Have Information, Will Travel!

By Pat Bilow

That could well have been Sandi Michaelis’ motto during her 42-year career with the Social Security Administration. “I’d be a rich woman if I had a nickel for every question I got over the years about Social Security benefits,” Sandi reflects with a hearty laugh after her recent retirement.

With intentions to become a medical technologist after graduating from high school, Sandi went on a lark with a classmate from their rural home in Holgate, Ohio, to the “big city” of Toledo to interview for a government position. Though she was told “not now” following her interview, the Social Security Administration hired her by the end of the following week. So began Sandi’s career and eventual transfers and promotions from Toledo to Sandusky, Ohio, back to Toledo, onto Ann Arbor, Michigan, then Chicago, and finally Wausau, Wisconsin.

“It seemed so cold when I first moved to the Wausau area, and I didn’t know anyone,” she recalls. “But a woman from the church invited me to an LWML meeting and even offered to pick me up. That was the beginning of what has become an extensive involvement with LWML. And I’ve gotten to love living in Wisconsin!”

“LWML and Social Security are alike in that they are both in the business of helping people,” Sandi relates. Since retirement, she now has more time to devote to LWML. When Sandi heard about LWML’s planned giving initiative, Gifts of Love, at one of her District Board meetings, “I thought of the gift annuity as another extension of helping people.” After several personal visits with me as LWML’s gift planning counselor to get a more comprehensive explanation, Sandi entered into her first gift annuity agreement.

“Gift annuities are one way to increase retirement income yet help LWML,” says Sandi. “My favorite Bible passage is John 3:16: For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. My gift annuity is a small way of giving thanks to God for His gift through Jesus. It brings me joy.”

For more information about gift annuities, e-mail bilowp@oh.lcms.org or call 1-888-482-8425.

“As opportunity arises, speak a word of encouragement. Tell how God has answered your prayers. Explain how your faith helped you through crises. Witness to your confidence in God’s love. ‘What He has done for others, He will do for you.’”

From You Are Special by Alma Kern

Speaking the Unspeakable

By Jan Wendorf

Sometimes, it may be too deep and personal to speak.
It may be a terrible or hurtful happening in one’s life.
It may be a failure too embarrassing to share.
It may be a controversial topic.
Unspeakable topics are simply those we don’t verbalize.
As I thought about this LWQ theme, Speaking the Unspeakable,” I prayed for God’s insight into what I should write.

Living as a Christian is not always upfront in our lives. Well, at least in mine. It is difficult to admit that I fail in my relationship with my Lord. I neglect my quiet time; I forget to hold onto His hand; I walk my own way without asking for His leading; and on and on ... Do I want to talk about what’s lacking in my life? Do you?

One of the primary targets of the LWML is Christ Centered Living — Being nourished by the Word and guided by the Spirit, each woman is actively demonstrating Christ’s love

As part of this Christian family, we are instructed to encourage each other in the ways of the Lord and to hold each other accountable for our spiritual growth. Often times, however, we shy away from speaking the unspeakable — asking where someone is in their prayer life, quiet time, and basically, in their relationship with the Lord.

Speaking the unspeakable regarding spiritual life can be life-changing. Are you willing to risk and begin this type of conversation with your family, friends, neighbors, and those brought into your life?

Prayer: Lord, I ask for courage to begin conversations that encourage and challenge others in their spiritual walk. I also ask that You would send someone into my life to ask the “unspeakable” questions that will move me into greater witness of Your love and into a deeper relationship with You. In Your Name, Amen.

“As opportunity arises, speak a word of encouragement. Tell how God has answered your prayers. Explain how your faith helped you through crises. Witness to your confidence in God’s love. ‘What He has done for others, He will do for you.’”

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