



# I am the *Heart* of LWML

**Bible Study Leader Guide**

By Rev. Brian Noack





# I am the Heart of LWML

## Bible Study Leader Guide

*For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also (Matthew 6:21).*

### Opening Prayer:

Blessed Lord, in Your love You have sent Your Son, Jesus Christ, to save and redeem us and to give us a new heart and a new life. Grant us Your Spirit that we may live confidently as Your children, serving those whom You have placed in our lives by sharing Your heart of love with them; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Watch *I am the Heart of LWML* PowerPoint Presentation  
([2021-01-20-I-am-the-Heart-of-LWML.pptx \(live.com\)](#)).

**As leader, you may want to read or assign someone to read  
the script to accompany this PowerPoint presentation.**  
([I am the Heart of LWML PowerPoint with script](#)).

### Introduction

Consider for a moment the human heart. It is a vital organ within our bodies, so important in fact, that God gave us a cage around it to help protect it. The heart helps deliver blood and oxygen throughout the body so that our other organs can work together to keep us living each day.

For many years, heart health has been a high priority, and for good reason. Without a heart the body does not function. We've all seen movies or television shows where a patient dies in the hospital. The "blip, blip" of the EKG machine slows and slows until it "flatlines" — the heart has stopped, and life has ceased. Thus, care of the heart is important. We're encouraged to eat right, exercise, have regular checkups with our doctor — all of that is good heart care. Nowadays, even our smart watches let us know if something is "off" with our heart. The heart is very important to our life!

As it is with the human body, so it is with any organization. What is at the heart of the organization is what makes it "run," and if the heart is compromised in any way, then the organization suffers. For an organization to lose its heart is to put its health and its very life in danger.

## Christ, the Heart of LWML

In the Lutheran Women's Missionary League, our heart has always been, and always will be, Christ, crucified and risen for the life of the world. All that we do as an organization focuses our attention on Christ and seeks to live faithfully out of the gifts and opportunities He provides for us. Through regular participation in Bible studies and worship, we remain grounded upon His Word as our faith is strengthened by His Spirit. Encouraged in that Word, we look for ways to support mission work here and abroad. And, through the talents that each woman is uniquely blessed with, we seek ways to serve others by sharing the love and mercy of Christ. All this is done is for His sake. For He is our heart, our health, and our life, here and eternally.

Baptized into Christ, we belong to Christ. As St. Paul says in Galatians 2:20, *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

Thus, when we consider this new concept, *I am the Heart of the LWML*, we are not seeking to replace Christ with ourselves. Instead, we are living out of the reality that as Christ is in our heart and life, and as it is He who lives in and through us, we are called to demonstrate the heart of Christ in word and deed. That is why you can also say, "I am the heart of LWML."

## My heart?

Here is where you might raise your hand and say, "I am the heart of LWML? Really? I know my heart, and it is not worthy of being the heart of anything!" And in a way, you would be right. Our hearts are sinful and imperfect.

1. Read Matthew 15:19–20a.

What does Jesus say comes out of our hearts? Summarize what Jesus is saying here.

**Out of our hearts comes evil thoughts, false witness, slander, and the like. What our Lord reminds us here is that out of our sinful hearts comes all that is sinful, manifesting itself in various ways before us. As such, at the very core of who we are, we are sinners in need of God's help to take our unholy, sinful words and deeds and forgive us, granting us Christ's righteousness.**

2. Read Jeremiah 17:9.

What does the prophet say about our hearts? How might we see this condition in our lives?

**Jeremiah tells us that our hearts deceive us. We see this in our lives when temptation gets the best of us because our heart has told us to give into it. There are times where worldly concerns supersede Godly things. We are also guilty of thinking that we know better than God and that God's Word doesn't always apply to us. Participants could also add specific ways from their personal experience where their heart has deceived them into relying upon themselves or the world rather than God and His Word.**

These and many other passages reveal that our hearts are not what we would like them to be. Our hearts are deceitful and filled with all manner of sin. If we're honest about this, we might think it hard to say, "I am the heart of LWML."

### **A heart transplant**

The good news is that our hearts are never too sinful for our Savior. Time and again in Scripture, we see God taking those hearts inclined to sinful ways and changing them so that His righteous plans are accomplished. Sin has sought to make our hearts stop — it has brought chaos and death into our lives. Yet from the moment of Adam and Eve's fateful bite, God has promised to make His people new again.

3. Read Ezekiel 36:25–27.

What does God promise He is going to do for us?

God is going to wash us clean from our uncleanness and sin, which is a picture of Baptism. He will also tear down the idols and false gods we set up for ourselves, be they tangible or perceived. With all our ungodly impurities removed, God will take our dead, sinful heart and replace it with a fleshly, living heart and then fill it with His Spirit so that we may truly live. With this new heart, God will enable us to walk in His ways as we are led by the Spirit. While this may seem like God is simply making us obey His rules, what He is really doing is leading us into a new and better life with Him now, even as we are inheritors of the perfect, eternal life in His kingdom.

Even though we have been sprinkled clean in Baptism and given a new heart and spirit, sin still fills our heart. It is a life-long struggle between the saint Christ has made us to be, and the sinner that still fights back. This is a battle that is waged in our heart.

4. Read Psalm 51:10–12.

What is David's prayer, and how does the Lord answer it?

David prays that God will create a new heart within him that seeks after the Lord's ways faithfully. David's desire is not to be rejected because of his sin, but to be brought into the Lord's nearer presence where life abounds. Additionally, David also asks that, from this point forward with his cleansed heart, he might live in the joy of salvation and walk in the ways of the Lord. In response, the Lord answers this prayer by keeping David on the throne as king of Israel and giving him faithful charge over God's people. However, more than this, God sends His Son, Jesus Christ, to bring about the truly clean heart that David prays for by shedding His blood on the cross. Jesus also brings David to the joy of eternal salvation through the power of His resurrection, and thereby brings David into the presence of God forever.

When we worry that our sinful hearts might make us unqualified to be the heart of LWML, or of anything else, we look to the cross of Christ and find our hope and salvation. From the cross, Christ is forgiving our sin, He is pouring out His life for us, and through the means of grace, Christ delivers his righteousness to us so that by His Spirit we may live in Him.

5. Read 1 John 3:19–22.

What does forgiveness and a new heart give us, according to St. John?

This new heart for God enables us to live confidently before others knowing that our eternal salvation has been secured by Christ. Such confidence can help us be bold in our witness and service, loving those whom God has placed into our lives. This new heart also enables us to call upon the name of the Lord in prayer and to know that He hears and answers us, for we are His children. Such prayer will aid us as we go about our vocations, especially when we need His strength, His wisdom, His guidance, and His forgiveness to help us along the way.

### **What do I do with this new heart?**

Let's take a look at the goals for the *I am the Heart of LWML* campaign. How do the Bible verses listed by each one help us embrace this new identity we have in Christ within the LWML, the Church, and the world?

**Goal #1: That each woman recognizes she is the Heart of LWML, created to praise His name, reflect His glory, and share His love.**

See Romans 10:9–10 and Colossians 3:16–17.

Justified by God in Christ, we are saved from sin and given life eternal. We then are led to bear witness to this great salvation in Christ and know that He helps us to be bold in our confession. His Word dwells in our hearts, a Word that not only changes us by His grace, but has the power to accomplish every task that our Lord sends His Word to do through us.

**Goal #2: That our church understands that the Heart of LWML lies within each woman as she engages in mission education, mission inspiration, mission service, and mission support.**

See Matthew 9:37–38 and 2 Corinthians 9:6–7.

One of the important tasks that the LWML undertakes is to pray for opportunities for mission to take place, and then to support the mission field through prayer and other means. The opportunities abound, and there is a way for all of God's people to support and participate in this work that the Lord has called His Church to attend to in His world. Part of this is accomplished, cheerfully, through mites and other means by which our mission grants and missionaries are supported. Every woman, and all people come to see that their support through mites and prayers make a big impact for the sake of the kingdom by the grace of God.

### **Goal #3: That each woman of the LCMS embraces her role as a Lutheran Woman in Mission.**

See 1 Timothy 1:5 and 1 Peter 3:15.

The gift of faith in Christ is what moves all Christians to a life of love and service. As our hearts have been changed and cleansed, we now go forth in love, bringing Christ into every act, every word, and every opportunity that the Lord gives us to tell the Good News of Jesus Christ. Through ongoing study of God's Word and reception of His gifts of grace in the Sacraments of the Church, Christians are strengthened in their lives of faith and made ready at all times to give a reason for the hope they have in Jesus.

### **I am the Heart of LWML!**

So you see, you can say, "I am the heart of LWML." It is not because you have a perfect life or a certain intelligence or an engaging personality, or even the cleanest of hearts (at least, not on your own). It is because you are a child of God, baptized into Christ, cleansed and forgiven so that your heart is clean and united to Jesus. Christ has given you His heart and His Spirit so that you may live confidently in your faith and joyfully before others. In all things, it is Christ who lives in you and it is in Him that we *live and move and have our being* (Acts 17:28a). In Christ, you are the heart of LWML.

Christ is the heart of all we say and do in the LWML. Christ has called you into the LWML as, together, we "joyfully proclaim Christ, support missions, and equip women to honor God by serving others." Christ has given you a new heart for this task. When doubt creeps in because of sin, look to the cross and remember what Jesus has said: *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid* (John 14:27). So be bold and declare, "I am the heart of LWML for I am in Christ and Christ is in me." *And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus* (Philippians 4:7).

### **Closing Prayer:**

Gracious God, thank you for sending Your Son to cleanse my sinful heart and to grant eternal life to me and all who call upon Your name. In Your wisdom, give me opportunities to proclaim Christ in word and deed. Pour out Your Spirit on me that my faith may be steadfast so I do not lose heart. Allow me to be Your hands and feet to serve Your children in mercy and love; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Bible verses are taken from the ESV translation unless otherwise noted.

*I am the Heart of LWML*, by Rev. Brian Noack, Sayville, New York  
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