



Shining with the light of Jesus

by Linda Gage, Gift Planning Counselor

For we
are God's
masterpiece.
He has
created us
anew in
Christ Jesus,
so that we
can do the
good things
he planned
for us
long ago.

Ephesians 2:10 NLT

High above the beautiful hills of San Diego sits a lovely home with a double-tiered deck the entire length of the house. The view during the day with the colorful vegetation, mountain peaks, and shimmering valleys is magnificent! The view is just as spectacular at dusk as twinkling lights on the hillsides and canyons shine like stars. This is where Chuck and Joanene Falk have made their home.

Originally from the Midwest and a graduate of Concordia Nebraska, Chuck accepted his first call as a math teacher to Lutheran High School West in Detroit, Michigan.

Through another teaching call, this couple found their way to California and are members of Christ Lutheran Church and School in La Mesa. Chuck later worked in software engineering, where he served more than 25 years, retiring in 2013.

Chuck and Joanene have a passion for serving others and sharing Christ. One of the unique ways they do this is by opening up their lovely home to international students who attend college nearby. This year they are hosting the 80th and 81st students who have been welcomed into their home and have become part of their extended family.

Another creative way to share Christ was sparked from the 2015 Des Moines LWML Convention and theme of "Bountiful! Sow • Nourish • Reap." Joanene invited her neighbors for Summer Suppers Light each Tuesday during August for an informal gathering at their home. With her focus on Jesus, Light of the World, she prepared and served a light dinner. Each week a speaker shared her testimony of the reality of Jesus at work in her life.

I had the privilege of meeting Joanene at an LWML fall event where I was invited to share about our Gifts of Love Ministry. With a desire to learn more about Gift Planning, both Chuck and Joanene attended a small group meeting hosted by LWML Pacific Southwest District Gift Planning Supporter Pat Beach Schutte. I shared with them a book, *Provide and Protect, Important Life and Death Decisions*, which highlights charitable gifting options and the benefits they can provide.

Chuck and Joanene decided that they wanted to gift their lovely home to ministry to further God's work when they go to heaven. They were able to do this through a Life Estate Reserve, which provides current tax benefits. An agreement is drawn up outlining the gift, and the property deed is transferred to the LCMS Foundation, our ministry partner. Chuck and Joanene have full use of their home while they are living. They continue to keep up the maintenance, taxes, and insurance. At the end of their life, the LCMS Foundation will take care of selling it. The proceeds from the sale are directed by Chuck and Joanene and will bless a variety of Gospel-based ministries, including LWML. Chuck said, "Joanene and I are very pleased with the guidance and assistance Linda provided. We know that our home, which has been a blessing to us during our lifetime, will bless countless others through the Christ-centered ministries that are important to us."

Just as the lights twinkle and shine from their mountain-top view, Chuck and Joanene shine with the light of Jesus and, through their thoughtful planning and stewardship, lives will be touched and changed eternally.

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Please consider naming LWML in your estate plan. Our legal name is Lutheran Women's Missionary League.