President Debbie: WE CONTINUE TO PROCLAIM

This morning, Debbie Larson will conclude her fourth year of service as LWML President by presenting her report to the convention body. She has graciously provided us with a few of the highlights from her report so that you can share them with your group at home:

▶ Two years ago, your Board of Directors stepped forward, trusted God, and was blessed to be able to hold an in-person convention in Lexington in 2021. Then COVID closed businesses and conferences once again. It was not by chance that we were able to meet. I believe we met in-person because that was the will of our Father. He is the Lord of the Nations, and I praise Him for allowing us to gather in Lexington and again here, in Milwaukee.

▶ God forms character during challenging times, and the character of this group of women continues to grow — strong and sure. We continue to deal with the effects of COVID. Remember: a tiny virus can do damage, but a mustard seed of faith gives us the strength to trust in God.

▶ By His grace, our Lord of the Nations continues to use LWML to bless His people, funding mission grants at a rate not seen before. We met our mission goal, set in Lexington, by January 2023 — three months early! We enter this next biennium with over $325,000 already designated towards funding future mission grants. Alleluia!

▶ This amazing God of ours has brought nations to our doorstep. Opportunities to share Jesus’ love by experiencing and embracing His gift of cultural differences abound. I encourage each of you to look for those opportunities and step out and embrace our Mission Statement.

▶ LWML’s future will have new ideas under new leaders. Women across the nation will continue to proclaim, give, and serve in unity of purpose because our Lord of the Nations is the Lord of the past, the present, and the future.


NEWLY ELECTED OFFICERS

President: Eden Keefe
Vice President of Organizational Resources: Arlene Naasz
Vice President of Special Focus Ministries: Karol Selle
Treasurer: Anita Werner
Pastoral Counselor: Rev. Mark Maas
Nominating Committee: Olajumoke Odedeke (Chairman), Deaconess Betty Knapp, Laura Strattman, Melissa Vance, Roxanne Pieper

THE HOPE OF ALL NATIONS

At this morning’s sending service, outgoing LWML Senior Counselor, the Rev. Brian Noack, will bless us by serving as our proclaimer.

The theme of the sermon will focus on hope and how Christ is the hope for the nations. As Lutheran Women in Mission, we are called to share the hope we have in Christ so that many more may be gathered to celebrate eternal life with Christ in His kingdom.

In addition, a time will be set aside to bless and dedicate our Gifts from the Heart, and celebrate all the ways our Lord is reaching people with His mercy.

Make sure to stay and be blessed and encouraged before making your way home!
Eden Keefe
ELECTED LWML PRESIDENT

Eden Keefe of Overland Park, Kansas, was elected to serve as national LWML President and will address the assembly this morning. She shared her vision that, as LWML, Lutheran Women in Mission, we will be purposeful and purpose-filled as we joyfully proclaim Christ, support missions, and honor God by serving others. In good Lutheran fashion, perhaps you are asking, “What does this mean?” She explains: Purposeful — Moving forward with thoughtful planning to impact the world with our mite giving and mission living. Purpose-filled — Christ-centered and dedicated in what we seek to accomplish, yet flexible and creative in how we engage women of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Eden shared that she and Char Kroemer visited regularly these past months, collaborating on pre-convention responsibilities, and praying with, and for, one another and the future. We, as Lutheran Women in Mission, trust that He will equip us for service “wherever and whenever He has need for us” (LWML Pledge). In the short-term, Eden looks forward to the LWML Board of Directors meeting this afternoon as they begin the transition into a new biennium, keenly aware of the gift of leadership and service by all those who preceded them. She seeks your prayers for God’s continued provision, grace, and guidance as we “Celebrate the Lord of the Nations” and Serve the Lord with gladness! (Psalm 100:2).

Celebrating With LAUGHTER ...

As we celebrated the Lord of the Nations for the past few days, laughter ensued as Laverne and Shirley returned to Milwaukee — this time not as factory workers but as Lutheran Women in Mission. In this, their second convention appearance together, Jan Struck and Abby Goehring, once again used every day and convention experiences to entertain and teach us about ourselves and our God. Lil’ Shirley has always been on the go. Laverne has always been amazed at what Shirley could accomplish. This morning we’ll get to hear them one more time. Listen closely to find the answer to “Why are missionaries not only the ones who cross the sea?” Then, thank the Lord for gifting Jan and Abby with their talents.

... AND SONG

On the other side of the stage, Dina Vandetti returned to lead us in song. Dina’s years in education and love for music combine to give her what it takes to lead 3,500 convention attendees in singing songs of praise, reflection, and Scripture, while throwing in some laughs as well. This convention marks number five for Dina as song leader. Dina defines the LWML as “completely laser-focused on the mission — to be the hands and feet of Jesus in the world where we live. It’s always been about that.”

We praise God for the talents of our side stage friends who laugh, sing, and lead us to “Celebrate the Lord of the Nations.”
FRIDAY INFO GATHERINGS

First-Timers Lunch with President Debbie Larson
Close to 300 first-time convention attendees were welcomed and encouraged by President Debbie Larson, who shared her contagious love for Jesus and her LWML journey. Because not everyone is a “joiner,” she encouraged attendees to continue inviting others to LWML activities and Bible studies.

Lunch with Jan Struck, Abby Goehring, and Dr. Dina Vendetti
This trio of talented ladies entertained the packed ballroom. Their love for Jesus, LWML, and one another was apparent in their presentation. “I am incredibly blessed to serve LWML in the way that I have and am constantly humbled by the way my Lord has allowed me to speak the Good News in this way.” Jan Struck

LAMP Ministry with Dr. Steven Schave
The Rev. Steve Schave, currently serving as the Executive Director of Lutheran Association of Missionaries and Pilots (LAMP), shared the mission impact LAMP provides among indigenous communities in remote areas of Northern Canada. “It has been an honor to be so actively engaged in reaching the lost and caring for the least throughout my ministry. … God's mission is not complete until every lost sheep and lost coin has been found.”

Armed Forces with Rev. Craig Muehler
Chaplain Craig Muehler, a retired U.S. Navy Captain, serves as the Director of the LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces. He shared the impact being made through supporting our military and their families as we celebrate their service to our country. “As I reflect back on my life and ministry, I am continually amazed at the mercy and grace of my Lord.”

Phil’s Friends with Phil Zielke
Since its inception in 2006, the goal of Phil’s Friends has been to provide support and hope to cancer patients and their families — all in the name of Jesus. To date, nearly 50,000 care packages, each containing a Bible and a blanket, have been delivered to hospital rooms and homes. “Through prayer and by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Gospel will go out to every tongue, tribe, and nation. The work isn’t easy, but it’s incredibly rewarding. I’m thankful to be in the harvest fields with all of you.”

GOL with Linda Gage
With much enthusiasm, Linda Gage shared the joy of working as a Gift Planning Counselor for Gifts of Love. Attendees were inspired to share their faith and bless their families while also making a lasting impact through charitable gift planning.

Did you miss the “WHAT’S YOUR 80?” VIDEO?
Never fear! Simply scan this QR code or visit lwml.org/80 and be led directly to the amazing video compilation of the many projects completed throughout all our districts. It is our sincere hope that you will be blessed as you view this video, and that you are inspired to share it as well.

CONVENTION BY THE NUMBERS

TEEN UP 4 MITES
125
[ ] golfers
almost double the 2021 event!

31
women golfers

$35,000
raised for the LWML Mission Goal

$100,000+
total impact since 2011

MISSION GRANTS
83
Mission Grant countries

$2,350,000
NEW! 2023-2025 LWML Mission Goal

$28.9 million
80-year national mission grant impact

Priceless
Standing hand-in-hand with sisters in Christ singing the Doxology
**MISSION IMPACT LUNCHEONS**

**Hmong Ministries with Rev. Doua Xiong**

Rev. Xiong and his wife Sue actively work with Hmong Outreach Ministries in California. They shared how they once practiced animism, but now live new lives through the work of the Holy Spirit and the saving grace of Jesus. “When our Lord Jesus said to Nathanael, ‘You will see greater things than these’ (John 1:50), He is truthful to His words, and we have experienced that — one time after another. Therefore, anyone who is called, do not follow what you have seen, but listen to the Word of the Lord, let Him lead, and you will see the unseen.”

**Rev. Greg Seltz**

Rev. Seltz, Executive Director of the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty (LCRL), shared how his work in our nation’s capital impacts the mission of the church as it encourages religious liberty. “My walk with the Lord has been quite a ride. I never imagined … I would be a pastor in places like New York City and Los Angeles, sharing the Gospel with the wealthiest and the poorest in our country. His love for me, for my family, and for those He brings into our lives is real each and every day, and I get to preach and teach what I know and receive by grace through faith.”

**LCMS Missions with Rev. Robson and Missionaries**

Rev. Kevin D. Robson has served as the Chief Mission Officer for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod since 2015. Rev. Robson was accompanied by Rev. Charles and Cheryl Ferry, Regional Director for Asia, and Rev. Ted and Rebecca Krey, Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean. Rev. Robson shared, along with the support of LWML, “… we look with great anticipation for the big, bold, audacious, magnificent moments ahead, as we move forward and continue Making Disciples for Life.”

**LCEF, Mission Focused, with Rev. Bart Day**

Currently serving as President and CEO of Lutheran Church Extension Fund, Rev. Day shared the focus of LCEF: to provide church workers and congregations the opportunity to impact mission and use the financial gifts God has given them to share the Gospel with others.

**LHM with Kurt Buchholz**

Serving as President & CEO of Lutheran Hour Ministries since 2013, Kurt brings a diverse background in international mission outreach and organizational leadership, along with a dedication for using today’s digital media resources to reach more people than ever before with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. “We are passionate about global missions in all their various forms and pray for and support work and missionaries.”

**Rev. Ed and Sheryl DeWitt with Redeeming Life Ministries**

Rev. Ed DeWitt and his wife, Sheryl, are the co-founders of Redeeming Life Outreach Ministries which operates a residential maternity home and a transitional living home for single pregnant and postpartum women in crisis. “I thank God that He led me and my wife, Sheryl, to the LCMS. It is here that I discovered what an amazingly loving God we have. It is my privilege and honor to be called to serve as a pastor of God’s flock.”

**Mission Nation Publishing with Robert Scudieri**

In 2016, Scudieri began Mission Nation Publishing to strengthen the church by providing resources to inspire and equip churches to reach ethnic groups different from their own. “I am grateful for the encouragement given by the LWML all through my ministry of fifty-one years. I believe LWML to be the most mission oriented entity in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod — a blessing to men and women, to congregations, to the districts of the LCMS, and to the Synod.”

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**MEET THOSE WHO HELP US CELEBRATE**

**Marilyn Seefeld, Convention Organist**

“Pure Joy!” That is how our convention organist Marilyn Seefeld refers to the music she has created and led others to create, over her lifetime. This is the third convention at which Marilyn has had the honor to play and the second that has been hosted in Milwaukee. She shares that planning for the convention has changed over the years — now much more of an online affair. However, “the focus is on Jesus, our Savior — serving Him and Him alone.” Marilyn has been playing organ since she was a child and has played in Iowa, South Dakota, and the Milwaukee area. “As long as we have breath, we praise the Lord!” The Rodgers all-digital organ was provided by Triune Music of Elmhurst, Illinois 630-279-3535

**Allison Mackee, Choir Director**

Being a choir director is not what Allison Mackie set out to do when she went to college at Concordia University — Nebraska. But, 5 years later, she graduated as a Director of Parish Music. Allison’s vocation allows her to lead brothers and sisters in Christ in praising Him from elementary-aged children all the way up to the adult choir at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church and School in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. This weekend she attends her first LWML National Convention and leads the choir — 309 strong. They will lead us to “Clap Your Hands” and “Rejoice … the Lord is King.”
RISING WITH THE LORD IN CELEBRATION

Saturday morning started early for those participating in the early morning Bible studies. Here is a recap of the studies:

**At Table with Jesus:** Relating the lesson Christ taught at a meal He hosted, Rev. Kris Whitby told of what amazing things happen when God invites us to dine with Him.

**Unshakable:** Donna Snow shared a taste of LWML’s new study *Unshakable*. In this study Donna shares that even in our most difficult life stories, we can point others to the love and grace only Jesus can share.

**Yesterday, Today, and Forever:** In a study of Hebrews 13, Rev. Robert Mundahl led participants to see that, while many things have changed in LWML’s 80 years, our foundation in Christ remains the same.

Singing Songs of Praise:

**CELEBRATION, NOT FEAR**

Through word and song, Convention Bible Study Leader Kaye Wolff reminded attendees, “We praise and celebrate God for His praise-worthiness.” Kaye is active in both the LCMS and LWML. She became interested in LWML when she was young, getting her own Mite Box at age 9. She says, “I asked my mom to give me money to put in my new Mite Box, but she told me I had to use my own money, thus instilling sacrificial giving at an early age.”

Our convention Bible study, “Blessed are the Nations,” is based on the convention theme verses (Psalm 33:12–13), but Kaye chose to start at the beginning of Psalm 33 to understand the context. In developing the study, she used a six-point outline, culminating in the truth that believers are to be a light to the world, proclaiming the message of salvation to the nations. When hearing the convention theme, Kaye’s thoughts are to “give thanks and praise to the Lord in all circumstances.”

Kaye looks at the people in the Bible as family members. Next to Jesus, who is her everything, she most respects Job. Even though Satan tried to turn Job away from God, Job remained faithful to his Lord. “He continued to trust that God’s plan was for his good. I pray for the faith of Job.”

On May 19, 2023, Lutheran woman in mission Kaye Wolff received the Christus Vivit Award from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, for demonstrating exemplary service to the church. Read more about Kaye on page 5 in the convention manual.

A short note from

THE COUNSELOR

I cannot praise God enough for the high, high privilege of serving as a pastoral counselor to LWML.

Women are an incredible gift from God to the Church. I know this personally, having been married to Judy for over 56 years — which, besides my faith in Jesus, is beyond all imagination God’s greatest gift to me.

For a long time, I have marveled at how women put their gifts to use for the Church, particularly in the LWML. That thought has been multiplied many times over these last two years. All I can do is praise God for you all and encourage you to generously and diligently continue to let God use you for this exceedingly wonderful work for Lutheran Women in Mission.

Rev. Gary Piepkorn, LWML Pastoral Counselor

“JESUS IS THE REASON WHY WE CELEBRATE ... FOR HE HAS WON OUR SALVATION AND GIVEN IT TO US AS A GIFT”

-Kaye Wolff
Rev. Dr. Steven Schave, Executive Director of Lutheran Association of Missionaries (LAMP) thanked LWML for supporting the “Propelling the Gospel” grant given this past biennium, “This grant means the world,” he tearfully exclaimed. “God has sent us to children of every nation. The grant helps LAMP locate pilots and keep them in the air safely.” LAMP will push even farther north into Canada and hopes to reach out to 55 new communities by 2025. The most important resource LAMP pilots bring is the light and hope of Jesus’ love to many children and young adults who live in despair and darkness.

Mites in Action Speaker Phil Zielke is excited about the wonderful partnership between Phil’s Friends and Lutheran Women in Mission. “God works miracles through Phil’s Friends and the women of the LWML. This year we will deliver our 50,000th care package. That’s 50,000 blankets that let patients know they are covered in God’s love, 50,000 Bibles given, and 1,000,000 Cards of Hope delivered! All of this adds up to countless lives being touched by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Rev. Kevin Robson, LCMS Chief Mission Officer, introduced two career missionaries — Rev. Ted Krey, Director of International Mission, Latin America-Caribbean Region in the Dominican Republic; and Rev. Charles Ferry, Director of International Mission, Asia Region in Taiwan. Each brought thanks for LWML support and shared that Romans 10:17, “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ is the basis for the missionaries’ commitment to orally share God’s Word. Their wives, Cheryl Ferry and Rebecca Krey, took the stage to share challenges and joys of serving in foreign countries. They are encouraged by the prayers, messages, and financial support of the LWML.

Chaplain Craig Muehler, Ministry to the Armed Forces director, gave us a glimpse into the work done by the mission grant to support Operation Barnabas for veterans and their families. Operation Barnabas identifies and recruits chaplains, trains congregations and individuals to support veterans, and shares ideas for honoring and appreciating veterans in our churches and communities. They partner with local and National organizations through VA services and hospitals, Honor Flights, Lutheran Church Charities Comfort Dogs, and more. “We must support and encourage veterans to live in hope and peace through God’s love and mercy.”

Kurt Buchholz, President and CEO of Lutheran Hour Ministries (LHM) shared that the task of LHM in Mongolia is to lift up and equip. Missionaries seek leaders to share the Gospel of Christ with their neighbors. Kurt assured attendees that LHM will not rest until all know of the love of Christ.

Rev. Doua Xiong and his wife, Sue, brought greetings from central California, where they lead Hmong Outreach Ministries in Merced and Fresno. Rev. Doua was raised in Shamanism, an extreme practice of communicating with living and dead spirits. A common ritual is to tie a string around the neck of a child to protect their spirit from leaving the body. Because of this practice, it is difficult for Hmong people to follow Jesus because they are tied to Satan in fear. Pastor Xiong uses his experience in this false teaching to teach the Hmong people about Jesus and share the Gospel message with them. “In the U.S., you wear a watch, but you have no time; we do not wear a watch, and we have time.” Make time for fellowship and to plant the seed through God’s Word.

MITES IN ACTION!

In the LWML Store during convention, Round Up for Mites raised $1,141.31
Mission Grants
“CELEBRATE THE LORD OF THE NATIONS”

In 1942, women from 15 districts met in Chicago and the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League (LWML) was formed. The purpose of LWML was to develop greater mission consciousness among women through missionary education, missionary inspiration, and missionary service. All mission gifts (mites) collected locally would be designated as 25% for national projects and 75% for district projects.

The first national mission grant of $15,000 was given to Christ the Chapel for the Deaf in Cleveland, Ohio (1943–1945 biennium). During the next 80 years, the available dollars for grants steadily grew and the number of grants supported increased. For the 2023–2025 biennium, 31 mission grants were selected by the delegates with a mission goal of $2,350,000.

Over the years, mite offerings have supported approximately 460 mission grants in 83 countries. These grants supported:
- Ministry to the blind, deaf, and mentally handicapped.
- Ministry to Hispanic, Native Americans, and other ethnic groups within the United States.
- Ministry to children, college students, and women.
- Ministry overseas, including direct missionary support, leadership training, church buildings, and improved quality of life for missionaries.
- Ministry providing translations of the Bible, catechism, and Bible stories for training and teaching.

We praise God for the gifts given and rejoice knowing that the message of salvation resounds through the nations.

CONVENTION OFFERINGS

Offerings were given in person or electronically throughout the 2023 LWML Convention, from those attending and those sharing their gifts from afar. These reported numbers will change as the electronic donations are tallied. Please watch for an email this summer, celebrating the completion of these donations. Here are the totals as of 2 p.m. on Saturday, June 24, 2023:

**Convention Offering #1**
LWML Mission Goal 2023–2025
$54,922 was received and contributed to the 2023–2025 LWML Mission Goal.

**Convention Offering #2**
We Are Called to Care — Plano, Illinois
$31,037 was collected to help create a therapy and visitation room for children and families in the foster care system while sharing Jesus’ unconditional love. wearecalledtocare.com

**Convention Offering #3**
Wolf River Lutheran High School — Shawano, Wisconsin
$18,360 was received to support Wolf River Lutheran High School’s scholarship fund. It is the school’s mission to share Christ’s saving grace by providing a Christian education to any student, regardless of race or economic standing. wrlhs.org/about

**Convention Offering #4**
Milwaukee Area Crisis Pregnancy Centers — Concordia Gospel Outreach
$2,872 was given to help Concordia Publishing House and its charity — Concordia Gospel Outreach — to provide Gospel-based materials including Bibles, the children’s book Alive Before You Were Born, and other devotional materials to Milwaukee area crisis pregnancy centers. concordiagospeloutreach.org

NEWS RELEASE
AVAILABLE MONDAY

A news release with the convention highlights, election results, new mission grants, and mission goal will be available on the website on Monday, June 26th, for you to copy and share with your districts, zones, groups, and congregations.
Celebrate the Lord of All Servants

Thank you Pastor Bill Engfehr and Maureen Consiglio! Both of these servants of Christ have used their various gifts to plan and enhance many of our conventions. To learn more about each of them, go to page 105 in the convention manual.

Lord Jesus, in Your earthly ministry You were loved and served by devoted women, including Mary and Martha in whose home You enjoyed rest and refreshment. Give us grace to recognize and affirm the varied and singular gifts You bestow on women (and especially upon the LWML) that Your kingdom may be extended, Your Church enriched, and Your people lovingly served to the glory of Your holy name; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Pray Without Ceasing

(LSB, Page 306)

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Sponsor of the 2023 LWML Convention daily newspaper, The Celebration Chronicles. Thanks be to God for the continued faithfulness of the LWML.