



## LWML North Dakota Tackles Human Trafficking

The Time Is NOW to talk about the social issues of your district. The **LWML North Dakota District** partnered with the **LCMS North Dakota District** to put on a *Witness, Mercy and Life Together* luncheon on the topic of human trafficking. After a Bible study by North Dakota District President, the Rev. Dr. James Baneck, Rebekah Grimm from Minneapolis spoke on the topic “Sex Trafficking: a Global Crisis.” Following lunch, Dawnya Underwood, from Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, addressed “Faith Rooted Efforts for Survivors of Trafficking.” To end the day, ninety women and men joined discussions about the local-based agencies to support and how a church can get involved followed by joining together in prayer.

Fall 2015 theme: **Friends=Sisters**  
 Winter 2015 theme: **Then Sings My Soul**

**NEWS!** Please send LWML news (and photos!) to:  
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by July 1, 2015. Include name, address, phone, and email address.

## The LCMS and Survivors of Domestic Violence and Abuse

by Kim Schave, Task Force Chairman

What does The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod have to offer survivors of domestic violence? The one thing they need the most — the Gospel!

The Gospel transcends the most traumatic of afflictions by offering hope, healing, and restoration. Through the loving reminder of Jesus’ atoning work on the cross, a victim of abuse can be made to feel secure in his or her place in the body of Christ. Understanding the boundless love that God has for the survivor can bring reassurance to someone who is feeling broken and unloved.

Through the Gospel, hopelessness is turned to hope. Shame is turned to esteem. Fear is turned to courage. Isolation is turned to fellowship. Worry is turned to trust. Doubts about God’s love and protection are replaced with confidence about His provision. Walking alongside a survivor of domestic violence is one way the church demonstrates its commitment to love and care for the neighbor in need. It also upholds the church’s corporate function as outlined in Romans 12:4–5 (ESV): *For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.* As the body of Christ, the LCMS is poised to offer assistance to survivors of domestic violence.

LCMS Convention resolutions in 2007 and 2010 tasked Synod with providing “materials and trained individuals to assist districts, congregations, and schools in addressing abuse and ministering to the spiritual needs of those struggling with the effects of abuse.” The **LCMS Task Force on Domestic Violence and Child Abuse**, comprising diverse professionals, was convened.

The task force is striving to bring greater awareness to the issue as well as offer hope and healing to those who have suffered at the hands of an abuser. Care has been taken to ensure that the materials developed proclaim the Gospel with great clarity so that no additional burden is placed on a person already afflicted with unimaginable pain.

To date, the task force has developed a website on [lcms.org](http://lcms.org) from which free, downloadable resources for church workers and laity are available. These resources include a theological statement on domestic violence and abuse, rites and prayers pertaining to abuse, a helpful resource sheet that lists informative literature and links to websites and phone apps, a prayer booklet for survivors, and an illustrated booklet for children and youth. (Some resources have also been translated into Spanish). A comprehensive training program for church workers and laity has been developed and is available to districts, circuits, congregations, RSOs, LCMS academic institutions, and other interested church-related entities.

In addition to caring for its own, the body of Christ is called to welcome and care for those outside its fold. By embracing survivors of domestic violence and offering a clear proclamation of the Gospel, our church is positioned to be a beacon of light in the midst of the dark world where abuse victims find themselves living. This mission field extends outside of our borders to far-away places where our international church partners are laboring to bring Christ to all nations. In countries where domestic violence is problematic, the LCMS is poised to bring resources to bear for addressing needs.

Our heavenly Father does not wish for His children to be separated from Him. We find assurance of this in Romans 8:38–39 (ESV): *For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Not even an abuser has the power to separate us from the steadfast love that is ours through Jesus Christ.