

American Gothic Convention Sketch
LWML 36th Biennial Convention
June 25-28, 2015, Des Moines, Iowa



The scene: *A cardboard cutout (poster size) of a church with the Gothic window in the steeple area is the background (someone may just stand behind the cutout and hold this during the sketch). A pastor raking a yard. An LWML member (Mary) approaches. Mary is wearing a print bibbed apron, a blouse with a white princess collar. The pastor is wearing a dark suit with a white shirt.*

This is much more effective if the script is memorized and then played out, rather than read directly from the page. Please take this extra effort and have fun!

Mary: Hi Pastor. We've finished cleaning inside the church and were wondering if you needed any help out here.

Pastor: Thank you. Help is always needed, but let's take a little break.

Pastor stands with his rake in the same position as the man in the painting holds the fork. Mary stands next to him in the same position as his daughter in the painting.

Pastor: Are you looking forward to the district LWML convention this year? I know I am.

Mary: Oh yes! I always look forward to the convention and I'm also planning on attending the national LWML Convention in Des Moines, Iowa in 2015.

Pastor: That's right. The LWML Convention will be held in Des Moines next summer. That reminds me of a painting. *(Mary looks sideways at Pastor, puzzled)* In 1930, the artist Grant Wood produced an oil painting titled American Gothic. As he was touring the state of Iowa looking for inspiration, he drove by a particular house. He sketched that house on the back of an envelope because he thought the house was a structural absurdity. Imagine putting a Gothic style window in a flimsy frame house! *(Pastor shakes his head in dismay)*

Mary: *(with a puzzled look on her face)* Pastor, I appreciate the history lesson but... why are you telling me this?

Pastor: *(holding his back as though it were aching)* Actually, I was just trying to come up with a way to stretch out this break a little bit longer! Anyway, the painting reminds me of the LWML. Do you know which painting I'm talking about?

Mary: Yes of course I do. It's the painting with the farmer holding the pitchfork and he's standing by a woman in front of their house. The people in that painting are very solemn aren't they? They actually look quite despondent. *(Looking very puzzled once again)* How could that painting possibly remind you of the LWML? I don't ever remember bringing a pitchfork to LWML.

Pastor: Well... *(interrupted immediately by Mary)*

Mary: We aren't **anything** like that painting! *(demeanor becomes light and perky)* We're

happy – filled with joy actually, we're active, we're purple, (*demeanor changes to annoyed, puts hands on hips*) we're (*pause*) happy! We are **nothing** like the American Gothic painting!

Pastor: (*steps back a step and seems a little surprised by Mary's reaction*) You're joy seems to be a little edgy right now, Mary! May I explain?

Mary: (*Mary assesses her stance, takes her hands off her hips and folds them in front her and nods her head – waiting for him to continue.*)

Pastor: Well, first the artist noticed that the builder put a Gothic style window in a regular frame house. I think God puts loving, serving hearts into ordinary women, making them extraordinary missionaries for Christ.

Mary: (*Mary softens and is pleasantly surprised*) Ahhhh, well that's a nice way to look at it. Tell me more.

Pastor: And when the people of Iowa first saw the Gothic painting, they were furious at the depiction of the grim faced man and woman. (*Pastor quickly glances at Mary. He waits for a reaction – and seeing none, continues*) But the artist persistently maintained his appreciation of people from the Midwest and said that his depiction was of the American pioneer spirit. The women of the LWML have always had a pioneer spirit for God. They're always looking to share the Gospel of Jesus, whether it's a tried-and-true method or something completely new. They aren't afraid to focus on the best way to reach people for Christ.

Mary: Thank you. You've made some good points. The women of the LWML have servant hearts and a strong desire to serve the Lord.

Pastor: *And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times having all that you need, you will abound in every good work* (2 Corinthians 9:8 NIV). That's the Scripture verse for the Des Moines Convention.

Mary: It's a wonderful verse, but in day-to-day life our excitement can fade and sometimes I begin to feel like that woman in the painting looks. Do you know what revitalizes me?

Pastor: Cleaning flower beds? Working in the church kitchen? Being on the altar committee?

Mary: Very funny. We do those things but they are not the only things that revive our spirits. Bible study and Christian fellowship gives us the guidance and the passion to continue to serve. And do you know one of the places where I love to go to listen and learn? (*talks louder and louder, getting more and more excited*)

Pastor: Where's that?

Mary: Conventions! And the LWML 36th Biennial Convention, June 25-28, 2015, in Des Moines, Iowa is - on - my - radar! (*said with great excitement*) The convention theme is **Bountiful! Sow • Nourish • Reap**. I will be:

- Fed by God's Word and Sacrament
- Nurtured through worship and fellowship and
- Equipped to sow, nourish, and reap in the Father's field

Mary takes off her apron and inverts it to the purple apron on the other side. If this isn't possible, have a purple apron available.

Mary: We'll have wonderful worship services, inspiring speakers and Bible studies, missionaries who will share real stories about God's love. Updates for the convention will be available on the LWML website. I'm so excited that I'll get to connect with friends from all over the country! (*very excited – may dance! Pulls something purple from her apron pocket – a flag or boa- waving it with energy*)

Pastor: You don't have to convince me. It sounds amazing! Say, let's go and talk to everyone here and let's fill a whole bus?!

Mary: (*shouts excitedly*) YES!! (*then hesitates*) What about the flower beds?

Pastor: There is a time for everything, Mary, and this is the time for action. The **Time is NOW** to focus on spiritual growth.

Mary: I like your LWML spirit, Pastor! Let's tell everyone and let's do it NOW!