and reach out to bless others as I have been blessed.



God's will, or God's plan, is something we've all heard within our faith walk. Our church, St. John's West Bend, has three truths: *It's all His, He saves, and His will is what's best for us.* It was with this last truth — His will is what's best for us — that my husband and I struggled.

The Abundant Blessings of His Will

By Courtney Young

My husband and I always thought we would adopt someday. We envisioned having children naturally and then adopting. During the five years we waited and prayed for a family, we still envisioned having children naturally first. All of our efforts went that direction.

We prayed for His will and, truthfully, we taught it every day to our students, but we were still holding back and trying to control the situation according to what we wanted. A year ago June, we celebrated our seventh anniversary. It was on our anniversary that we truly gave the desire of our hearts to God — and meant it — when we told our heavenly Father that we believed His will is best and we will walk through any door He opens.

It was almost one month later that God didn't just open a door but kicked open the door as wide as only He could. When we woke up that morning, we had no idea how our lives would change. Within one day's time, we went from being asked if we were interested in adoption, to presenting our information to a birth mom, to being chosen. Let me assure you that this did not happen without a lot of prayer and moving parts.

However, on that day God made His will and His plan known to us, and we knew we had to have blind faith and walk through the door He opened.

I wish I could tell you that the journey waiting for the birth was easy from here on out, but it wasn't. There were a lot of ups and downs the next seven months. Through it all, we felt the peace that Jesus alone can bring and were so thankful for His people surrounding us and encouraging us when we needed it the most. Finally, we got the call that our birth mom was in labor. We then jumped in our car and trekked to Detroit through the worst snowstorm of the year.

On February 11, God gave us the greatest gift we have ever known. Our daughter, Stella Quinn, was born. We spent the next two days in the hospital where we shared a room with our birth mom and Stella. At the time it felt like the hardest and longest 48 hours of our life as we watched someone else take care of our daughter. Looking back, once again, our heavenly Father's will was best. Those 48 hours allowed us to build a stronger relationship with our birth mom, and she was able to spend precious time with the child she would always love but never raise.

Stella is now five months old, and we are just waiting for the judge to sign off on finalization. We are still amazed every single day by how perfect our daughter is and how perfect God's will and plan for our family has been. We are truly blessed, and we love being able to share our story and our Triune God's faithfulness after many years of waiting. His will is truly what's best for us! *Q*



Ryan and Courtney are members of St. John Lutheran Church, West Bend, Wisconsin, where Courtney teaches second grade at St. John Lutheran School. Courtney became aware of LWML through her mother and aunt who are LWML members in Michigan and where she received LWML scholarships toward her education at Concordia University-Chicago.

Cast All Your Anxieties on Him

From the Boomer Chronicles
by Linda Guteres

Cast all your anxieties on him because he cares for you (1 Peter 5:7 ESV).



Boomer's paws seemed glued to the asphalt. A growl emanating from deep within his chest put me on alert. Something dangerous was in our path. It was an early fall morning before the sun was up; it was difficult for my eyes to see anything clearly. I heard a strange hissing noise in front of me, but the dark lawns surrounding us remained still. My pulse raced as I continued scanning the area to see what was alarming my dog.

That's when I saw them.

Lawn ornaments.

Boomer's growl transformed into barks as he turned and bolted for home. Yanking on the leash didn't stop him; he only ran faster. When we got home and I pushed the gate open, Boomer rushed in as I bent over trying to catch my breath. Seconds later, Boomer acted as if nothing had happened; he was safely home. I, on the other hand, had to sit down for a long time.

I knew the large colorful bags of air were harmless. However, to Boomer, the bright orange bulbous pumpkin and the large-eyed inflated scarecrow were perilous and life threatening.

Silly dog!

Maybe we, too, are anxious about things we do not know or understand. Or we are uneasy about new things, or we're concerned about our past returning to tap us on our shoulder. There are myriads of things we can worry about — death, medical test results, marriage breakdowns, wayward children or spouses, financial burdens — you name it.

And yet our heavenly Father tells us over and over again to worry not, to come to Him in prayer, and to trust Him and His promises. *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present our requests to God* (Philippians 4:6).

We don't have to face anything alone. God invites us to confess our sins and leave our worries at the foot of the cross, where His story of love and faithfulness are manifest. Through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross and His bodily resurrection, our sins are forgiven and we start anew, thanks to His grace.

Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest? (Luke 12: 25–26)

And yet, there are still times I forget about the promise of peace that comes from God.

Like Boomer, I become keyed up, unable to face what is in front of me. My pulse begins to race. All I want to do is to run home where it's safe. I hide within my familiar home, burst into tears, and only then do I begin to calm down.

I'm grateful because God doesn't stop loving me even when I forget His promises. *Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the LORD your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you* (Deuteronomy 31:6 ESV).

Boomer is still jittery about things that wave and hiss in the night. As for me, I will continue to ask the Holy Spirit to increase my faith and to teach me to trust Him, so I can live in His peace and bravely share the story of God's love and faithfulness with others.

And I am thankful for Boomer and the blessing his life has been to mine. Q

Planting Seeds — Blessings of Faith

By Anita Stohs

God calls His children to faith through the Holy Spirit, through the Word and Sacraments. The Word of God can be shared by people in a variety of situations. The seed of that Word can be planted in the fellowship of friends, among family members, and even in the midst of strangers. The following stories are examples of how the Holy Spirit works through God's Word, as the Word is shared by ordinary people to encourage others and to bring people into God's family.



Dawn*

Dawn's father was an agnostic, and her mother did not attend any church services. When she was a little girl, visitors from a nearby church invited Dawn's parents to come to their church.

Dawn's parents said no. One of the visitors persisted, noticing Dawn running around the living room behind her parents.

"What about your little girl?" the visitors at the door asked. "We have a Sunday School."

Dawn's mother decided to let her attend. Her parents dropped her off at Sunday School and came to pick her up. Dawn went from that little girl playing in her living room to a faithful Christian woman, one who has spent a lifetime encouraging people in learning and living the faith. She is the leader of a weekday Bible study group that has been meeting for more than 30 years. By the work of the Holy Spirit, Dawn's parents followed her in the faith.

Judy

Judy came from a family that was Christian but did not attend church services. When Judy was in elementary school, a friend invited her to Sunday School. Judy's parents did not object, and Judy began attending with her friend. Her parents later followed her into membership. God strengthened Judy's faith in Christ, which did not waiver as she grew up and into college and graduate school years. While other dorm mates would sleep in on Sunday morning, Judy was always up to attend the worship service at her church. She lives her faith with a kind and compassionate manner toward others.

Judy met her husband in a young adult singles group and joined him in his church home. Judy is involved in religious education, music, and the LWML in the church they attend. She is an example of how God brings faith through the invitation of another child.

Dawn and Judy's stories illustrate how God can use a simple invitation to Sunday School as an open door to a lifelong relationship with Christ.



*All names in this article have been changed.



Bev

Bev's family attended church on Christmas and Easter, but Christian education was not a priority. While growing up, Bev played in an alley beside a parochial school where religious instruction classes were held. Bev watched through a window and wanted to attend. Though not given permission to do so

right away, her parents later allowed her to attend a church instruction class, taught by a nun. Bev walked or took a bus to attend classes and services alone. Her church attendance later led to her mother also joining the church.

Bev remembers one nun in particular who showed an interest in what the children in her class did in their daily lives, building a relationship with the children she was teaching. At one point, Bev lived near her grandmother who attended church each week and was an influence in witnessing faith to a child. Bev continued her pattern of regular church attendance into young adulthood, when she married into a Lutheran family that had followed the same pattern. By God's grace, she remains faithful in church and Bible class attendance.

Jennifer

At a time when neither of her parents was attending church, Jennifer, who had been baptized and brought up in the faith, kept on going alone. The mentoring of a caring adult, actively working with older youth in that church, was a help, as were the parents of other youth in the group. Jennifer met her husband at a college-level church activity for young adults and attends weekly services, participating in a variety of church activities, especially Bible study. Her story is a reminder of the importance of caring adults who take part in young adult church programs, as well as the power of the Holy Spirit to keep the light of faith burning in His children, when worship is not a part of a family's weekly schedule.

May God help all of us, when the opportunity arises, to be a part of a welcoming environment that can lead to the seed of God's Word being planted, thus bringing about faith by the Holy Spirit. We may see the open door God gives to us to invite people to "come and see Jesus," or we may be on the other side of that door as a caring individual who nurtures that Spirit-given faith. *Q*



Taking Bible Lessons to Heart

By Anita Stohs, with Susan Wagner

Susan Wagner and I attend Bible study together at Hope Lutheran Church in Shawnee, Kansas. She hobbled in one morning with an orthopedic boot on one leg because of a fractured ankle, and a broken toe on the other foot. She then told us the story of what had happened:

"My friend's car had been in the shop for over a week, and I was helping by playing chauffeur. One afternoon I picked her up so she could walk her puppy, Serena, before ending her long workday. Unfortunately, Serena had been sick, so her kennel needed to be cleaned. I opted for the walk instead of the cleaning! It was a beautiful spring day, and a walk with a puppy would be the perfect antidote for the funk that had recently consumed me. The fresh air and sunshine further boosted my spirits.

"We were almost back to the apartment, when suddenly I was twisting, falling and crashing to the sidewalk in a blaze of pain. As I sat there in my torn, bloody jeans, knowing at the least my ankle was broken, I reflected on the Bible study I had led at my LWML circle meeting only five hours before. 'Lord,' I thought, 'I really didn't need to take the lesson to this level!'

"Apparently, He thought I did. Three days later I heard the same verses from Second Corinthians repeated in the Sunday sermon! The lesson? 'Comfort Ye, Comfort Ye My People' Bible study [Spring 2018 *Lutheran Woman's Quarterly*]."



RECONNECT to the Body of Christ

By Brenda Segovia, Rio Grande Valley Mission Action Council, with Cheri Fish, Mission Editor



The Rio Grande Mission Action Council (RioMAC) had a fruitful year in 2017 and is excited to see the new opportunities God has for His people in the future. By the grace of God, RioMAC hopes to inspire, develop, and equip leaders to serve new and innovative Christian communities through partnerships flowing across the Rio Grande Valley (RGV) of Texas and beyond. Thanks to the LWML Mission Grant, we will be able to charge forward with that mission here in the RGV.

The Reconnect to the Body of Christ mission grant intends to reconnect our neighbors in the Rio Grande Valley to the greater Body of Christ. This grant will aid and support the congregations of Texas District Circuit 28 in their outreach efforts to the lost and unchurched in one of the lowest socio-economic metro areas in the United States.

Part of the plan for this grant is to support a traditionally trained church worker in a missional role. This was launched in 2016 when DCE Brenda Segovia was called to serve in this non-traditional missional role. As this project develops, it will eventually offer a new model of ministry for congregations throughout The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS).

Highlights from 2017 include leadership development, spiritual renewals, service opportunities, and new ministry endeavors. One of those efforts was a statewide middle school youth gathering called Crossroads. Youth from across Texas teamed up with our local youth and helped with many mercy projects for the community as they spread the Good News of Jesus. Many lives were touched. This summer's Crossroads event, held in June 2018, connected our middle school youth with even more families! We hope to continue growing in these and many other ministry opportunities with the help of this mission grant.

There are many stories of how God impacted lives in 2017. One of the families who inspired us was the Mata family. Ruth is a single mother, raising her three children under difficult conditions. Although the father had abandoned them, God surely did not. A service team connected with them

and helped them rebuild flooring and install a new water heater. The muddy ground dried out from the leaking water tank, and the rotting wood was replaced with new lumber. Ruth loved the devotions that we read in Spanish and especially loved going through *Luther's Small Catechism*. Throughout the rest of the summer, they wanted to be involved in as many youth events, worship opportunities, and service projects as possible. Having received kindness, they poured out great love and kindness to others!

Through monthly youth gatherings and retreats led by our DCE Mission Facilitator Brenda Segovia, new servants received discipleship and new leaders were formed. We have been blessed to see the Holy Spirit working in these new leaders; several have expressed interest in becoming professional church workers, and one has already begun her studies at Concordia University in Texas!

By the Holy Spirit's leading and power, RioMAC leaders look forward to another exciting year. We can't wait to watch God change people's lives for even greater service in His kingdom. We see how God has been gathering and building over the years, and we are so thankful that He has led the RGV ministries to connect with the generous love from the LWML! *Q*

MISSION GOAL: \$2,075,000

2017–2019 MISSION GRANTS

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



- 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



CURRENT MISSION GRANT HIGHLIGHTS

NOLA 4H: Hearts for the Hungry, Homeless, and Hurting — \$100,000

New Orleans has the third highest homeless rate in the nation with 1,700 homeless persons every night, much of this due to the Hurricane Katrina and the loss of homes. Six inner-city LCMS churches and their pastors, leaders, and members have come together to serve Christ by serving their neighbors and providing food and shelter. The NOLA 4H churches work closely with other organizations to support various outreach ministries. This mission grant will enable NOLA 4H to equip each of the fellowship halls in the six churches to serve more people.

Christian Hope through Mass Media in Egypt — \$100,000

Lutheran Hour Ministries will use this mission grant to expand their proclamation of the Gospel to other parts of the Middle East, especially refugee camps in Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey. LHM will reach families, refugees, and citizens of the region through a new television program broadcast in Cairo, Egypt. This broadcast has the potential to reach millions of people throughout the Middle East with the message of faith and the true love of Christ and to be a strong Christian voice and witness through Arabic satellite television programming.

Laborers of Love — \$100,000

Through Lutheran Braille Workers, people with visual disabilities can have the opportunity to work and study with the same translation of the Bible as sighted people of the church. This mission grant will assist in the cost of the production of the zinc plates for each Braille Work Center, along with producing the ESV Bible in Large Print.



Grace Upon Grace

By Shari Miller

"Tuesday's child is full of grace" is a line from an antiquated nursery rhyme that describes characteristics of children born on different days. Share with a partner or your small group what you think the words "full of grace" mean.

The apostle John states in John 1:16: *For from his [Jesus'] fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.* What beautiful words of encouragement, comfort, and hope! Grace is God's undeserved favor and love (a gift!) toward sinful humans who have no right or reason to expect or receive it. In our study, we delve into God's grace to His children in the past, present, and future.

Opening Prayer: Gracious God, You are our loving Lord! However, our sin builds a wall of unrighteousness that separates us from You and Your love. But You saw our need and sent Jesus — the Word become flesh — to live a perfect life, suffer, die for our sins, and rise from the dead. We are showered with the blessings of Your grace given to us through the merits of our Savior Jesus. Thank You for sending the Holy Spirit to give us faith in Jesus and all the gifts He offers. We ask for wisdom and discernment as we study Your Word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

God's Grace: The Past

In **Exodus 33:19**, what does the Lord tell Moses about His _____ grace and mercy?

Throughout the book of Jeremiah, the Lord sends warnings through prophecy to the sinful children of Israel. Vices and idolatry were rampant in their land, and the Lord warns that they will be delivered into the hands of their enemies and are destined for exile from their homeland. As prophecies are fulfilled and Judah is conquered, despair and discouragement, as well as weeping and wailing, occur throughout the nation. God's people had broken their covenant with Him. In light of this, read what God still promises His people in **Jeremiah 31:2–4** and **31–34**. _____

Who or what is the new covenant God promises in **Jeremiah 31–34**? See **Hebrews 8:6–12**. _____

In the midst of the chaos in their lives, how do you think Israel felt after hearing these prophetic words in Jeremiah? _____

What are we reminded of in **Romans 3:23**? What feelings does this verse generate in us? _____

What is the Good News given to us in **Nehemiah 9:17b** and **Titus 3:3–7**? _____

What does it mean that we are justified by his grace (**Titus 3:7**)? See **Romans 3:21–24**. _____

Faith Talk: Share specific feelings with a partner or your small group that result from knowing that our Savior God saved you by grace — upon grace — from a life of sin and despair and that through Baptism you are His own dear child.

God's Grace: The Present

John Newton penned the following words: "Amazing grace — how sweet the sound — that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see!" (Public Domain). Of what does **Romans 11:5** assure us? _____

The Holy Spirit uses the Means of Grace to work faith in our hearts and keep us in the faith. What are these? See **1 Peter 1:23**; **Titus 3:5**; and **Matthew 26:26–28**. _____

Why are they called the Means of Grace? _____

Read **Ephesians 2:1–10**. Write the phrase in verse 7 that describes God's grace. _____

What immeasurable riches does the believer receive by grace through the Holy Spirit? _____

Faith Talk: Why can we not fully comprehend this treasure of grace that we have? Discuss with a partner or your small group. Identify and discuss specific ways that we can, with the help of the Spirit, live gracefully in our daily lives:

Colossians 4:6 _____

Titus 3:1–2 _____

1 Peter 4:8–11 _____

1 Peter 5:6–11 _____

2 Peter 3:18a _____

Faith Talk: Discuss with a partner or your small group ways you can by word and action share the grace of God with those you live and work with this week.

God's Grace: The Future

God always keeps His promises. What does He promise us in the following Bible passages, particularly in regard to the future?

Acts 20:32 _____

Romans 5:20–21 _____

Romans 8:31–32 _____

2 Thessalonians 2:16–17 _____

Hebrews 4:16 _____

God's grace is overflowing. Read **John 1:14, 16**. _____

Martin Luther wrote in a sermon on John 1:16: "For this is the sum and substance of it all: Whoever wishes to be safeguarded from the devil's might and to escape sin and death must draw from this well, Christ; from Him flows all salvation and eternal bliss. This fountain is inexhaustible; it is full of grace and truth before God; it never fails no matter how much we draw from it. Even if we all dip from it without stopping, it cannot be emptied, but it remains a perennial fount of all grace and truth, an unfathomable well, an eternal fountain. The more we draw from it, the more it gives. Such water, as St. John remarks later, wells up to eternal life (John 4:14)." [Luther's Works, Volume 22, page 134; 55-Volume American Edition on CD-ROM; General Editors J. Pelikan/H.T. Lehmann; Fortress Press/Concordia Publishing House.]

Faith Talk: Discuss what phrases from Luther's quote are most meaningful to you and why.

Faith Talk: Will this grace of God ever end on this earth? What significance does it have for you that this grace upon grace is a "perennial fount," "an unfathomable well," "an eternal fountain"? What could your future look like living in the grace of God?

Faith Walk:

1. Thank the Lord that you are saved by grace through faith in Jesus. Ask the Holy Spirit for strength to share the message of salvation in Jesus Christ alone with at least one person this week.
2. Look for ways that God's grace is at work in your life.
3. Draw from God's fountain of grace through trials and tribulations.
4. Practice living gracefully and reflecting God's grace to those around you.

Closing Prayer: Read responsively these words from Psalm 86 and Numbers 6.

L: Incline Your ear, O Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and needy.

R: Preserve my life, for I am godly; save Your servant, who trusts in You — You are my God.

L: Be gracious to me, O Lord, for to You do I cry all the day.

R: Gladden the soul of Your servant, for to You, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.

L: For You, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon You.

R: Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer; listen to my plea for grace.

L: In the day of my trouble I call upon You, for You answer me.

R: I give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify Your name forever.

L: You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

R: Turn to me and be gracious to me;

L: The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;

R: The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

Closing: (sing or speak together): "Amazing Grace" (LSB #744; LW #509; or verse 1 above).

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.



His Blessing of Showers

By Betty Marschner

Opening prayer: Heavenly Father, as we spend these moments pondering Your work in both drought and famine, instill in us a thankful countenance in the midst of both situations. We know that you can work good through all conditions in our temporal lives. Bless our time in Your Word. May we continue to grow as redeemed children through the life, death, and resurrection of Your dear Son Jesus Christ, set apart now to spread the good news of the Gospel everywhere to everyone. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

We begin by reading aloud together Ezekiel 34:26 (ESV): *And I will make them and the places all around my hill a blessing, and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing.*

In this text, God is again promising a blessing on a people who often forgot about Him. Those wayward Israelites in olden times were not unlike us today. During times of prosperity they became complacent and frequently began to worship idols and/or false prophets. After a time of testing they would once again repent and were again blessed by the One Triune God.

As I start to write this study, Dakotans are in the grips of a stubborn three-year drought. To farmers and ranchers this is very devastating. Hopes and dreams are shriveled and turn to powdery dust in the relentless heat and dry conditions. Many anxious eyes look upward daily to see if any relief in the form of a fluffy, billowing cloud might appear in the crystal clear, azure sky.

It seems fitting then to spend a few moments considering how our Lord God works through seasons of famine or drought. Read the following passages and answer the questions.

Famine or drought was used at times, especially in the Old Testament, as a tool to motivate God's people to repent and move in another direction.

What caused Abram to leave the promised country to live in Egypt? See **Genesis 12:10**. _____

In **Genesis 26:1–2**, what caused Isaac to leave his land? _____

Can you think of a time in your life when adversity caused you to move in another direction? Share. _____

God also used famine or drought as a form of judgment upon a wayward people. Read **Haggai 1:7–11**. Why did God call for a famine on the Judeans who returned to Jerusalem? _____

Do you think that God can still use droughts or famine in our time to move people to repentance? _____

Look at **Genesis 26:2–5**. When we are in a season of famine, what do these words of comfort to Isaac tell us about God? _____

What words of comfort does Apostle Paul write in **Romans 8:35–39**? _____

There is great comfort in knowing that, through all adversity, even when disciplined for being wayward, our God is with us and nothing will ever separate us from His love. How does this fact help us as sisters in Christ to relate to others dealing with adversity? _____

As I continued working through this study, our Lord saw fit to bless with life-giving showers. Once again the small ponds teemed with life, the grasses grew lush and green, and all things seemed to flourish. There was a time, though, when God used water in another way. Read **Genesis 7:4**. What was God's form of judgment on a sin-filled world? _____

Noah and his family were saved from the waters of judgment that would bring certain death on the entire created world. Take a moment to discuss the differences and similarities of judgment and chastisement. _____

As Noah was saved through the waters, we are saved through the waters. Look up **Colossians 2:12** and **1 Peter 3:18–21**. Which waters save us? _____

In **Isaiah 55:10–11**, God draws a comparison between what rain and snow produce and His Word. What is the analogy? _____

Christ often spoke of life-giving water. In **John 4:13–14** what does Jesus offer this woman of Samaria? _____

Christ uses the metaphor of a bubbling spring to bring across the fact that, through the work of the Holy Spirit, this life-giving water wells up within us — not just to give us temporal relief from thirst, but to become an everlasting spring, welling up in us eternal life and an ever-lasting quenching of thirst. Through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are assured that we receive this life-giving water in our Baptism. We then tell others of this blessed eternal gift so they, too, can receive its blessings.

We close our study by reading together the words of Apostle Paul in Titus 3:5–7 (ESV): *He saved us, not because of work done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

Closing Prayer/Hymn: With one accord, O God, we pray: Grant us Your Holy Spirit. Help us in our infirmity Through Jesus' blood and merit. Grant us to grow in grace each day That by this sacrament we may Eternal life inherit. [Amen.]*

*"All Who Believe and Are Baptized," *LSB* #601, verse 2. (Tune: "Dear Christian, One and All, Rejoice.")

Betty Marschner is active in her local, zone, and district LWML. As a retired wife of a North Dakota farmer/rancher, Betty is enjoying a new venture of service, that of writing Bible studies and devotions.



How the LWML Has Blessed ...

By Rev. Carl Gnewuch,
LWML Pastoral Counselor 2005–2009

When I consider how the Holy Spirit has blessed others through the LWML, what first leaps to mind are the smiles, laughter, exuberant singing, and attentive listening of women gathered to celebrate the missions of our beloved Synod. The women of the LWML know how to conduct conventions! Like Mary they remember what is most needful — to listen to the voice of Jesus. Their votes reflect a spirit of unity bound by the bond of peace. They encourage each other with the encouragement they have received from the Spirit. They decide to give, then give, then celebrate what is being done with what they have given. The women are blessed!

What next comes to mind are the smiles, laughter, singing, and joy of women and children from every corner of the world who have received the message of salvation as a result of what the LWML women have given. The LWML women may not yet know the stories of the thousands, but will when we gather for the heavenly convention, where the celebration will never end. The saved are blessed!

What finally comes to mind is the quiet smile of a woman sitting in prayer at home — it could be my mother, my wife, my daughter; it could be any of you reading this now. Having finished her morning devotions and prayers, tucked her daily gift in her Mite Box, she softly sings as she stands up to meet the day. She is blessed.

From *Radiant Reflections — 75 Years of Blessings*
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Su Bendición en Lluvias

Por la Sra. Betty Marschner Traducido por Melissa Salomón

Oración de apertura: Padre Celestial, mientras pasamos momentos meditando sobre Tu obra tanto en tiempo de sequía y de escasez, pon en nosotros un rostro de gratitud en medio de ambas situaciones. Sabemos que Tú puedes obrar para bien por medio de cualquiera condición en nuestras vidas temporales. Bendice nuestro tiempo en Tu Palabra. Ayúdanos a seguir creciendo como hijas redimidas por medio de la vida, muerte y resurrección de Tu Amado Hijo Jesucristo ahora que somos apartadas para proclamar las Buenas Nuevas del Evangelio a todos en todo lugar. Pedimos esto en el Nombre de Jesús. Amén.

Empezamos con leer juntas a voz alta del libro de Ezequiel 34:26 (NVI): *Haré que ellas y los alrededores de mi colina sean una fuente de bendición. Hare caer Lluvias de bendición en el tiempo oportuno.*

En este texto Dios promete de nuevo una bendición sobre Su pueblo quienes a menudo se olvidaban de Él. Aquellos Israelitas rebeldes en aquellos tiempos fueron muy parecidos a nosotras hoy en día. Durante tiempos de prosperidad se volvían complacientes y frecuentemente empezaron a adorar a ídolos y/o falsos profetas. Después de un tiempo de prueba una vez más se arrepentían y una vez más fueron bendicidos por el Único Dios Trino.

Mientras escribo este estudio, los estados Dakotas están en medio de una sequía obstinada de tres años. Para los

granjeros y rancheros esto es devastadora. Sus esperanzas y sueños están marchitados y se vuelven a polvo en las condiciones secas y de calor implacable. Muchos son los ojos que miran hacia el cielo para ver si hay algún alivio en la forma de nubes mullidas y onduladas que pudieran aparecer en el cielo azul y cristalino.

Parece justo ahora tomar unos minutos para considerar cómo el Señor Dios obra por medio de estaciones de sequía o escasez. Lee los siguientes pasajes y responde a estas preguntas.

La escasez o sequía se usaba, especialmente en el Antiguo Testamento, como una herramienta para motivar al pueblo de Dios a arrepentirse y cambiar de dirección. ¿Qué le causó a Abram salir de la tierra prometida para vivir en Egipto? Lee a **Génesis 12:10**.

En **Génesis 26:1-2**, ¿qué le causó a Isaac salir de su tierra? _____

¿Puedes pensar en un tiempo en tu vida cuando la adversidad te causó ir en otra dirección? Comparta con otros. _____

También Dios usó la escasez de comida o sequía como una forma de juzgar al pueblo alejado de Él. Lee **Hageo 1:7–11**. ¿Por qué Dios mandó sequía a los Judíos que volvieron a Jerusalén? _____

¿Crees que Dios puede usar escasez y sequía para mover a personas a arrepentirse hoy día? _____

Lee **Génesis 26:2–5**. Cuando nos encontramos en un tiempo de escasez, ¿qué podemos saber acerca de Dios en estas palabras de consuelo para Isaac? _____

¿Cuáles son las palabras de consuelo escritos por el Apóstol Pablo en **Romanos 8:35–39**? _____

Hay un gran consuelo en saber que a través de toda adversidad, aún cuando estemos bajo la disciplina por ser rebeldes, nuestro Dios está con nosotros y nada nos apartará de Su amor. ¿Cómo nos ayuda saber este hecho como hermanas en Cristo cuando nos confrontamos con la adversidad de otros? _____

Mientras continuaba por medio de este estudio, nuestro Dios quiso bendecirnos con lluvias que dan vida. Una vez más los pequeños estanques fueron repletos de vida, los pastos crecieron verdes y espléndidos, y todas las cosas parecían florecer. Hubo un tiempo, sin embargo, cuando Dios usó el agua de otra forma. Lee **Génesis 7:4**. ¿Cuál fue la forma de juicio que Dios usó sobre un mundo lleno de pecado? _____

Noé y su familia fueron salvados de las aguas de juicio que trajeron cierta muerte sobre el entero mundo creado. Toma un momento para hablar de las diferencias y similitudes del juicio y del castigo. _____

Mientras Noé fue salvado de las aguas, nosotros somos salvados por medio de las aguas. Lee **Colosenses 2:12** y **1ra de Pedro 3:18–21**. ¿Cuáles aguas nos salvan? _____

En **Isaías 55:10–11**, Dios hace una comparación entre lo que la lluvia y el nieve producen y lo que Su Palabra produce. ¿Cuál es la analogía? _____

Cristo a menudo habló del agua que daba vida. Lee **Juan 4:13–14**. ¿Qué ofrece Jesús a la mujer de Samaria? _____

Cristo usa la metáfora de un manantial para dar a entender el hecho de que a través del Espíritu Santo, el agua viva brota dentro de nosotras — no sólo para darnos alivio temporal de la sed, pero también para ser un manantial eterno, brotando en nosotros vida eterna y una que siempre apaga la sed. Por medio de la vida, muerte y resurrección de Jesucristo, estamos aseguradas que recibimos esta agua viva en nuestro bautismo. Cuando compartamos con otros sobre este don eterno y bendecido, ellos también pueden recibir sus bendiciones.

Cerramos nuestro estudio con leer juntas las palabras de San Pablo en Tito 3:5–7 (NVI) donde dice: *Él nos salvó, no por nuestras propias obras de justicia sino por su misericordia. Nos salvó mediante el lavamiento de la regeneración y de la renovación por el Espíritu Santo, el cual fue derramado abundantemente sobre nosotros por medio de Jesucristo nuestro Salvador. Así lo hizo para que, justificados por su gracia, llegáramos a ser herederos que abrigan la esperanza de recibir la vida eterna.*

Oración e Himno de Clausura: Con un solo acuerdo, O Dios, oramos: Danos Tu Espíritu Santo. Ayúdanos en nuestras flaquezas por medio de la sangre y mérito de Cristo. Ayúdanos a crecer en gracia cada día y que por medio de este Sacramento, podemos heredar la Vida Eterna. Amén.

Canten “Cristo Salvador, Sé mi guiador,” *Culto Cristiano* #159, verso 1.

La Sra. Betty Marschner es activa en su sociedad, zona y distrito de la Liga Misionera de Damas Luteranas. Es esposa de un agricultor/ ranchero retirado de North Dakota. Betty está disfrutando de su nueva ocupación de escribir devocionales y estudios bíblicos.



Abundant Spiritual Treasures

By Jan Brunette

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:19–21).

Many people today want to live in a world of fantasy. Resorts and theme parks overflow with people from all over the world, hoping to embrace a day of laughter and relaxation, providing a respite from the present world. Even when at home, masses watch movies and television reality shows as a means of viewing the lives of others, hoping that entertainment will offer more colorful pictures than experienced in their own real lives. These worlds of "happily ever after" or "stranger than strange" offer a different perspective and give a glimpse of how life could be outside the confines of their own four walls.

All these can be good, enjoyable, and refreshing. Having a vacation or watching uplifting movies can be acceptable and valuable. Yet, when lives are in turmoil, when lingering crises occur, or when we find ourselves swallowed up in heartbreak, these kingdoms prove to be only a temporary fix. In addition, when we rely on the kingdoms of this world, we may run the risk of missing the narrow way that leads to rest and peace in God's kingdom.

Jesus Himself warned of this mindset: *"Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few"* (Matthew 7:13–14).

According to **Galatians 3:24–29**, what is the narrow way and what is its promise? _____

*This brand-new Bible study, *The Task-Filled Life*, authored by Jan Brunette, will be available online beginning Saturday, October 6. Since this is the weekend of LWML Sunday for many churches, use the opportunity to encourage your sisters in Christ at your church to participate! The study begins with the session, "The Great I AM," on Saturday, and then continue digging a little deeper with a short session each weekday following. The online study will continue for six weeks in this manner. This study is excerpted from Week 5.*

Find out more about this study by checking LWML's Facebook page, or follow along on the LWML website at www.lwml.org/life

Opening Prayer: Dear Father in heaven, reveal Your will and way as I study Your Word. Open my eyes to Your truths and Your glory as I grow to understand the incredible spiritual treasures of serving You in the kingdom. In Jesus' name I ask this. Amen.

In Christ's kingdom, each day can be valued as a day spent in His presence, even while living in the reality of our personal lives. Each day covered with His love remains secure and reveals hearts open to His teachings. The narrow way with Jesus far surpasses the wider world of television, movies, and fantasy kingdoms — and is to be desired first and foremost.

The kingdom of God changes our view of the other kingdoms and keeps our lives in better balance. In the kingdom of God resides the Lover of our souls, the Friend who shares our woes, and the Savior who understands our goals. Rest in Him as we discover this kingdom and the blessing of knowing this Lord and Savior in Whom we reside.

The Kingdom of God

"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matthew 6:33).

Where is this kingdom of which Jesus spoke? See **John 18:36**. _____

The kingdom of which the disciples were aware, and from which they thought Jesus would rescue them, was in direct contrast to the kingdom to which Jesus referred. His kingdom would, in fact, flip their world upside down. Instead of escape, aggression, and possession, His love ruled and was the power to be used by the believers in His kingdom.

The beatitudes are a classic example of Christ's interpretation of a world of new thoughts, revealing a new approach to life. Read **Matthew 5:3–11** to discover this upside-down world. Discuss the contrasts and how the earthly worlds differ from the love displayed in the kingdom of heaven. _____

How is Christ's kingdom also reflected in the following?

Matthew 13:44–46 _____

Matthew 25:34 _____

Luke 17:20–21 _____

Hebrews 12:28 _____

And now we ask, "Who receives this kingdom?" Refer to:

John 7:38–39 _____

Ephesians 1:13–14 _____

1 Corinthians 6:19–20 _____

2 Corinthians 5:5 _____

Kingdom Treasures

Because the kingdom of God is heavenly, not earthly, the joys and privileges of that inheritance become ours upon receiving Christ through Baptism. Look up the following passages to discover more of what Scripture has to say about the incredible kingdom of God.

Psalm 145:10–13 _____

Romans 14:17 _____

1 Corinthians 4:20 _____

One of the greatest blessings of belonging to Christ's kingdom is stated in Psalm 16:11: *You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.* These eternal pleasures are ours to implore by seeking, asking, and knocking (Matthew 7:7–8).

Spiritual Treasures in God's Word

Through Scripture, the kingdom of God explodes with the knowledge of all the abundant treasures offered by the eternal and loving Savior. We continue this walk, relying on the Holy Spirit to reveal the abundant grace and mercy offered, as we, Christ's baptized children, reside in Him and He in us.

Psalm 19:7–10 _____

Psalm 119:72, 105, 127 _____

Proverbs 8:10–11 _____

Colossians 3:16–17 _____

On your own: Read the entire chapter of **Psalm 119**. It is a treasure trove of God's revelation regarding the value of His Word. Let **Hebrews 4:12–13** serve as a reminder of the impact God's Word can have upon us as we read and study it.

Faith Shielded by God's Power

Christ's kingdom resides in His presence. Through faith we become His own and receive His Holy Spirit as a guarantee of our inheritance into that kingdom (John 3:3–8). As a result, we possess the kingdom of God, always available to us in our hectic, spinning, task-filled lives.

Psalm 18:30, 35 _____

Galatians 2:20 _____

1 Peter 1:3–9 _____

Ephesians 2:19–22 _____

Concluding this study of the abundant treasures of God's spiritual kingdom, we can rejoice that there is so much more to learn. The amazing love discovered through Christ's sacrificial death, the power revealed in us through His resurrection, and the comfort of knowing that He is ever with us are truths in which we believe. They are the groundwork of our faith. Even upon our death, we will discover it not to be a day of sorrow, but rather a day of rejoicing, for we will be truly alive in Him. We will be in Christ forever and will be joined with our loved ones in the clouds upon His return (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17). What a party that will be!

Closing Prayer: Loving heavenly Father, You have stored up for me abundant treasures both now and into eternity. Open my eyes to the incredible spiritual blessings You desire to give me every day. May Your strength and mercy be mine as I walk the narrow path with You in my busy, task-filled life. In Jesus' name and for His sake I ask this. Amen.

Closing Hymn: Sing or say together the first and last verses of "What Is the World to Me" (LSB #730; LW #418; TLH #430).

Jan Brunette is a Christian author, speaker, and freelance writer and has been an active member in the LWML for over forty years.



All Things Autumn!

Here are some resources and products that will get you into the lovely autumn season! For those autumn getaways or LWML retreats, we have NEW products to share with you!



NEW Sparkle Luggage Tag

You will always spot your luggage with this durable and attractive sparkle tag. **LWML37011 \$4.99**

Mustard Seed Devotion Packets

Just the right thing to take with you to meetings or retreats. Leave them with hotel or restaurant staff!

Walking with My Lord LWML40205 \$1.50

Living in Prayer LWML40201 \$1.50



NEW Travel Mug

This eye-catching 16 oz. mug holds hot or cold liquids. It's a must for those short and long road trips! **LWML10182 \$9.00**

NEW Pocket Folder

Our lovely pocket folder is great for handouts for a meeting or retreat! Ten folders per package. **LWML11603 \$6.00**

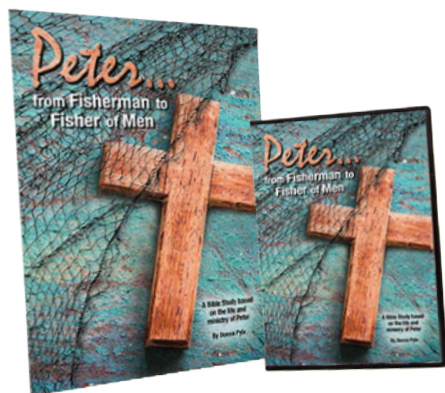


NEW Water Bottle

This beautiful 17 oz. water bottle is great for driving, biking, or walking through the autumn foliage! **LWML10057 \$12.99**

Cardigan Sweater

Ward off those chilly evenings as you enjoy ALL THINGS AUTUMN! No button, nice long length with tie closure. Sizes S-4XL. **LWML10094 Starting at \$45.00**



Where Love Abides is the **NEW** Bible study by Donna Pyle.

It's a wonderful study based on John 15:1-17.

DVD: LWML68936 \$74.99 | Workbook: LWML68937 \$12.99

Peter is another recent Bible study by Donna Pyle, based on the life of Peter. The study promises to put you on the path with him as he walks with our Lord Jesus!

DVD: LWML68934 \$74.99 | Workbook: LWML68935 \$12.99

Place orders at www.lwml.org/store

or by phone at 800.325.3040.

Prices good through December 31, 2018.





Angelina Jauregui and Melissa Salomón next to Deaconess Alma Zamora with her husband, Rev. Juan Zamora. Alma is very interested in forming a society and is already signed up for Jan Brunette's H2H Training, which will be held at their church in October!

LWML is represented at the IV National Hispanic Convention

Angelina Jauregui, LWML Vice President of Gospel Outreach, and Melissa Salomón, Chairman of LWML Heart to Heart Sisters Committee, were honored to represent LWML at the IV National Hispanic Convention held in Houston, Texas, this past July. Angelina and Melissa brought greetings from President Patti to the entire assembly on the first day of the convention. They spoke briefly about the mission of the LWML and its commitment to reaching multicultural women.

Angelina and Melissa presented two conference workshops and shared the new pamphlet on the LWML. They explained: "What is the LWML?" — its mission, the H2H Sisters Program, and its effort to be intentional about inviting and welcoming the participation of multicultural women in our church to be active in LWML. Discussions included information on how the LWML funds mission work and the grant writing process at the district and the national level.

Some women were surprised to hear that every woman of the The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synnod is eligible to participate in the LWML. They commented they didn't know they could be a part of the LWML and had lots of questions about forming their own societies.

Information was shared about understanding the LWML culture and the importance of forming societies, attending district conventions, and experiencing national conventions. Attendees were encouraged to find creative ways to be at the convention in Mobile, Alabama, in 2019.

Hispanic women leaders and deaconesses met after the convention and were encouraged to continue networking. There will be another opportunity next year, October 16–18, in El Paso, Texas, at the Lutheran Hispanic Missionary Institute conference called PALMCON.

Everyone left looking forward to the next National Hispanic Convention to be held in 2021. It is their hope that the LWML President will come to meet the assembly and to bring greetings from the LWML.

Coffee Themed Retreat a "Latte" Fun!

Almost 35 women gathered together to "Sip, Savor, and Drink Deeply" at a coffee retreat held at **Redeemer Lutheran Church in Dickinson, North Dakota** (North Dakota District). Devotional materials written by Deb Burma kept everyone centered around God's Word as they enjoyed food, fun, fellowship, and beautiful prizes. Each attendee was given a purple key chain designed by Megan Fair, an LWML Young Woman Enthusiast, and was sent home with her own vanilla latte mix labeled with a Bible verse and the saying, "Sending You a Latte Love." What a great idea!



Thank you Dorcas Society

The Dorcas Society of **St. Paul Lutheran Church, Ida Grove, Iowa** (Iowa West District), has decided to pack away their quilting supplies and retire after 62 years of active service. Their society began in 1956 with quilting and expanded to include working in service to members of their congregation, local community needs, and world-wide mission projects. President Gwen Pfleeger writes, "We have had many dedicated and devoted members over the years and are sad to retire. We are thankful to have been able to serve as long as we have."

We thank the Dorcas Society of St. Paul Lutheran Church for their many years of service. We hope and pray the Holy Spirit inspires other women to continue to serve as you have done.

LWML Connecting Women for Service

Laura Borley, once a native Long Islander and an active member of LWML, relocated to Pennsylvania about five years ago. One of the things making Laura's transition easier was her membership in the **Philadelphia Zone** (Eastern District) of LWML. At their 2018 Spring Rally, Laura and the other members of the Women of Mt. Calvary and their Lydia Society worked together on an afternoon of multiple service projects. These faith-filled ladies completed 185 port pillows (pillows used to relieve pressure off a patient's medical port or pacemaker); began their quest to make 750 reusable sanitary napkins; and collected many items to be used for hygiene kits to be sent to a representative in Africa. Laura says, "I'm 42 and have been an active member of LWML for as long as I can remember. These women have made me who I am. When I relocated to Pennsylvania, I was thrilled to find the only LCMS church in the county. What a blessing to know they had an LWML!"

Information on port pillows can be found on Pinterest or Etsy. Patterns for reusable sanitary napkins can be found at GAIN, Global Aid Network.



It's About Time!

Time is one of our greatest blessings. Women of the **Iowa East District Williamsburg Zone** recently learned time management skills at their zone rally. If you sometimes feel as though you are juggling too many tasks at one time, LWML has a resource to help you. *Time Management: Manage Yourself, not Your Time!* will help you not only rate the importance of a task, it will also show you six simple steps to manage yourself. Find the resource by typing "Time Management" into the search bar at www.lwml.org.



New Ideas Bring Women Together

Looking for fun new way to encourage women to gather together? Why not try a painting event with a twist? Linda Umoh, LWML president of **Lamb of God Lutheran Church of Flower Mound, Texas** (Texas District), welcomed 70 women, ranging from 8 to 86 years of age, to enjoy a time of painting and camaraderie. Retired art teacher Pat Bockelman supplied the equipment and guidance as the group created beautiful paintings of angels. The paintbrushes glided across the canvas as the society president presented an inspiring message about the biblical importance of angels. This event created a beautiful blend of women of all ages, many creative talents, and an inspiring message about angels. What a great idea!



SPRING 2019 THEME: READY, SET, GO (Celebrating the Young Women of LWML)

Please share your stories and photos of joyful, mission-minded service involving the young women in your congregations with News Editor Linda Guteres: newseditor@lwml.org or 3 Timber Trail, Medford, NY 11763
Deadline: November 15, 2018. **Include:** name, address, phone, and email.



LWML Women Support Women a World Away

The women of **St. Luke, Wauseon, Ohio**, lovingly provided more than four-dozen feminine hygiene kits. Hand-sewn, reusable, flannel pads, along with ladies' panties, were placed into colorful handmade bags. These items were donated to Ministry in Mission (an RSO serving Haiti) to be distributed as part of the I Love My Shepherd's Women-Encouraging-Women Mission Trip in January 2018. Jackie Rychel and Sue Matzke of St. Mark, Chesterland, were part of the team. The kits were shared with girls in the youth group at First Lutheran Church, Jacmel, as well as women and older girls at Raymond Lutheran Church and The Center of Refuge Orphanage.



Quarterly Bible Studies a Blessing

Touchmark Retirement Community in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, is reaping the benefits of *Lutheran Woman's Quarterly* Bible studies through the efforts of **Annette Jarratt** and her husband. Some of Touchmark's residents asked Annette if she would be willing to lead a Bible study, and she said yes, with the help of the LWML's magazine! Meeting twice a month the group averages about eight people who come from a variety of church denominations in the area. Annette says, "The studies have been a God-send for me!"

Left to right: Beverly Mount, Josephine Spencer, Grace Brinkhuis, Mavis Boekhoff, Annette Jarratt, Arlene Matthiesen, Norma Nyhaug, Beverly Jepson, Doris Haber.



Free online Bible Study

A brand-new Bible study, *The Task-Filled Life*, authored by Jan Brunette, will be available online beginning Saturday, October 6. Read more about it on page 22. Find it online by checking LWML's Facebook page, or follow along on the LWML website at www.lwml.org/life.



LWML Providing Hygiene and Relief

The Ladies League of **Christ Lutheran Church and School** in **Stevensville, Michigan**, worked hard assembling 120 hygiene kits for Lutheran World Relief. In the great automotive tradition of Michigan, congregational members worked together in an assembly-line manner after worship on Sunday, April 15, National Volunteer Day. The supplies for the hygiene kits were purchased with proceeds from two Lenten suppers served by the Ladies League earlier in the year.

Busy Hands, Caring Hearts

Zion Lutheran Church's, LWML (Texas District), has served the Lord with gladness this past year by spearheading three projects benefitting the Ysleta Lutheran Mission. Ysleta Lutheran Mission is dedicated to assisting those in need in El Paso and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. The three projects included a collection of new toys for Ysleta's Christmas Gift Distribution project, a Lenten Food Drive to assist in their weekly food distribution, and collecting backpacks and school supplies to assist them in their distribution to children in need.



Through the efforts of Zion's LWML and the generous support from Thrivent Action Team grants, many people will be richly blessed by these great projects. Lydia Williams, Zion's LWML president says, "It has been a busy and very productive year! We look forward to assisting the Ysleta Lutheran Mission in their outreach projects again next year, as well as other mission projects!"



Nebraska LWML Sews Love

The women of the **Nebraska LWML Districts** came together to "Seek and Serve" people in their surrounding communities and as far away as Iraq and Poland. Armed with His Word in their hearts, they searched for ways they might serve. Just this past year, they made pillowcases for nursing

homes, local hospitals, and military personnel. They also made Memory blankets with the intention of gifting a blanket and card to every LCMS pastor in their district. Some of these blankets were distributed at the Nebraska North Convention. Other blankets will be distributed to the Nebraska South Convention later this year.

In June, one of their member's grandsons, Archie, was born prematurely. Surrounded by his loving family, Archie lived for only four days. The family was given two blankets, in the hope that these gifts would bring some comfort to the family. Katy Gifford, President of Nebraska South District received the following note:

Thank you for the little blankets to hold. They are so sweet, and words that came with them are priceless. I know it will help Nathan and Michelle. We are so glad that we could meet our sweet Archie and spend some time with him. He was very loved during his short time on earth. Marie (Please let all the ladies know.)

Katy writes: "What a blessing it is that we get to be God's hands in a time of such sorrow. If there is any way we can help other districts work on this project, please ask. We'd love to share."



LWML Service Member

Charlotte (Svoma) Hamilton, wanting to do her part, joined the United States Marine Corps in January 1966, after her brother Roger was deployed to Vietnam. Upon completion of basic training, she was transferred to Marine Corps

Schools at Camp Lejeune for computer training and was promoted to Lance Corporal. While stationed at the Marine Corps Base at Quantico, Virginia, with Headquarters Battalion, Charlotte worked with keypunch and verifier machines, collators, and a HUGE mainframe computer.

Charlotte was released from active duty with an Honorable Discharge in August 1967, but continued to work as a GS-3 until the birth of her daughter in February 1968. Charlotte states she was always treated with consideration, understanding, and respect. She believes serving our country builds character and self-confidence, self-discipline, self-respect, and develops teamwork. Charlotte feels it was a great privilege and blessing to have served our country!

Charlotte was confirmed at St. John's Lutheran in Ladysmith, Wisconsin, and is currently a member of Faith Lutheran in Menomonie. She is active in LWML, has held several offices in church, and attended four Wisconsin North district conventions.



One of the many beautiful district LWML convention banners I was blessed to see. This one, from the LWML North Wisconsin District, seemed a perfect fit for the theme of this issue.



My first time visiting Niagara Falls!



Donna Pyle, Nancy Beckcom, and Linda Gage share the excitement of the new LWML Bible study, *Where Love Abides*, at the LWML Texas District convention.

FROM PRESIDENT PATTI

Overflowing Blessings

The short devotion in this issue, “Showered With Blessings,” quotes 1 Timothy 1:14: *The grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.* Overflowing blessings are what I have witnessed this summer. I’d like to share some of them with you.

I have been blessed to have attended six district LWML conventions: Oklahoma, Gulf States, Eastern, Iowa East, North Wisconsin, and Texas as of this writing. The Florida-Georgia convention is coming up in September. It will be the last district convention I will attend as LWML President, which makes me a little sad because going to these district conventions (10 in 2016!) is one of the best things about being LWML President!

Visiting the districts has been a blessing to me, personally, by encouraging me as I see God working through our LWML family to reach so many people for Jesus. Whether it’s through Bible study or through works of mercy, giving aid, fellowship or enjoyment, we share our blessings with one another. Our fountain of blessings overflows to others.

Summer is also the time when many of us experience God’s blessings in the form of nature. Spending time at the lake this year has refreshed me. God’s blessings have included eating homegrown tomatoes, okra, and corn. Going to Niagara Falls for the first time was amazing. What power in the water! It reminds me of the power of water with the Word in our Baptism.

Scuba diving in the Caribbean and seeing the incredible variety of God’s creatures demonstrates how He blesses us with things to enjoy.

My grandchildren attended Camp Lutheroma, our church camp in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. It is another summer blessing where dedicated young people work as counselors to help make a difference in young lives in so many ways!

Blessings in God’s Word also happened this summer. Our new DVD Bible study, *Where Love Abides*, by Donna Pyle came out in July. We are blessed to have a generous donor who helped make this study happen financially as well as blessed to have a devoted Bible student like Donna to write and produce it. You will be blessed as you follow this study based on John 15. LWML is blessed, and I am happy to say that we take seriously how those blessings can be turned over to others.

As we approach the season of harvest and thanksgiving, we thank and praise God for our overflowing blessings. Let’s share those blessings to God’s Glory.

Patti Kess



Lutheran
Women
in Mission

www.lwml.org | Fall 2018



*For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence,
for my hope is from him.
He only is my rock and my salvation,
my fortress; I shall not be shaken.
On God rests my salvation and my glory;
my mighty rock, my refuge is God.
Trust in him at all times, O people;
pour out your heart before him;
God is a refuge for us (Psalm 62:5–8).*

LWML SUNDAY 2018

Our Rest in a Changing World

Need a break from this busy life and always wondering what might happen next? The theme, “Our Rest in a Changing World,” from Psalm 62, will take you through worship to the sermon, “The Rest We Share,” giving pause and insight in seeking that rest in God.



2018 LWML Sunday materials, authored by Rev. Ken Hennings, LCMS Texas District President, are available now. To ensure availability and delivery, all LWML Sunday orders should have been placed before September 1, 2018.

Contact the LWML office at 1-800-252-LWML (5965), or visit www.lwml.org/lwml-sunday for free downloads of LWML Sunday materials.