

LUTHERAN WOMAN'S QUARTERLY

SPRING 2018

ON THE COVER:
A MOTHER'S PRAYER,
A FAMILY'S RESPONSE

BIBLE STUDIES:
COMFORT YE,
COMFORT YE,
MY PEOPLE

**STRUGGLING WITH
THE INFLUENCE OF
TECHNOLOGY**
PRAYER GIVES
MY LIFE BALANCE
LA ORACIÓN LE DA
EQUILIBRIO A MI VIDA

**MISSION
GRANTS:**
SPREADING
THE GOSPEL
WORLDWIDE



I'd like you to meet the *Quarterly* family. We share a remarkable bond of love and friendship as we serve the Lord with gladness and joy. We carry each other's burdens, celebrate the blessings He brings into our lives, and pray earnestly and unceasingly for one another.

What you may not know is that every one of us has lived a year gone by of unspeakable challenges, tears, and loss. Becky and Sharon share their stories with you in this issue.

Through all that has happened in the lives of my *Quarterly* sisters these past months, we turn to the LORD God to sustain us and carry us. We hold fast to His promises. We love to work for Him — to share His Good News through the pages of this magazine.

Yet we are keenly aware there are relentless forces — the world, self, and the devil — at work daily to discourage and dishearten us, creating seemingly insurmountable road blocks in our way as we walk the *LWQ* motto: "Knowing Christ and Making Him Known."

As I adapt to the transition of living alone, sometimes it seems as if each day I am waiting for the next shoe to drop. An LWML sister-friend who recently lost her husband shared these words: "Even when everything else seems to be crumbling down around us and Satan is throwing everything at us he can, he can't take away the hope we have in Jesus Christ."

I know I have asked our readers to pray for the *LWQ* staff in the past, but may I be so bold to ask you to pray daily for us and in a specific way?



Please pray for God's mercy and protection over each one of the *Quarterly* staff and our families so we may carry out His work, which is our heart's desire, faithfully and with good courage. Q

Nancy

Nancy Graf Peters, Editor-in-Chief



Children in Lebanon are eager to receive and read books about Jesus through an LWML Mission Grant. Learn more on page 14.

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AVAILABLE ONLINE

Leader guide available for Comfort Ye, Comfort Ye, My People, with list of sample actions of comfort.

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



The Gift of Family By Shari Miller

Our children would return from college, burst through the door, and exuberantly shout: “It was such a long trip. It’s good to be home.”

Home is the place where family is. As God’s own dearly loved children through Baptism by the power of the Spirit, we have faith in our Savior Jesus Christ and all that He accomplished for us through His perfect life, suffering, death, and resurrection. As daughters and sons of the King, we are forgiven and free to live as brothers and sisters in Christ. Jesus promises in Matthew 18:20: “*For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.*” What a gift to be in the family of God!

We are gifted with faith and we want to pass that legacy of faith on to those we love. Paul speaks to Timothy: *I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well* (2 Timothy 1:3). Lois and Eunice are a model for those in the family of God — sharing the faith with those we love and celebrating our new life in Christ.

When we have disappointments or failures in life, the family of God loves, consoles, bolsters, encourages, and forgives one another. Paul exhorts us: *Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony* (Colossians 3:12–14).

How can you serve in the family of God? Jesus says in Matthew 20:26b–28: “*But whoever would*

be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” The reason for our service is our Servant-Savior Jesus. His love motivates us by the power of the Spirit to serve those in the family of God and beyond.

We can share the Good News with those we meet while on our errands. We can cheerfully serve the homeless and others in need by providing physical and spiritual help and resources. We can mentor newer members of God’s family and help them feel at home. We might open our homes to small group Bible study, as the Holy Spirit builds faith through the Word. We are privileged to identify areas of service and then fill that niche with our God-given talents and abilities. What’s on your “to-do” list today?

The family of God hopes for an eternal home and celebration. Through him [Jesus] we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God (Romans 5:2). Jesus promises to take us home to live with Him forever.

Home is the place where family is. As God’s dear children because of Jesus, we anticipate the day when we can burst through the door of death, stand before the Lamb, and exuberantly shout: “It’s good to be home!” **Q**

Shari Miller, wife of Rev. Larry, is a freelance author and musician living in Helena, Montana, and is the LWML Montana District President. She has written numerous articles and studies for the LWML. She and her husband co-authored the marriage devotional/activities book entitled, Together is Better (available from LWML).



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Knowing Christ & Making Him Known

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Praying the Psalms

A prayer inspired by Psalm 16 *By Sheila Lutz*

Father, to You I offer
my heart-felt praise for
ordering and preserving my
life and for showing me I
can rejoice in my family —
even in times of trial.

You blessed me with Christian
parents. Thank You for always being
in my life. Others who love You
and praise You did not have that
childhood. Thank You for the many
experiences on the paths of life in
Christ — all part of life in Your family.

In marriage, You gave me a loving,
Christian husband who still cares
for me and holds me dear. How my
praises ascend to You for that life.
Others praise You as deeply but
have had a difficult path in marriage
— or are not married. You are their
strength and comfort. Your path for
each of them kept them with You,
the One Who holds them dear as
the bride of Christ.

The children You gave me have
been a joy and a struggle, a pleasant
path and a sometimes road of
sorrow. Your Word ever counsels
me as I parent the tiny ones — as
I parent the teens — as I parent
the budding adults with their own
families — as I parent adults. In
sickness and in health, You preserve
them as my family. Teach me to be
a vital family member — no matter
my stage or age. You are my refuge
when I fail; help me set Your Word
always before me so I can recognize

the fullness and joyfulness of my
beautiful gifts from You. Questions
and doubts always arise, but, with
You, I'm never shaken.

You are my chosen portion — my
cup of life when life is ending for
one I hold dear. You hold my lot.
You hold her lot. Though my heart
is aching because she doesn't
recognize me, You chose this
excellent one for my family, You still
fill me with love and delight and
memories. Help me to honor You
and her during these last days.

When I am ill or become the one
who needs care, let my heart
remain glad. Be my constant
companion as I go through the
pain. Let my whole being rejoice,
knowing it is secure in Your hands
— never abandoned by You.

You have filled my life with family
that I can celebrate as You do. In
this ever-changing life, You are
changeless, You are joy, and You
are love. You have chosen me to
be part of Your family — the good
family — for there is no good apart
from You. In sorrow or joy, I can see
Your richness, for, secure in Your
presence and held by Your might,
I experience the pleasures of Your
joy in my earthly family. I praise and
thank You that it was Your pleasure
to make me part of this family and,
through my salvation by Your Son,
of Your family who will live with You
forevermore. Amen. *Q*



CELEBRATING
75 years



THEN & NOW LWML Family

The definition of family has expanded in the 75 years of LWML history. Nuclear families were the norm then; now blended families, single-parent families, and multicultural families are common. Additionally, we also have an LWML family, with members sharing their love of LWML through generations. All support the organization's basic purpose: **MISSIONS!**



THEN — AND NOW!

Clara Schmitt, LWML's first president [pictured above], opened her home to five grandchildren after her daughter's husband passed away. Her grandson, Rev. Kenneth Young, recalls Clara working every day in her husband's business and taking care of the family, all while doing her volunteer work with the LWML. Alice Decker [left], Rev. Young's daughter (Clara's great-granddaughter), carried the 75th Anniversary banner and gave the opening prayer as Lutheran Women in Mission gathered at the convention in Albuquerque this past June. She has served as a missionary in Guatemala and Haiti. Continuing with the family dedication to mission service, Alice's daughter, Nicole Boeder (Clara's great-great granddaughter), served in South Africa, Poland, Jamaica, Guatemala, and Kenya.



Current LWML President Patti Ross was introduced to the LWML by her mom, Anita Mahnken. Patti, like Clara so many years before, enjoys spending time with her grandchildren.

"My family has always been very close — loving, supporting, and enjoyable! I find those traits also in my LWML family, and I hope you do too!"

LWML President, Patti Ross, 2015-19



Ida Mall, LWML President 1991-1995, was appointed LWML Public Relations Director in 1983, a position her daughter, Michelle Zollinger, currently occupies.

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



A Mother's Prayer, A Family's Response

By Becky Wehrspann



Parents, children, siblings. Big and small. Close-knit or spread across the miles. We are family, attached to one another physically, emotionally, and spiritually. We are held together by God's mercy and grace at the center of our lives. We celebrate milestones, we create traditions, and we share memories. My husband, Ben, and I have been married for 17 years, and are raising three children, so we've celebrated, created, and shared some of life's most cherished moments together.

Two years ago, we made the decision to demolish our 140-year-old home and rebuild on the same property. We were completely out of our comfort zone taking on such a large project, but we knew it was in the best interest of our family. We prayed for God's guidance, and we were thankful the process went basically according to plan and budget.

What I wasn't prepared for was the homesick feeling in my new home, or the desire and longing for the familiar of our old house. During all this change, we tried to keep some of our family traditions alive. Slowly the bare walls were filled with family photos and special artwork. The beds were covered with handmade quilts from grandmothers and aunts. We took camping trips, we planted our garden, we went fishing and hiking, and hit the bike trails — all things our family enjoys doing together.

Less than two months after moving into our new home, we were hiking a trail we'd been on numerous times when our 8-year-old daughter, Marta, fell approximately 60 feet from a rocky ledge. She suffered a traumatic head injury with three skull fractures. She was air lifted to a Level 1 pediatric trauma center 60 miles from our home. She underwent emergency surgery where they removed a third of her skull to allow her brain to swell. She was heavily sedated and in a medically induced coma for eight days.

The doctors were optimistic because of her age and overall health, but no one honestly knew if, when, or how she would wake up. Remarkably, there were no other injuries to her body. The surgeons were baffled, and searched and scanned for internal damage. Ben and I prayed words of thanksgiving that God had kept the rest of her body safe from harm. But we also thought God had possibly spared her other organs to donate if her brain was no longer functioning. We asked God for His mercy and guidance.

Almost immediately, I began an online journal to keep others informed of Marta's condition and our prayer requests. It quickly spread around the country and world.



May 28, 2017

We know so many of you are holding our sweet baby girl in prayer, and we are so very grateful for that. Please, please keep praying. God has blessed us with so many friends and family who love our sweet girl as much as we do. We know that God's holy angels are watching over her. We know she is a child of God, and He is mighty and powerful.

During this time, we waited and prayed and were overwhelmed by the support from our friends, family, and extended community of strangers. We learned medical jargon and increased our vocabulary ten-fold. We held vigil at Marta's bed nearly around the clock, praying for God to spare her life and allow her to remain with us on Earth.

May 30, 2017

Psalm 118:1 Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever! We are in another day of waiting — but Marta's levels continue to remain stable for the most part. The doctors and nurses have been fabulous, and we are so thankful for their wonderful love and care for our sweet Marta. Her EEG has shown no signs of seizure — praise God! She had a follow-up CT scan early this morning that was basically unchanged from the scan post-surgery — praise God!

We witnessed firsthand how God brings people to just the right place at the right time, never by coincidence. God's perfect timing was evident to us from the very beginning. There were trained medical personnel on the hiking trail. Our family friends who were hiking with us provided help in ways we couldn't even have imagined. Our pastor was already headed in the direction of the hospital when his wife received our plea for prayers. He was there before Marta arrived on the helicopter, and he stayed with us that day and night until the surgeon had given us the report after Marta's 5-hour surgery. We were never left alone.



June 2, 2017

Isaiah 41:10 *So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.* This is a very moment-by-moment time right now, and we know that the road to recovery will be slow, long, and difficult. But we also know God already has the path laid out for us and He is guiding each of us every step along the way. It is all done in God's time. He is in control. I am humbled to be Marta's mom and to walk this rocky road with her. She is my precious, sweet baby girl on this earth, but she is God's Own child forever.

Our family came from near and far — just five days prior to the accident, my parents had moved from Champaign, Illinois, to Grinnell, Iowa — now they were an hour away instead of five. Family members from California, Georgia, and Texas came to be with us. We benefited from the generous donations of others for food, a place to stay, and a safe place to welcome guests through the Ronald McDonald House. We had pastors from our district visit us. God provided for all our needs. We called upon Him in fervent prayer — pleas of mercy and healing, of a miracle for our precious daughter.

June 6, 2017

John 14:13–14 *"Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it."* God has given us a great gift in His command to pray. He wants us to pray with confidence and trust. A friend's daughter recently asked her mom how long Marta would have to be in the hospital. Her mom answered that it might take most of the summer for Marta to heal enough to come home. During her prayers that night the little girl asked God to make Marta better in one week! May we all have that trust and confidence that God CAN do all things — all we need to do is ask!

For eight years, we were a family of five. We suddenly became part of a hospital family, especially in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) with our nurses, doctors, and other care team members. Additional support, prayers, and kindnesses began immediately from our church family, our Lutheran school family, my LWML family, and our community. We covered the white board in her hospital room with Bible passages. We hung cards and pictures sent by friends and strangers on her window. We sang songs and hymns around her bed. We became part of a bigger family of God through the prayer chains of countless congregations around the United States and the world. Our Lutheran school held a prayer vigil. God opened doors of communication between family members who hadn't spoken to each other in several years. It was a time of deep emotional heartache, but also a time of healing and immersion in God's Word.

June 7, 2017

Proverbs 3:5–6 *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.* Our morning began very somberly. I sent out a plea for continued prayers, and within minutes

your messages began to flood my phone and Facebook. It was an amazing calm knowing so many were continuing to keep our family upheld in prayer. I knew in my mind that God was taking good care of us, but my trust had turned to earthly things — things I could see and hold and measure. And then on rounds we were given a new hope. The team was ready to pull Marta's breathing tube. She's passed her tests with flying colors, and the doctor felt this was the appropriate next step instead of going back to more sedation. Praise God! What a difference a few hours and some plastic tubing makes! There were still bumps in the road this afternoon, but we feel like a giant hurdle has been crossed. She made improvements today we didn't think we could expect to see for weeks. God has answered so many prayers, and we are forever grateful for each of you who are walking this road with us.



And then, we were suddenly part of a family of “survivors” as we heard stories and details of others who had suffered similar head injuries and recovered. God provided hope for us amid our darkness when those stories were shared, encouraging us to trust in Him for healing and recovery.

June 10, 2017

Colossians 3:15–17 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. I am so very grateful for all those friends and family members who are showering us with prayer, and those who are sharing their favorite Bible passages with us. It is of great comfort to rely on God's Word for all that we need — for those reminders of His unending love and promises of His perfect will. We are given the opportunity to teach and admonish one another, to sing praises together, to pray together — all with thanksgiving and glory to God our Father and Lord Jesus Christ. Being able to share this journey with family, friends, and strangers has had a tremendous impact on me, as a mom, and on our family. We know we are not in this journey alone — God has placed each of you to travel with us, to pray for us, to uphold and sustain us.

During the third week in the PICU, Marta made steady improvements. She went from sitting on the edge of the bed with four adults' help to riding in a wheelchair to walking in the hallways with assistance in a matter of days. That week brought a new rollercoaster ride — decisions about the next steps in Marta's care, including follow-up surgery to replace her bone flap, and deciding where she would receive in-patient rehabilitation. We prayed fervently and asked others around us to do so as well.

June 16, 2017

Isaiah 55:6–9 Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. We are certain God has been — and continues to be — in control of every situation. Nothing could have ever prepared me for what we've faced the past three

weeks. And even as I write that, I know that God has prepared our family 'for such a time as this' by giving us the faith we have and for putting us in a community full of the exact kind of support we need. All along, He knows what is coming next, even when it seems so out of control to me and the rest of the world. So many times in the past three weeks, I've felt completely in the dark — dark moments of despair and sorrow, darkness of the unknown, darkness at whatever hurdle is placed in front of us or of Marta. Thankfully, those dark times don't last too long, as friends and family members have reached out to be lights to us — showing us the blessings of love and friendship, holding us up in prayer, bringing gifts and donations to make sure our daily needs are met.

Nineteen days after arriving at the University of Iowa Stead Family Children's Hospital, Marta was released to an in-patient rehabilitation center just 15 miles from our home. Her doctors estimated she could be there for two months. Her therapy was rigorous, but there was also time for some fun. We got to meet the three flight crew members who air lifted her to Iowa City. We met Gracie Comfort Dog when she and her handler came for a visit. Our first outing outside of hospital walls was to a mini golf course where Marta did a great job navigating her new self in public. Just two weeks after our arrival — five weeks after her accident — she and I were on our way home.



June 28, 2017

Isaiah 43:1–2, 4–5 But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: 'Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. Because you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you, I give men in return for you, peoples in exchange for your life. Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from

the west I will gather you. These verses from Isaiah were sent to me less than 24 hours after Marta's accident by a dear LWML sister in New York. Ben and I have known all along — even before the accident — that each of our children is a gift from God. We are all God's children, created in His image, He has called us by name, we belong to Him. I pleaded with Him in fervent prayer to spare her life here on Earth, for at least a little while longer. And for a reason I do not know or understand, God heard my prayers and the prayers of thousands others, and He did spare her life. I am thankful that God has entrusted Ben and me to continue raising our daughter here. He has given us a special gift in Marta — He has called us out of the fire, He has been with us every step of the way — just as He promised — and has given us new hope as His children. We belong to Him.

After returning home, at the encouragement from several friends and family members, we began family counseling through Lutheran Family Services. It was an opportunity for us to talk about what happened and each of our roles in the event — and in the healing process. We've met several times as a family, and as individuals, and Ben and I as a couple. We are each working through the trauma of the accident, the five weeks of being separated from one another and our home, and the after-effects of all that has happened.

June 29, 2017

Isaiah 40:30-31 *Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.* I have been weary. I have been faint. I have felt very weak. I have been exhausted. Thankfully, I have not had to rely on my own strength to get through the past five weeks. Waiting on the Lord is not easy, certainly not when we are already feeling weary and exhausted. But being submissive to His will has taught me so many things about being a wife, mom, friend — and most especially a child of God. He gives me all that I need, when I need it. He supplies me with His good and gracious gifts — everything I have is from Him. He has showered us with blessing after blessing. Now we can have the strength and endurance to run the race set before us (Hebrews 12:1).

The fear, anger, and pain sometimes still surface — some days it's more than I can bear. Other days have a more normal feeling to them. My heart aches for the life we used to have — the accident and aftermath will be a part of our lives forever — but making decisions to move forward is to everyone's benefit. We have

encountered great change in the past year. Even so, our loving heavenly Father reminds us the *word of the Lord stands forever* (Isaiah 40:8).

We are now several months post-accident. Marta continues to heal. She had surgery in August to replace the piece of skull with an implant. She returned to school in September and is doing well in third grade. She completed physical and occupational therapy in late November, and receives speech therapy once a week, working on multi-tasking skills and developing tools to help increase her focus and concentration. She is a miracle.

And while I didn't make it to the LWML Convention in Albuquerque, so many of my LWML brothers and sisters brought the convention to me — through live-stream video, texts and phone calls, and most especially through the pictures from our *Quarterly* booth of so many holding us in prayer. God provided a means for me to be filled through His Word and Spirit, thousands of miles from my LWML family.



July 14, 2017

An open letter to my dear, faithful readers — Many of you have told me that you think of Marta or our family many times a day. I want you to know that so many times in the past several weeks, I think about you: who you are, where you are from, how you heard about Marta and our family, who you have shared her story with, why you keep coming back to read the updates, and the list goes on. There are thousands of you and only one of me — and yet, I feel like we are all friends here; family even. I have shared some of our most personal struggles with you, and you have seen us at probably the absolute worst. But you continue to pray, you continue to offer hope and encouragement, you share our story and ask others to pray too. I am grateful for your prayers and for your genuine love and care for our daughter. God bless all of you! Q

Becky Wehrspann and her family are members of Grace Lutheran Church in Jesup, Iowa. She has served in her local LWML society, on the LWML Iowa East District board, and as Features Editor for the Quarterly. The full story of Marta's injury, care, and recovery can be found at www.caringbridge.org/visit/martawehrspann.

Spotlight on a Young Woman



Stephanie Edgar, LWML Montana District Young Woman Representative, pictured at the 2017 LWML Convention in Albuquerque with parents, Kristi and Robert Roegner, and her son, Dakota.

Favorite Bible verse: *Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see* (Hebrews 11:1).

Why LWML? Both of my parents have been involved, and I knew about LWML, but it wasn't something that tugged at my heart strings. When I taught in Perryville, Missouri, I was asked to be a YWR to the district convention — to meet with other young women who had a desire to know more and had hearts for missions — and later I was asked if I would serve as LWML Missouri District webmaster. I was also blessed to use the gifts God has given me to serve as the LWML Montana District web coordinator and to serve as a YWR for the 2017 LWML Convention in Albuquerque.

Current LWML grant closest to your heart: #5 — Current Missionary Need. I served as a foreign missionary and greatly understand the need for financial help. Thankfully, I was very blessed by the school I served in Taiwan, but so many other missionaries are not as fortunate.

Convention Highlights: Seeing the delegates, rather than break the tie for the last grant to receive funds, vote in both grants — an amazing outward show of faith, “*being sure of what you hope for and certain of what you do not see*.” I also really liked the mariachi band. Seeing the Senior Pastoral Counselor (Rev. Roegner), who just happened to be my dad, up and dancing — priceless!

Advice for future YWRs: Step out in faith; get involved with the LWML. If there doesn't seem to be a place for you, step out in faith; make one. If something isn't right, step out in faith; make a change for a different scenario for future YWRs. Step out in faith; work with more seasoned LWML'ers. So many of them want younger women to be involved. Step out in faith; encourage your friends to be involved, no matter how busy, how many kids, or how clueless they are about LWML. Just take that first step!

But I trust
in your
unfailing
love;
my heart
rejoices
in your
salvation.
Psalm 13:5

As we face our daily tasks, we may become overwhelmed. At times like this, we need to remind ourselves to trust in God's unfailing love. Be confident and bold in prayer!

A common theme in the concluding verses of many Psalms is confidence in knowing that God hears our prayers. Psalm 13:5 is one such verse. The Lord promises to hear us and, in faith, we trust His promise. We can rejoice that He has given us faith and salvation. We will live in His presence forever.



Why Our Family?

By Betty Marschner

I watched our 43-year-old son scurrying across the dining area in the nursing home he now calls home. For a moment I rejoiced in that now he was able to get around with his own power as weeks earlier he had to be taken everywhere. It wasn't more than a moment later I felt sadness that he had to be in this place so early in his life, and a part of me once again asked, "Why Brian? Why our family?"

This is not an uncommon question for our family to ask. From our first child, born many years ago with a rare achondroplastic skeletal disease, to finding out recently that our second grandchild has hearing deficits needing special services, we have asked "why?"

Encountering unexpected trials within our family actually has gotten easier as we go through them. Dealing with the first set of serious health concerns we faced in our daughter brought with it a real sense of denial. "How could two perfectly normal adults have such a rare disease in a child?"

When Brian became ill with a deadly leukemia, we wondered if we did rile up God's anger against sin in our lives. We were once told we were under the devil's spell. This only brought us more despair, worry, and depression.

It was sometime after Brian's first set of Gran Mal seizures due to earlier cranial radiation that we began to mature in our faith.

Yes, we still get angry. When Brian succumbed to a massive hemorrhagic stroke, resulting in right side paralysis and inability to speak, we were angry. Many choices needed to be made

as to rehabilitation and a nursing facility. Some of us were looking forward to his homecoming, hoping it would be soon, yet others were less enthusiastic. Could we be involved in so much daily care in our home?

Through all this, we realized that, yes, we are all sinners and we deserve God's wrath because of our sins. Psalm 130:3 reminds us: *If you, oh Lord, should mark iniquities, Oh Lord, who could stand?* However, because Jesus sacrificed Himself for our sins on the cross — because of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ — we have a sure promise. Jesus tells us in John 3:16: *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."*

We will find trials in our lives, but the Son of God can be glorified through them. We can use these infirmities to give God glory for His sustaining love, and we can help others through similar trials.

Apostle Peter writes in 1 Peter 1:6: *In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith — more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire — may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.* So now we can ask, "Why not our family?" **Q**

Betty Marschner, active in her local and district LWML, freely shares how life's greatest struggles can bring the biggest growth of faith through God's mercy and grace.



Tales of an LWML Man By Don Lutz

I have been a trailing spouse to conventions from Portland to Pittsburgh and several points in between. I have made friends, shared hugs, and helped serve alongside several committees, both district and national. I have formed relationships with fellow Lutherans from various walks of life and countries. The greatest impact for me, nonetheless, has been to witness the dedication, devotion, and service of women on a mission, Lutheran Women in Mission.

As the husband to a devoted LWML'er, I have seen first-hand what LWML can and does do. I am head-over-heals for the LWML — and sometimes heels-over-head.

Growing up in the LCMS, I knew of the LWML but, in the eyes of a youth, they were the church ladies who always seemed to be doing something to keep the church working smoothly — taking care of the altar, sewing quilts, staffing the kitchen. I don't remember hearing much about the LWML except on LWML Sunday. My mother was active in LWML, but I still didn't know the full extent of the impact and reach of the organization. That all changed after I got married.

Shortly after Sheila and I got married, we moved to Pekin, near my home congregation in rural Green Valley, Illinois. Sheila was soon involved with the church ladies. As she became more invested in LWML, my education on what all they do began in earnest. Now, the work that the

church ladies did and still do in my congregation is important, but I found that there is so much more. The work done through the mite offerings is phenomenal, and the avenues available to the women of the LCMS to serve God's kingdom is extensive and varied. As a lay man, I was just a little envious of the opportunities to serve and lead through the LWML.

My education was far from done — I was only beginning to learn about the scope of the LWML.

Sheila was serving on a national committee and needed some help with her booth at a convention. She convinced me to come along. The next thing I knew, I was witness to the amazing generosity of the ladies as they brought their Gifts from the Heart and nearly blocked a large hallway with donations of clothes, blankets, diapers, and other supplies. I helped sort and count (you always want it counted) for hours but, eventually, they needed to be packed. There weren't enough boxes to hold it all. I was tasked with visiting all the booths in search of boxes, but even those were not adequate.

Soon I found myself literally heels over head, diving into dumpsters to salvage any cardboard boxes that had been tossed out and patching them into usable containers. Some had as much duct tape (finally, something a man can relate to) as cardboard when used. By the end of the convention, I was on a first name basis with the kitchen staff, security, and

continued on page 13



God Opens Eyes of the Kuranko

By Beth Heiney

The Family of God is amazing! We learn that just about every time we host a team from the U.S. here on our home turf in Guinea, West Africa, where we've served for the past 22 years. This past November we were privileged to once again host an LWML eyeglass team from MOST Ministries. Seven very experienced sisters in Christ arrived in Conakry, our capital, early in the month. God was about to use the next week and a half to glorify His Name in amazing ways!

We'd planned to visit three strategic areas in which our church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Guinea (EELG is our French acronym), is at work. We'd let MOST know ahead of time that this would be a tough trip. The roads around that area of the country, known as the "Forest Region," are some of the worst. We weren't sure about housing, only that there would be a place to sleep each night. There would be little to no electricity, flushing toilets, internet, or running water — all those things Americans are kind of addicted to! But we promised that there would be a very positive eternal impact on each area. This was a great opportunity to help the church in this part of the world.

After a day to rest and repack in Conakry we headed out. The EELG, with the help of Risen Savior Lutheran Church in Wichita, Kansas, now has two missionaries that have been sent outside their home areas to begin ministry. We would be visiting those two areas as well as another area where LCMS work really started years ago. But I want to focus on one in particular.

James M. has been with the Lutheran Church for many years. He was a refugee from the horrible civil war in Sierra Leone, came over to Guinea, and met some of our Lutheran

evangelists. He learned very quickly, and this past year was ordained as a Lutheran minister. James is a Kuranko (koo-'ron-ko) and has a heart for his people. He could have returned to his home country a long time ago but decided that he would not return until he saw an active church planted among the Kuranko people here in Guinea.



James began making visits into the Kuranko villages but came up against a lot of resistance. After a while, James began to get the full story of what had happened in that area. Some years ago, a local Christian group visited many of these villages with a big evangelism campaign. At the end of their presentation, they asked who was interested in becoming

Christian and some people raised their hands. However, there was no follow up and no teaching. After the team left, those that raised their hands were left in the lurch, made to look like fools. This pretty much inoculated the area against Christianity.

After his training, James approached us with the idea of moving his family into the Kuranko area to continue the work he had started among these unreached people. We've had a heart for Kurankos for many years as well, so agreed to pray about where God might be leading. Right after that conversation we were approached by Risen Savior. They were looking for a project that would involve reaching an unreached people group! God seemed to be leading the two together, and a 3-year program was set up to get James established in the area and provide funds for him to be able to support himself and his family once the project is finished.

It's been tough going for James and his family. Satan is not happy when Christians start interfering in his territory, and he let it be known! Upon arriving in his new village

James was informed that he could live there and plant churches elsewhere, but he was not to plant churches there! He's struggled with family issues himself. His son had an eye injury that threatened his sight. But he's worked hard to show the love of Jesus all over that area, reaching out to the sick and providing other unmet needs. And he was eventually able to plant churches in other villages.

Enter the MOST team!

Our visit there was not without its bumps and bruises. On day two the truck with all our glasses and other supplies broke down, causing a two-hour delay. Because of the location of the villages deep in the bush, we had to sleep about two hours away from the villages, which meant a daily four-hour drive back and forth on top of the six-hour clinic. Our ladies were incredible, however! They kept working well into the night and never had a cross word for anyone. At every clinic, we started with the message that physical eyesight is important to us, but someday that will end when our eyes close for eternity. We need to know Jesus so that we can spend our eternity with Him!

The reports since that team visit have been exciting! Immediately after the team left, James's village chief said that he is welcome to plant churches there. Because of the work James has done and the visit of this team, the people have seen that our church is serious and is not going to leave them without guidance again. This past Christmas Day, James baptized 31 people in several villages and expects many more. God is blessing James's faithfulness and perseverance, and definitely used this MOST team to open doors that were previously shut.

God can use you, dear sister, no matter your situation! What I didn't mention about this LWML team that made such a difference? Their ages ranged from 55 to 74! Don't ever say that God can't use you. All you need to do is be willing and available! He can do the rest, and He will! The difficult things fade quickly, but there's nothing like knowing that God has used you for His eternal purposes. Just say YES! [Q](#)

Beth and husband, Tim, serve through Global Lutheran Outreach (GLO).



Older customers are often the most appreciative since they've usually struggled a long time with poor eyesight. This man was leaping with joy at being able to see!



LWML Man continued

several display vendors. I was proud of the work the LWML Human Care Committee was doing and pleased to be a part of it.

Since then, I have worked in the LWML store, cut material for cancer victims' head coverings, and greeted people who stopped by the *Lutheran Woman's Quarterly* booth. You may have received a bookmark from me if you were at the convention in Albuquerque last summer.

Going to the conventions had another effect on me. As I visited the other booths, I learned about the wide range of service opportunities available through the LCMS and its agencies. Seeing this inspired me to organize mission teams, reaching out to our local community and beyond. We have served our Illinois neighbors in Pekin, Morton, Springfield, and Peoria, as well as Biloxi, New Orleans, Cedar Rapids, and the Ysleta Lutheran Mission in El Paso.

Who knew that attending a convention could have such a long-lasting impact? I am grateful to the LWML and thankful for all the work they do, the doors they open, and the faith they live out every day, every year, through every mite and every act of selfless faith. Witnessing, supporting, and sometimes helping my wife's service in the LWML has been a fun-filled, eye-opening, life-changing ride. I don't see that ride, be it head-over-heels or heels-over-head, changing anytime soon. [Q](#)



Don Lutz is a life-long member of St. John's Lutheran church in rural Green Valley, Illinois. Recently retired, he spends time gardening, transporting things in his "retirement" truck, singing in four groups, and serving on the boards of Friends in Harmony and Pekin Civic Chorus as well as chairing the Stewardship-Missions Committee at St. John's.

Spreading the Gospel Worldwide

By Jennifer Bagnell,
Public Relations Director of LHF,
with Cheri Fish, Mission Editor



Ethiopian Lutheran school children with Bible storybooks

As a Lutheran woman, how many times have you used a child's Bible storybook? Perhaps you had a book about Jesus you loved as a child, or maybe you have sweet memories of reading Bible stories to your own children as you tucked them into bed. Maybe you've been a Sunday School or Lutheran day school teacher, and you've used Bible storybooks to teach your young charges the faith.

However, countless women around the globe have never been so fortunate. To many, a Bible storybook is an unaffordable luxury or isn't available in their language at all.

Through an LWML Mission Grant to the Lutheran Heritage Foundation (LHF), this situation is changing! At the 2017 convention, delegates voted to provide \$100,000 to LHF for translating, publishing, and distributing Lutheran Bible storybooks for children and families worldwide.

"It's difficult to express the enormous impact this Mission Grant will have on spreading the Gospel," reflected LHF's executive director, Rev. Matthew Heise. "We know that Scripture tells us to raise up a child in the way he should go, and even when he is old he will not depart from it. LHF is deeply thankful to the LWML that, with this Mission Grant, literally tens of thousands of

children will be able to read and learn about their Savior, Jesus."

One of the first storybooks is *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*, a colorfully-illustrated book of 60 Old and New Testament stories. It has been recently translated into the Farsi language, spoken in Iran. Although it's very difficult to get Christian materials into Iran, "God has a way of opening doors for His children," Rev. Heise shared.

In 2015, more than a million refugees crossed into Europe, including over 100,000 immigrants from Iran. When they settled in countries like Germany and Denmark, Lutheran churches and missionaries saw a great opportunity to introduce those living in the darkness of Islam to the light of Jesus Christ.

"The biggest challenge is the language," explained Rev. Hugo Gevers, a Lutheran pastor in Leipzig, Germany. "How do you teach people who don't know your language at all?" Once the 5,000+ copies of book are printed, they will be given free of charge to the Farsi-speaking families.

"What we've seen with this book, time and again, is that we translate and publish the book mainly for children," reflected Rev. Heise. "But what we didn't expect is how many adults would pick up this little book and start to read, and how it would lead to them asking more questions about who this Jesus is."

In the coming months, LHF will continue to translate several more publications for new and growing Lutheran churches in Africa, Asia, and Europe. For many recipients — most of whom come from Muslim, Buddhist, or atheist backgrounds — the stories of God's love bring peace and comfort.



David (right) and Rev. Hugo Gevers

This has proven true for David, LHF's lead Farsi translator of *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*. David grew up in a Muslim family in Iran, but after fleeing to Germany a few years ago, God led him to Rev. Gevers in Leipzig.

"I think of when Jesus was with his followers, and they said, 'Hey Jesus, your mother is outside.' But Jesus told them, 'Here are my mother and my brothers!'" David said. "Now I'm here in Germany. I have no family here. But my pastor is my father, and all who read this book and believe, they are my brothers and my sisters." Q

MISSION GOAL: \$2,075,000

2017–2019 MISSION GRANTS

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



CURRENT MISSION GRANT HIGHLIGHTS

Providing Food and the Gospel to Starving Children — \$40,000


Mercy Meals of Siouxland is a ministry that packages fortified rice/soy meal and donates all packaged meals to Orphan Grain Train for transportation and delivery to Christian organizations in many countries. With this mission grant, children and families will receive food and hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ in places including India, Haiti, Romania, and Ecuador, as well as to Navajo reservations in the Southwest and Ysleta Mission in El Paso, Texas.

Christian Eldercare Home in Haiti — \$100,000

With this mission grant an Eldercare center will be built on the same property where an orphanage was constructed in 2014. The children will have grandparents and the elderly will have children to make them smile. This would result in a dwelling with clean water, suitable waste containment, beds, food, and care for these forgotten people. This will fulfill the intent of creating a true community for Haitian Lutherans by providing a safe living environment.

Sharing Jesus with People with Disabilities — \$100,000

Bethesda Lutheran Communities desire to enhance the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities with services that share the Good News of Jesus Christ. With over 1,900 people at 300 program sites in 13 states being served, travel is essential in achieving this mission. Relying on the support of donors, Bethesda nourishes relationships and grows their network to support people of all abilities with their faith journey. These mission grant funds are used to support ministry consultant travel.



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



³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, ^{4a}who comforts us in all our troubles, ^{4b}so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. ⁵For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. ⁶If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. ⁷And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

^{10b}On [God] we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, ^{11a}as you help us by your prayers.

2 Corinthians 1:3–7, 10b–11a²

Comfort Ye, Comfort Ye My People¹

By Sharon Rapp

Opening Prayer: You came to earth, O Christ, as Lord, But pow'r You laid aside. You lived Your years in servanthood; In lowliness You died. Lord, help us walk Your servant way Wherever love may lead And, bending low, forgetting self, Each serve the other's need.³ Amen.

Opening Discussion: Read aloud together core verses **2 Corinthians 1:3–11a** (see sidebar). What is your reaction? With a partner or small group, discuss an act of comfort that God brought to you through other people. What was the situation and how did the action encourage you?

Note: The author was drawn to this topic through a medical condition during which many acts of comfort were received from family and friends. A list (most certainly incomplete and intended to be a thought starter) of those encouraging, uplifting, and supportive actions is included in the leader guide (available from your leader or online).

Comfort and Covenant: How is God the Father described in **2 Corinthians 3–4a**? _____

Nehemiah 1:5? _____

Psalms 86:15? _____

What has God promised in the following verses that brings comfort to His people? **Galatians 4:4–5a** _____

Romans 6:4–5 _____

Matthew 26:26–28 _____

List some examples from the Old Testament where God showed comfort or compassion. _____

God is caring: *The Lord is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made. The Lord upholds all those who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down* (Psalm 145:13b–14). He keeps his covenants: *The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off — for all whom the Lord our God will call* (Acts 2:39). God considers believers as family: *How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!* (1 John 3:1a).

Concern and Compassion: Read again verses 5–7 (sidebar). What consequences are possible from giving comfort?

How might we trust good to come from trying circumstances?

What reassurance does our Savior offer in **John 16:33**?

What does **Philippians 2:5–8** tell us about the nature of Christ?

John 14:10?

Hebrews 4:15?

Name some examples from the four Gospels in which Christ offers comfort. Can you think of an instance in which He helps someone whom others had overlooked?

Jesus was especially drawn to those who needed comfort — including those others had ignored: *“It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners”* (Mark 2:17). We are to follow His example: *“As the Father has sent me, I am sending you”* (John 20:21b). Christ reassures the disciples: *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”* (Acts 1:8).

Connection and Communication: In verses 4b and 10b–11a of **2 Corinthians 1** (sidebar), how does Paul invite the family of God to be of assistance?

How are we also able to serve in this way? See **Matthew 22:37–40; 1 Thessalonians 1:2–3; Hebrews 10:24; 1 Peter 3:8**.

Who is honored when we comfort one another? See **Matthew 25:37–40**.

What other situations can you recall from Acts and the Epistles where comforting takes place?

How does the Apostle Paul embolden us in **2 Corinthians 1:21–22; Colossians 3:12–17; 1 Thessalonians 5:11–14**?

How does the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League encourage us, children of faith, to follow Christ’s example?

Comforting, encouraging, serving demonstrate our love and are our response to salvation. When we feel ill-equipped, **Isaiah 41:10** encourages: *So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand*. When faltering, we can remember Christ’s words to Paul: *My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness* (2 Corinthians 12:9). Strengthened through Word and Sacrament, we can engage, encourage, equip, and enjoy the process — *rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man* (Ephesians 6:7 ESV).

The keynote workshop presenter at a professional conference out of state, I learn from my husband’s call that my dear mother has received her eternal healing. A colleague finds me sitting alone, crying quietly, in an empty meeting room. Promising to let the co-leaders of the convention know immediately, she speaks words of empathy and sends me to my hotel room to begin packing. Two leaders arrive and, after hugs and prayers, encourage me with news that a replacement session is being readied. One returns to help with those preparations. The second contacts the airline, confirms the needed change is available, drives me to the airport — then waits until the ticket is exchanged, my husband knows when to meet me, and I’m ready to walk to the gate. What sweet comfort!

Closing: Making a connection is a start and can often be done quickly by sending a text, email, card, or note. Placing a phone call, writing a letter, sending flowers, or visiting take more planning and time, as does delivering a gift or meal. Each act, however, communicates love and care. And no matter how busy the day, there is time for prayer.

Closing Prayer: Abba! Father! You had compassion on us in sending Your Son to fulfill the law, allowing us to become Your children through faith. Holy Spirit, keep us mindful of our Savior’s command and empower us to be kind, caring, heartening servants. Lord Jesus, give us courage to follow Your example, sensitivity to the needs of those around us, and willingness to communicate Your love through prayer and acts of comfort. Amen.

Closing Hymn: Sing or say together “Take My Life and Let It Be” (LSB #783; LW #404; TLH #400).

When time allows: Think of at least one person who needs comforting or encouraging and make the connection. Reread Jesus’ words of consolation, promise, and prayer in **John 14–17**. Research the word “comfort” and its synonyms in a concordance or study Bible.

¹Isaiah 40:1 KJV

²References NIV: *The Thompson Chain-Reference Bible*, 1978

³“Lord, Help Us Walk Your Servant Way” (LSB #857)

Sharon Rapp, LWQ Bible Study Editor and Heart to Heart Sister, lives in Jackson, Tennessee, where she and her husband are members of Concordia Lutheran Church.

Struggling with the Influence of Technology*

By Dr. MaryAnn Waldon



An influence that is often viewed as an addiction today is technology. Whether it is a smart phone, computer or tablet, technology absorbs too much time for many of our teens. Do you consider this effect to be detrimental or beneficial? In what way? How does your teen view technology and its influence?

**BALANCE BIBLE STUDY Christ Filled Living with Adolescents, Chapter Three, by Dr. MaryAnn Waldon, #LWML20442*

Dr. MaryAnn Waldon, a retired professor, is an active LWML member at her home church, Hope Lutheran, in Friendswood, Texas. She is married, has five children, two step-children, 12 grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren. She has a bachelor's and master's degree from the University of Nebraska and a doctorate from the University of Houston.

Opening Prayer: Dear Lord, we ask Your Holy Spirit to be our guide as we deliberate a current issue in our society and its influence on our teens. Help us use wisdom in determining what is detrimental and what is useful in technology. We know that deliberation and insights given through Your Word will provide knowledge that we can use with our teens. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Read **Proverbs 15:21**. What does this passage say that could be applied to technology? _____

What do **Proverbs 15:14** and **Proverbs 23:12** indicate about the use of technology? What do you think is the parent's responsibility? _____

Read **James 1:14-15**. What does this passage indicate might be promoted through various uses of technology? Name some possible consequences. _____

Technology can be a valuable tool in learning, but it can be a detriment also. Parents need to be wise in guiding the use of technology by their teens.

Did you indicate pornography as one of the temptations? Read **Proverbs 16:25**. What is the warning in this passage? _____

Teens might be encouraged to do sexting. What do you know about sexting? To what do you think sexting might lead? _____

Remind your teen how thoughts lead to actions. Read **Philippians 4:8-9**. What kind of actions are we counseled to perform? _____

Another serious danger is the use of technology in the bullying of your teen, or your teen bullying another teen. This is called cyberbullying. On the following page, list steps you might take if you should find this happening.

In **John 8:3–11**, what example does Jesus give us? What other instances of His compassion and gentle guidance do you remember from your reading of Scripture? _____

Instruction is given in **Hebrews 12:1** that is excellent advice for a parent. How could you apply this to the example you set and to your teen's life and activity? _____

Always turn to the Lord in prayer. He is your constant strength and will provide wisdom as you assist your teen. Draw strength from His church, His Sacraments, and His Holy Word.

Proverbs 19:18a is very direct about a parent's responsibility. How do you understand these words? _____

Another passage also provides a caution. Read **Proverbs 11:14**. If we interpret discipline as guidance, then we must consider how important the role of the parent is in shepherding the use of technology.

If supervision is not given, the use of technology and social media can lead to regrettable circumstances with consequences which affect both family and friends. What encouragement does **Proverbs 16:20–21** reiterate for a parent? _____

Careful attention to the use of technology and monitoring access to social media in a teen's life will allow technology to be a beneficial resource for learning and communication rather than a detriment to self-esteem. However, parents must be able to discern how the teen is using technology. Parental guidance makes the difference.

Closing Prayer: Dear all-knowing Lord, difficult days may come into our lives when constant new discoveries occur in technology. Sometimes technology appears and changes so fast that we are not even aware of it before our teens are using it in their lives. Give us the wisdom to determine what is beneficial and what is detrimental. Help us to guide our teens in the wise use of technology. Strengthen us to offer protection, through discipline, should it become detrimental in their lives. We trust Your loving guidance and rely on our Savior, Christ Jesus. Amen.

Closing Hymn: Sing or say together "Oh, That the Lord Would Guide My Ways" (LSB #707; LW #392; TLH #416).

If your teen is being bullied, how can you support or encourage him or her? _____

Suggest ways a parent might help build a teen's self-concept so that bullying can be resisted and ignored. _____

How could you apply **Proverbs 16:23–24** in helping a teen gain a better self-image? _____

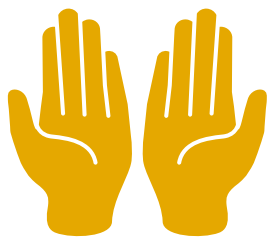
The support and love of a parent give a teen armor against bullying. Together different solutions may be found. According to **Hebrews 13:6**, whose support do we always have? _____

Parenting is never easy, but it can be especially trying for parents of teens. At times our frustration and anxiety levels are very high. What encouragement and hope do **Psalms 31:21–24** and **Romans 15:4–5** provide? _____

Even though you trust your teen, it is wise to use caution and check on behavior that appears questionable. Knowing your teen better than anyone else, you can discern much by paying close attention to subtle clues and observing changes in behavior. Always be aware of what your teen is viewing.

If you find that your teen has succumbed to temptation and has used technology in a detrimental way, reread the words of our Lord in **Matthew 6:14**. What are we to remember when we make mistakes? _____

Read **Galatians 6:1**. Describe your thoughts from this passage as they apply to your teen. How do you interpret the words, "restore him in a spirit of gentleness?" _____



Prayer Gives My Life Balance*

By Kay Meyer

“Can you pray for my son and his family? He stopped attending church when he went away to college. Today he has two young sons, but they never attend church.”

“My daughter was raised in the LCMS, but recently became a member of a cult. It breaks my heart to know she is involved with this group that believes Jesus is just a man and you cannot pray to him. Can you help?”

Opening prayer: Pray silently for this study and for someone you know who needs prayer.

Begin with P.R.A.Y.er

The most frequent issue that people contact our ministry about is a young adult who has stopped attending church or has gotten involved in a non-Christian religion. When they ask for help, I encourage them to begin with prayer.

One way to pray is to use the acronym P.R.A.Y. P stands for Praise. Praise God for who He is and what He has done for us. R stands for Remember. Remember you are a sinner and need a Savior, and what Jesus Christ has done for you. He suffered and died for your sins and was raised to life on the third day. A is for Ask. Ask for anything you need. Y is for Yield. Yield to God's will.

There is really no specific way that we have to pray. Stephen's was short and quick: "Lord, Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts 7:59-60).

Prayer Keeps Life in Balance

Read and discuss Bible verses about praising the Lord:

Exodus 15:2 _____

Psalms 66:8-9 _____

Matthew 11:25 _____

Luke 19:37-38 _____

Compare these verses with those above:

1 Chronicles 16:8-9 _____

1 Corinthians 11:24 _____

Philippians 4:6-8 _____

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 _____

What do praise and thanksgiving have to do with prayer? What is the difference between praise and thanksgiving? _____

How does prayer keep your life in balance? _____

God answers prayer with "yes," "no," and "wait." Describe a time when God answered your prayer with "no" or "wait." Why is that more difficult for us to accept? _____

Share with your small group a time when the Lord answered "yes." _____

Format and Frequency

Jeff's aunt and her friends had prayed for Jeff for over twenty years when he came to faith in Christ. It was only after he became a Christian that he learned about his aunt's prayers. She is now with the Lord, but Jeff knows God worked through her prayers for his salvation. He is thankful that she cared enough to pray for him and his family.

The Bible shares three formats for prayer. One is small group prayer, which Jeff's aunt used, although I'm sure she also prayed individually and asked her congregation to keep her sister and family in prayer. Another type of prayer is praying individually or privately. A third is praying corporately with the church.

*BALANCE BIBLE STUDY Christ Filled Living, Chapter Two, by Kay Meyer, #LWML20441

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

continued on page 22



La oración le da equilibrio a mi vida

Por la Kay Meyer, traducido por Melissa Salomón

“¿Puedes orar por mi hijo y su familia? Ya dejó de ir a la iglesia cuando salió de la casa para ir a la universidad. Hoy tiene dos hijos pequeños, pero nunca van a la iglesia.”

“Mi hija creció en la Iglesia Luterana Sínodo de Misuri, pero recientemente se fue a formar parte de una secta. Me parte el corazón saber que se fue con un grupo que cree que Jesús es sólo un hombre y que no puedes orar a Él. ¿Puedes ayudarme?”

Kay Meyer, quien escribió este estudio bíblico, es anfitriona a un programa de radio y muchas veces pide que mujeres de la audiencia hablen para pedir consejos. En este estudio ella comparte preguntas que personas le han hecho en su programa y las respuestas de ella.

Oración de apertura: Ora en silencio por este tiempo de estudio y por alguien quien necesita de tu oración. (La autora de este estudio que es traducido del inglés usó las siglas para la palabra “pray” que se traduce “ORAR” u “ORACIÓN” en español. En la sección que sigue compartiremos el acrónimo P.R.A.Y. que ella usa en inglés y lo que significa en español).

Empieza con “P.R.A.Y.er”

El asunto más frecuente que personas traen a nuestra atención en el ministerio es de un adulto joven que ha dejado de ir a la iglesia o ha empezado a involucrarse con un grupo religioso no-cristiano. Cuando piden ayuda, yo les animo a que empiecen con oración.

Una forma de hacerlo es usar el acrónimo P.R.A.Y. (orar). “P” es para “Praise” que quiere decir “Adoración.” Adoren a Dios por Quien es y por lo que ha hecho por nosotros. La “R” representa “Recordad.” Recuerda que eres pecador y necesitas un Salvador, y medita en lo que Cristo Jesús ha hecho por ti. Él sufrió y murió por tus pecados y resucitó en el tercer día. “A” representa “Ask” o “Pedir.” Pide por todo lo que necesitas. “Y” es para “Yield” o “Someter.” Sométete a la voluntad de Dios.

No hay forma específica en que tenemos que orar. La oración de Esteban fue corta y rápida: “Señor, Jesús, recibe mi espíritu” (Hechos 7:59–60).

La Oración Guarda el Equilibrio de la Vida

Lee y habla sobre estos versos bíblicos acerca de la adoración del Señor:

Éxodo 15:2 _____

Salmo 66:8–9 _____

Mateo 11:25 _____

Lucas 19:37–38 _____

Compara los versos que siguen con los versos arriba:

1ra de Crónicas 16:8–9 _____

1ra de Corintios 11:24 _____

Filipenses 4:6–8 _____

1ra de Tesalonicenses 5:16–18 _____

¿Qué tienen que ver la adoración y acción de gracias con la oración? ¿Cuál es la diferencia entre la oración y la acción de gracias? _____

¿Cómo la oración mantiene a tu vida en equilibrio? _____

Dios contesta a la oración con “sí,” “no,” y “espera.” Describe un tiempo cuando Dios contestó a tu oración con un “no” o un “espera.” ¿Por qué son estas respuestas más difíciles para aceptar? _____

Comparte con tu pequeño grupo un tiempo cuando el Señor te respondió con un “sí.” _____

Formato y Frecuencia

La tía de Jeff y sus amigas oraron por Jeff por más de veinte años antes de que se convirtió a Cristo. Solamente fue después de que se convirtió a Cristo que descubrió que su tía había orado por él durante esos veinte años. Ella ahora está con el Señor, pero Jeff sabe que Dios obró por medio de las oraciones de ella para su salvación. Él tiene gratitud para con su tía porque ella lo amó tanto que oró por él y por su familia.

continúa en la página 22

Identify the frequency and/or format in the following verses:

Matthew 6:6–7 _____

Matthew 18:19–20 _____

Acts 12:5,11–16 _____

Luke 22:44 _____

2 Corinthians 12:8 _____

Colossians 1:9–10 _____

Ephesians 6:18 _____

Matthew 7:7–8 _____

How would you describe earnest prayer? _____

What's the difference between asking, seeking, and knocking on God's door in prayer? _____

Why should we be specific in our prayer requests? _____

What happened when the church prayed? _____

Was this a miracle? Can God still perform miracles today? _____

Prayer keeps life in balance, so pray for your loved ones and friends who have either fallen away from the faith or who are not Christians. And ask other Christians to pray for them too.

Optional prayer: Consider how you might pray for one person you know who is unchurched, unsaved, or who has stopped attending church. Write down the name and remember him or her in prayer for the next two weeks.

Closing Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank You for listening to my prayers and giving me direction and guidance every day. Thank You for suffering for my sins and giving me eternal life as a free gift. Help me grow in my prayer life and always trust You. In Your name. Amen.

Closing Hymn: Sing or say together "I Am Trusting Thee, Lord Jesus" (LSB #729; LW #408; TLH #428).

La Biblia comparte tres formatos de oración. Uno es la oración con un pequeño grupo, lo que usó la tía de Jeff, aunque estoy segura que también oró por él en privado y también pidió que su congregación orara para su hermana y su familia. Otro tipo de oración es orar individualmente o privadamente. El tercer tipo de oración es orar en comunidad con la iglesia.

Identifica la frecuencia y/o el formato que vemos en estos versos:

Mateo 6:6–7 _____

Mateo 18:19–20 _____

Hechos 12:5, 11–16 _____

Lucas 22:44 _____

2da de Corintios 12:8 _____

Colosenses 1:9–10 _____

Efesios 6:18 _____

Mateo 7:7–8 _____

¿Cómo describes tú la oración "seria"? _____

¿Qué diferencia hay entre preguntar, buscar y tocar en la puerta de Dios en oración? _____

¿Por qué debemos ser específicos en nuestras peticiones cuando oramos? _____

¿Qué pasó cuando la iglesia oraba? _____

¿Fue esto un milagro? ¿Puede hacer Dios milagros hoy en día? _____

La oración mantiene la vida en equilibrio, así que ora por tus seres queridos y amigos quienes ya no siguen la fe o no son cristianos. Y pide que otros cristianos oren contigo también.

Oración opcional: Considera cómo podrías orar por una persona que conoces quien no es cristiano o que ha dejado de ir a la iglesia. Escribe el nombre y recordarlo o recordarla en oración por las próximas dos semanas

Oración de Clausura: Señor Jesús, gracias por escuchar a mis oraciones y por darme dirección y guianza cada día. Gracias por sufrir por mis pecados y por darme la vida eterna como un regalo gratuito. Ayúdame a crecer en mi vida de oración para que pueda confiar en Ti. En Tu nombre. Amén.

Himno de Clausura: Canten o digan juntos "Mi fe descansa en Ti" (Culto Cristiano #246).



Mona Fuerstenau is the Director of Strategic Ministry Partnerships for Bethesda Lutheran Communities.

She travels the country for conferences and workshops to equip the church body to become a place for belonging — a true family for each of God's children. Her prayer is for every life to be enriched when we practice Being Family with people of all abilities.

Bethesda's Mission: To enhance the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities through the services that share the good news of Jesus Christ.

Resources

LCMS.org/disability

Find Bethesda religious resources at www.cph.org

BethesdaLutheranCommunities.org

Accepting People of all Abilities into the Church Family *By Mona Fuerstenau*

Being family means authentic love and genuine care, no matter the circumstance or challenge. Being family means being in relationship, which is sometimes messy. Being family is a daily desire to love and to be there despite the situation.

Our congregations are an extension of our families. Many members of that extension have been influential to me, especially as I raised a son with disabilities.

- **The Parish Nurse** — what a blessing! LCMS Parish Nurses receive opportunities for training and supporting families with disabilities.
- **The Pastor** — who shared with me that looking into my son's eyes during the communion blessing was like looking into my son's soul. He saw my son made in the image of God.
- **The Children's Program Director** — who saw the performing gifts of my daughter and gave her opportunity to shine. Siblings of people with disabilities often struggle to be seen.
- **The DCE** — who approached us on our first visit when my son was a teen, talked directly to him, and introduced him to two other teens.
- **Be Relational:** Get to know each person in the family. They are so much more than "just" a family with a disability. Each person has gifts and talents and interests completely unrelated to disability. Fellowship is an important part of faith community life.
- **Be Purposeful:** Meaningful participation and contribution of all members of the family are necessary. Being family requires give and take. People with disabilities and their families have much to offer the Body of Christ. Look for ways for each of them to serve.

At the 2017 LWML Convention in Albuquerque, the LWML chose to support Mission Grant proposal #15 — Sharing Jesus with people with disabilities. Your support of Bethesda's Religious Life Team with sharing the Gospel and equipping the church is a testament to the fact that so many LWML members already see the need for the church to Be Family to those living with disability. Thank you! Your support allows us to continue to do just that.

Support goes beyond Church professionals. Church members can also reach out to families of those with disabilities.

- **Be Sanctuary:** Provide a safe space both physically and attitudinally. Be welcoming and ask questions.
- **Be Honest:** If you don't know what to say, or do, or if you are worried you might offend, be honest and say that.



God works through His people

Diane Molnar, a member of **Trinity Lutheran Church, Cedar City, Utah** (Rocky Mountain District), learned that East Elementary School was in great need of school supplies. As donations of supplies flooded in, it became apparent there was also a great need for winter clothing, shoes, hats, and mittens. This news spread to a local Catholic Thrift Shoppe who joined in with donations of clean clothing and shoes.

That generosity was followed by a \$1,000 donation, raised at Trinity's annual Oktoberfest, to the school to further assist disadvantaged students in need. What a beautiful testimony to the benevolence of God's people!

Presenting the \$1,000.00 check to East Elementary Principal Moyle is Trinity Lutheran Church member, Diane Molnar. A special thank you goes to East Elementary Secretary, Renee Sholes.



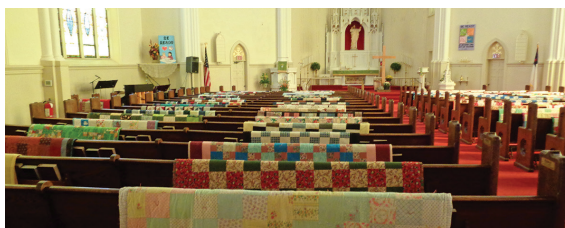
Since 2002, the Lutheran Women's Missionary League of both the **Central Illinois District** and **Rock Island Zone** have been actively involved with Cristo Rey, a Hispanic mission church located in East Moline, Illinois. Led by Pastor Dominguez, Cristo Rey has been the recipient of mission grants, food pantry items, and English as a second language classes taught by volunteer LWML members. The ladies of Cristo Rey gather mite offerings for the support of district mission grants and have served meals at LWML functions and other circuit activities. At the 2011 Peoria LWML Convention, Pastor Dominguez and a member of the Cristo Rey congregation presented a display, celebrating the work being done at their church, while this member's wife participated in the Heart to Heart Sister program. Cristo Rey was also a recipient of the Gifts of Love ingathering at Peoria, which assisted them with their outreach activities for several years. Last year, a young woman from Cristo Rey and a lady from another Hispanic outreach in Beardstown, Illinois, attended the 2017 Albuquerque LWML Convention.



For three exciting weeks last November, the Lutheran Women in Mission of **Christ the Redeemer, Tulsa, Oklahoma** (Oklahoma District), DCE Intern Myrthe Harkenrider, and the children of Faith Friends partnered together to learn about thankfulness and how to put their gratitude into practice. During week one, the children (kindergarten to fifth grade) and LWML women assembled Lutheran World Relief kits and tied quilts. While they worked side-by-side, they discussed their thankfulness for all the wonderful gifts God has given them. Week two focused on missions and how Mite Box offerings help missionaries throughout the world. The children were given the special opportunity to Skype with LCMS missionaries in Slovakia! Questions flowed! The third week focused on thanking others, including those whom the children forget to thank, such as their parents. All participants took part in assembling "thank you packages" that included trail mix and appreciation notes. Lutheran World Relief videos were shown, detailing how the quilts and kits they had made were going to be used. President Carol Fruehling said, "Our LWML wants to partner with our staff and show our support for the mission of our congregation. We had a great time getting to know the children. Their enthusiasm speaks well for the future of our church!"



Good conversation inspired the women of the **Washington Zone LWML** (LWML Missouri District) to pursue new heights when planning their fall rally. The "Christian Women's Survival Show" proved to be an occasion filled with activities geared to encourage and equip the daily lives of Christian women. The day zoomed by as everyone enjoyed guest speakers, devotions, a debut of The Singing Saints (a group of pastors and laymen), a fun-filled photo booth, and mission and ministry presentations. Of course, there was a lot of delicious food and singing! The ingathering resulted in a generous collection of many children's socks, hats, gloves, mittens, and monetary gifts that will support the local community. The women of the Washington Zone proved they not only know how to survive, but they can thrive as they "do all things through Christ who gives them strength."



Cloth of every shape and color — large pieces and small — that's what the talented quilting ladies of **St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Reedsburg, Wisconsin**, work with when they gather to quilt. The number of ladies may be small, but their mission is huge and together they design, put together, sew around, and tie hundreds of quilts each year. These amazing works of art are displayed on the church pews during LWML Sunday and after worship, they are sent around the world to warm the hearts of their recipients. What a blessing!

FALL 2018 THEME: SHOWERED WITH BLESSINGS

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

Deadline: April 15, 2018

Include: name, address, phone, and email



Have you ever wondered how Naomi mentored Ruth, Paul mentored Timothy, or Jesus mentored the disciples? With many smiles and giggles, LWML members at **St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Alta Vista, Kansas**, learned about mentoring partnerships in the Bible. These six members scored a perfect 100% when they played the Mentoring Match-Up Game. This game, with other suggestions for an LWML Mentoring Brunch, can be found under Leader Helps www.lwml.org.



Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, Decatur, Illinois (Central Illinois District), has been busy with "Stitches of Love," a service project where they make hats for people in need. Some of the hats are unique, made on circular looms in the shape of Minions, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, and snowmen. Annalee Karloski said, "Every child in the classroom will get a hat." Annalee continues, "We started out knitting prayer shawls, and then we got these looms. We've given hats and scarves to Northeast Community Fund, Webster-Cantrell Hall, the Cancer Center, and New Life Pregnancy Center."

Lutheran Women in Mission Respond to disaster with Books, Bags, and Bears



If there's one thing the LWML does well, it's responding to needs when disaster strikes. Just a few months ago, Hurricane Harvey caused massive damage in Texas, leaving many people trying to repair and rebuild their homes and lives.

LINC Houston recently held an open house for their community. One of the items they distributed was called, "Waiting in Line Welcome Bag." Most often mothers and children are the people waiting in line for relief and support. To help them pass the time while standing on lines, bags containing encouraging devotions, an Arch Book, and an LWML bear were distributed to those waiting. Dan Zieschang said, "A note on each bear lets the children know that this is their 'safe bear,' and they can grab it when they feel fear as a result of rain, lightning, thunder, flooding."

Traci Sterba and Lisa Miller, of Trinity Lutheran Church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, organized a disaster relief effort, providing support and comfort to Texans affected by Hurricane Harvey. They organized Pack-a-Purse, a campaign filling gently used purses with hygiene items, makeup, notes of encouragement, and a \$5 bill. Traci, who had lived through flooding said, "You never really realize what you've

lost until you go to get a Band-Aid®, and you see you don't even have that!"

The campaign went viral on Facebook, and people from all over the country were eager to contribute. As a result, over 100 packed purses were loaded onto a trailer headed for Texas. As if this weren't enough, during the following week, 200 additional purses were collected from members of Trinity and other churches in the surrounding area.



With his truck packed to the brim, Lisa's husband, **Steve Miller**, made the trip to Nederland, Texas, stopping at Holy Cross Lutheran Church. Pastor Francis Schroeder of Holy Cross posted on Facebook: "This was a great day! I received from the Women's Ministry at Trinity Lutheran Church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana ... over 200 purses! Such an incredible idea and love for others shared! Thank you again to our neighbors and sisters from Baton Rouge!"



The sisterhood of LWML was clearly evident on the wedding day of **Meichun Julie Lin Thompson**. Meichun was **LWML Utah-Idaho District's** first Heart to Heart Sister at the 2017 Albuquerque LWML Convention. Surrounded by her LWML Sisters, Meichun is radiating God's love. May God grant rich blessings on the new Mr. & Mrs. Zach Thompson!



Introducing the Committees and Teams that have been elected or appointed for the 2017–2019 biennium.

* indicates Committee Chairmen; names in brackets were not pictured

Executive Committee

Back: Rev. Mitchel Schuessler, Ginger Starrett, Carol von Soosten, Michelle Zollinger, Leslie Jaseph, Marilyn Schroeder, Rev. Robert Mundahl
Front: Char Kroemer, Angelina Jauregui, Patti Ross, Debbie Larson, Kaye Wolff, Jennifer Huecker



Christian Life Committee

Mary Marten*, Ruth Badciong, Diana Schnack



Christian Resource Editors

Tina Landskroener, Linda Koeller, Diane Grebing*



Committee on Young Women

Kimberlea Lessman, Bianne Stahlecker, Abby Faske, Carrie Brumbaugh*



Gospel Outreach Committee

Mary Scharenbrock, Nancy Heredia*, Candy Habich



Graphics Team

Judy Newell, Diane Frauendienst, Stephanie Kollbaum* [Dana Peick]



Growth and Development Committee

Deaconess Betty Knapp, Deaconess Rachel Jaseph, Crystal Miller* [Ann Marie Bollas]

Lutheran Women in Mission



Heart to Heart Sisters Committee

Melissa Salomón*, Anita Beyersdorf,
Oluwatoyin Fakuajo, Mai Thao



Information Technology Committee

Dawn Zerkel, Kathy Pavelock*,
Tina Bentley



Leadership Development Committee

Deb Vinkemeier, Susan Brunkow*,
Cheryl Killham



Mission Grants Committee

Back: Nikki Tyrrell, Sylvia Bean,
Front: Susan Donnelly*,
Janell McKinstry, Leslie Colligan



Official Publication Staff

Back: Sharon Rapp, Amy Gill,
Sheila Lutz, Cheri Fish,
Front: Linda Guteres, Nancy Graf
Peters*(Editor-in-Chief), Becky Wehrspann



Public Relations Team

Bev England, Michelle Zollinger*,
Beth Weber



Structure Committee

Barb Volk, Mary Smith,
LaDonna Stanosheck, Arlene Naasz*



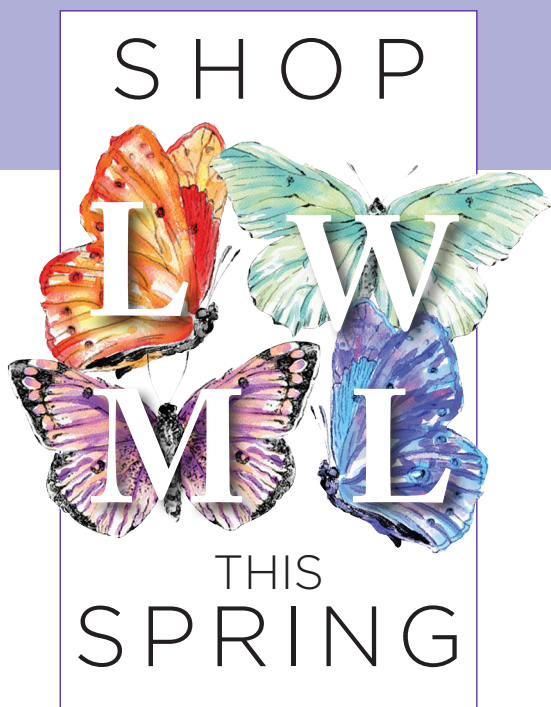
Nominating Committee

Linda Fees, Karen Morrison,
Joy Anderson*, JoNette Brogaard,
Sherrie Smith



LWML Office Staff

Carol Iannelli, Karen Anderson,
Eva Koeller

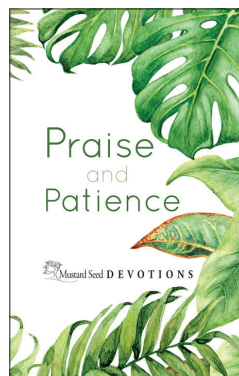


These LWML resources and products are sure to Engage, Equip, and Encourage you as you Enjoy your daily walk with the Lord!

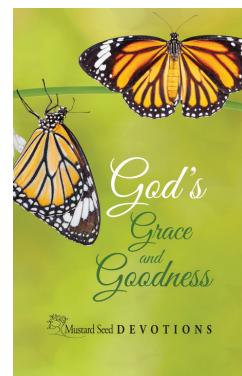
Each of these **Mustard Seed Devotional Booklets** is designed to tuck into a greeting card or fit into an Easter basket of goodies.



Trust & Talents
#LWML40226 \$2.99



Praise & Patience
#LWML40225 \$2.99



God's Grace & Goodness
#LWML40224 \$2.99

Place orders at
www.lwml.org/store
or by phone at
800.325.3040.
Prices good through
June 30, 2018.

Have these on hand for baby or wedding showers!



Dear Mother encourages new moms and gives them special insights as a Christian and a mother.
#LWML21002 \$2.99

Together is Better Marriage devotions and activities that will engage, equip, and encourage couples in establishing a Christ-filled marriage. #LWML49930 \$5.50

Check out these items sporting the NEW LWML logo!



V-neck Polo You are sure to engage others when you sport our wonderful v-neck, easy wash-and-wear, no button polo!
Small-3XL #LWML10060 starting at \$20.00

You will enjoy wearing the **Purple Swarovski Crystal Butterfly Necklace** and **Purple & Crystal Beaded Stretch Bracelet!** Necklace #LWML31044 \$15.00
Bracelet #LWML31045 \$12.00





FROM PRESIDENT PATTI

Friends and Framily

“There are friends, there is family, and then there are friends that become family.”
Framily. LWML Framily! Do you agree?

This issue revolves around family and framily. I am blessed a thousand times over with a loving, supporting, and ministry-involved family. I have a huge framily because of my association over the years with the Lutheran Women's Missionary League, and I hope you do too!

We confront challenges and share joys. We share common goals of sharing Christ's Gospel message wherever and whenever we can. We encourage and lift each other up during hard times and hard work.

We welcome our family members to be alongside us whenever possible. Our husbands, brothers, sisters, children, grandchildren, cousins, and aunts who support us and join in our mission are so key to staying encouraged and feeling valued.

We welcome our friends. Members of our congregations, children at our church or school, pastors, young moms, neighbors — old and new — can catch our enthusiasm and join our LWML Framily.

This is the year of LWML district conventions. I encourage you to find out the date and place of your convention, grab a friend, and attend! There will be so many chances to add to your framily as you take part in servant events, listen to mission speakers and, above all, engage in Bible study and devotions with new friends you haven't met yet. Feel free to attend any of the district conventions. A schedule of all the conventions is available on the LWML website: www.lwml.org/district-conventions.

As illustrated in the articles of this issue, being a friend, being an encourager, being a mentor is so important. St. Paul, in Romans 1:11–12, writes to the faithful in Rome: *For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you — that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine.*

LWML should always work to encourage others through the sharing of our faith. And what better encouragement can we share than what Paul writes later in chapter 8:14–17. *For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.*

Now THAT'S a family!



Patti Kess



www.lwml.org | Spring 2018

2018 LWML PRAYER SERVICE

Living as God's People

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

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



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

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