



*Sandie Harjala, LWML
Mid-South District President*

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God calls and equips

A message from District President, Sandie Harjala

It is a blessing to have been elected as your new LWML Mid-South District President. I am Sandie Harjala and am a member of Grace Lutheran Church in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Have you ever answered God's call feeling totally unable to do the work?

About a year and a half ago I was asked by two dear friends (at least I thought they were dear friends), to submit a resumé to be on the ballot for LWML Mid-South District President. I have held many positions over the years in Lutheran Women in Mission. God fully equipped me for each of these—because the skills needed, I didn't have! I guess I'm teachable. I felt like this position of president was not for me. I prayed; my sweet husband prayed. Dave, my husband, said, "If God wants you there, He will equip you and you will win the election." (It is important to note that it is difficult to lose if no one runs against you!)

On May 10 I had major spinal surgery. The convention in Memphis, June 7-9 was no longer going to be on my agenda. This service opportunity, however, was still on God's list!

I love serving the Lord through the LWML, so I ask for your heartfelt prayers that my body heals, both my back and my internal organs that got messed up with anesthesia and pain meds because I have celiac disease. (Celiac is an autoimmune disease that doesn't tolerate gluten in your diet, including medications.)

I have answered God's call, but I need help. First and foremost, I need Jesus to guide my every move as I serve. Secondly, I need your prayers and willingness to step out of your comfort zone to fill vacant positions in our district and zones. Remember, it is God who will equip you.

Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands! (Psalm 90:17).

Serve the Lord with Gladness!

—President Sandie Harjala

Recharge, Refresh, Renew

Lauren Robertson, 1st Vice President

I love attending LWML Conventions. This is a time to see old friends and make new ones—and also a time to recharge. Hearing encouraging speakers like Kay Wolff, enjoying uplifting music and humor from Wendysue Fluegge, and being in the Word with my sisters and brothers in Christ has so much power. The time flew as we learned of our new mite goal, mission projects, updated bylaws and elected new officers, including myself. There is much work to be done, but I must thank outgoing 1st Vice President Jane Hubsch. I have had the privilege to work alongside Jane during our transition to online voting. Jane has been my sounding board and I am sure will still be for years to come. I also want to thank outgoing President Candy Habich. She has given me opportunities to serve in the LWML at the district level and I have learned much from her. And I have to thank Diane Reimold, 2nd Vice President, whom I have served under and learned from for 2 years. She has always had ideas and suggestions when I struggled and always built me up. Congratulations on Diane's well-deserved recognition with the Ralph Weiser Excellence in Ministry Award. I am blessed to have good company in the LWML surrounding me and guiding me.

Honoring George Allen

The LWML Mid-South District board of directors honored George Allen for his many years of faithful service to the LWML Mid-South District at their pre-convention board dinner. George has been our one and only webmaster since 2007! As if that was not enough, he took on the role of League Letter editor a few years later. George and his late wife, Janet, travelled across the district to attend LWML retreats and other events. Most recently, he and his two daughters attended the 2023 district retreat at Camp Garner Creek in Dickson, Tennessee. The board of directors and other friends contributed more than \$500 to our district endowment fund in George's honor. May God continue to bless this faithful servant!



*George Allen,
communications volunteer*

Growing the Mid-South District Endowment Fund

During the LWML Mid-South District Convention, contributions to the fund were received, with each contributing person placing their name on a petal. The petal was then placed on the stems. The flowers blossomed as we raised more than \$200 to be added to the endowment fund. Remember the endowment fund in your future giving. Its growth allowed us to send four women to the convention this year. —Mary Pruitt, Endowment Fund Chair



Greetings to You All!!!

Laurie Sanders, 3rd Vice President

Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name! (Psalm 100:4).

WOW!!!! I am thanking and praising our great God for a wonderful 28th Biennial Convention. God used the convention to flow through all of us as we returned home—and to flow through our groups to be encouraged in God’s mission field.

A bigger even WOW was that God and all of you have entrusted me to be your 3rd Vice President of the LWML Mid-South District. I am looking forward to how God is going to use me in this position. I pray that I can be a blessing to all women and the greater mission of the church through LWML.

Each quarter you will not only see where our mission grants are but I will also share with you ways you can encourage your zones and groups to share ways for getting the gospel out to those in our church and in our communities. Any ideas you have and would like for me to share, please use me as your 3rd Vice President to help. Your ideas can encourage all of us to participate in the common goal of sharing the gospel through outreach.

The new mission grants for the 2024-2026 Biennium are on the LWML Mid-South District website or they can be seen at this link <https://www.midsouthlwml.org/grantinfo/MissionGrantsTable.pdf>.

At the national level, there is a need for women to serve in many areas. One in particular is Vice President of Gospel Outreach. Nominations in this position are now being accepted. If you would like to consider this position or others that are open, please go to the following link: <https://unite-production.s3.amazonaws.com/tenants/lwml/attachments/454278/eNews-2024-04-03.pdf> to see this position and the description of those positions. If you would like to

Quick links to find your

WOW!

The new mission grants for the 2024-26 Biennium can be found *here*.



For opportunities for service to LWML on the national level, click *here*.

Mission Grant submissions for the 2025 LWML Convention in Omaha are due by September 1, 2024.

nominate someone, the nomination forms can be seen at this same link. Deadline for nominations for these positions is August 15, 2024.

Would your group like to submit a mission grant for the LWML convention next summer in Omaha? The deadline for these grants is September 1, 2024. The primary criteria for every proposal submitted is that the grant recipient will share the Gospel of Jesus Christ, through evangelism, teaching, and service to others.

As your 3rd Vice President, I look forward to working with all of you in this mission field in the LWML Mid-South District and throughout our world in bringing the gospel to those who do not know Jesus as their Savior.

Serving our Lord with gladness.

—Laurie Sanders, 3rd Vice President
missiongrants@midsouthlwml.org

28th Biennial Convention Report

Diane Reimold, Convention Chairman

On June 7, 2024, the 28th Biennial Convention of the LWML Mid-South District was opened with the processional of zone banners, executive board, and past presidents. President Candy Habich began the convention “in the name of God the Father who created us, God the Son who redeemed us, and God the Holy Spirit who sanctifies us and makes us one.” The 181 attendees who participated included 15 first timers to a district convention, four Young Women Reps, three Junior YWRs, and three ladies who have served in LWML for 50 years or more.

Special guests attending the convention included LWML Representative Brenda Piester, Keynote speaker Kaye Wolff, LWML Gift Planning Counselor Linda Gage, and LCMS Mid-South District President Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola and “our first lady,” Pat Paavola. The focus of Kaye’s message to us was God isn’t through with you yet!

The Gifts from the Heart ingathering collected for Life Choices of Memphis, Tennessee, included 84 packages/boxes of diapers, 203 packages of wipes, 89 bottles of shampoo and soap, 108 baby blankets, 164 baby bibs, 315 items of baby clothing, \$45 in gift cards, \$65 in cash, and 77 other items.

Three offerings were collected during the convention. The Friday worship service offering of \$2162.00 goes to our 2024-2026 Mission Goal. (See page 5 for the list of grants to be funded.) Our two Saturday offerings went to Transitions of Dyer County, Dyersburg, Tennessee (\$1794.80) and Dream Center of Jackson, Tennessee (\$1979.28).

The Friday opening worship service with holy communion was held at Christ the King Lutheran Church. LWML Mid-South District Senior Pastoral Counselor Rev. Joshua Ralston was the proclaimer. LWML Mid-South District Junior Pastoral Counselor



The Banquet Band included, left to right, Jenny Whitely, Kaye Wolff, Susan Snyder, Wendysue Fluegge, and Becky Grese.

Rev. Gordon Smith, Senior Pastor of Christ the King Lutheran Church Rev. Charles Neugebauer, and West Tennessee Zone Pastoral Counselor Rev. Eric Rudsenske assisted with the service.

The LWML Mid-South District Endowment Fund collected donations at their exhibit table during the convention breaks. \$259 will be added to the \$520 the members of the board of directors donated as an honorarium to thank George Allen for his many years of service to the LWML. A total of \$779 will be added to the Endowment Fund.

The Nominating Committee presented a slate of officers. The following individuals were elected:

- President Sandie Harjala
- 1st Vice President (Administration) Lauren Robertson
- 3rd Vice President (Mission Grants and Mission Service) Laurie Sanders
- Financial Secretary Erin Foster
- Nominating Committee Chairman Teri Miller and members Tiffany Nelson and Lois Hobby-Clayton

Continues on page 5

- Junior Pastoral Counselor Rev. Kory Janneke

Humorous interrupter and banquet entertainer Wendysue Fluegge kept everyone laughing with her doppelganger Tabitha Katt. The banquet band was hilarious. There is a video posted on our Facebook page for those who missed it.

Unique events happening during the convention included a national LWML mission grant check presentation for the 2023–2025 Biennium for Feeding Haitian Children Through Gospel and Meals Trinity HOPE in the amount of \$58,082. LWML Mid–South District President Candy Habich; Operations Manager for Trinity HOPE, Candi Boudreau; Carol Hall, widow of Trinity HOPE founder John Hall; and LCMS Mid–South

District President Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola received the check from LWML Recording Secretary Brenda Piester. We also saw Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola present the Ralph Weiser Excellence in Ministry Award to Diane Reimold. Diane is a true example of what this award represents. The award is given annually to a lay person who has contributed services and stewardship to the Mid–South District’s mission and ministries in honor of Ralph Weiser.

Thank you to the women of the West TN Zone for hosting the convention, Christ the King Lutheran Church, Memphis, Tennessee, for allowing us to use their facilities, President Candy Habich for her leadership these past 4 years, and our heavenly Father for giving us the LWML to serve Him.

Mission Grants, 2024–26 Biennium

The mission goal for the 2024–2026 Biennium is \$130,000. Mission grants that will be funded are:

- A. \$25,000 Financial Aid for Professional Church Workers** – LCMS Mid-South District
- C. \$8,000 First Lutheran Hot Springs – Worship Transportation for Wheelchair Bound** – Mid-Arkansas Zone
- D. \$8,160 City of Hope Outreach – Beds of Hope for Hope Village** – Mid-Arkansas Zone
- E. \$7,000 Camp Petit Jean – Camp Trinity Camperships** – Mid-Arkansas Zone
- F. \$6,500 Table Graces Food Pantry – To alleviate food insecurities in McMinn and Meigs Counties** – Chattanooga Zone
- H. \$10,000 Family Promise – Temporary Housing for Homeless Families** – East Tennessee Zone
- I. \$6,954 Isaiah 117 House Carter County Tennessee – Supporting Children Entering Foster Care** – East Tennessee Zone
- J. \$10,000 First Lutheran School and Early Childhood – Roof Repairs** – East Tennessee Zone

- K. \$7,000 Compassion Closet Ministry Funds – Support for Foster Children** – East Tennessee Zone
- L. \$5,000 Grace Lutheran Knoxville – Spiritual Support for Cancer Patients** – East Tennessee Zone
- O. \$6,500 Faith Lutheran Tullahoma – Last Call Radio Ministry** – Middle Tennessee Zone
- P. \$5,000 Trinity Hope – Feeding Haitian Children for the Kingdom** – Middle Tennessee Zone
- T. \$6,386 Tanzania Deaconess Ministry – Young Women Impacted by Albinism** – West Tennessee Zone (partial)
- X. \$6,500 Food Co-Op – Food for Seminary Students Concordia Theological Seminary Ft Wayne IN** – Lutheran Organization
- Y. \$7,000 Concordia Seminary St Louis – Supporting International Students** – Lutheran Organization
- Z. \$5,000 Lutheran Braille Workers – Taking Jesus Love to Visually Impaired Inmates** – Lutheran Organization

You're in a Good Time and Place to be Lutheran Women in Mission!

A message from Rev. Kory Janneke, Junior Pastoral Counselor

For those of you who don't know me (which is probably most of you!), my name is Pastor Kory Janneke. For the past two + years I've served at St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Conway, Arkansas. Prior to accepting God's Call to serve here in Arkansas, I also served congregations in South Dakota and Wisconsin.



First, I'd just like to introduce myself a little bit. I grew up in a Lutheran home in southern Illinois. My dad is also an LCMS pastor, and my mom has served the Church in various capacities, including as an organist and LWML officer. While attending a Lutheran high school in southern Illinois, the Lord led me to pursue the pastoral ministry. As a student at Concordia University Wisconsin, I met my wife Heidi, who is originally from central Arkansas. Heidi and I have six children (four boys and two girls) and are also expecting a baby boy this September.

It's been a blessing for us to settle in Arkansas and for Heidi and our kids to have extended family members nearby. It has also been a blessing for me to serve a Lutheran congregation in a new region of the country. As you are probably aware, Lutherans can be a rarity in the Bible Belt! While serving in Conway, it's been exciting for me to have a front row seat to watch the Holy Spirit bringing some folks back to the Lutheran Church and also to see Him drawing others to the Lutheran message for the first time.

It's my belief that Lutheran Christians are needed in places like Arkansas, Kentucky, Tennessee, and beyond! The Lutheran heritage that we have inherited is rich in the Gospel, centered in Christ Jesus, and rooted

in historic, creedal Christianity. Let us not forget that the Lord has entrusted us with such abundant blessings!

In these trying times, with a polarized society, shrinking churches, and rampant immorality, it can seem like such a daunting task to be engaged in Christ's mission. The needs around us and

around the world are many and serious. Most of all, countless souls, including many of our neighbors right here in the Bible Belt, still need Jesus and His forgiveness and salvation.

I'm reminded of the Old Testament story of Queen Esther who, together with the Jewish people in Persia, also faced some very daunting circumstances. But despite the dangers that she faced, Esther's relative Mordecai reminded her that the Lord had put her in the right time and place to protect her people. Mordecai said, *"For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"* (Esther 4:14).

Mordecai's words helped inspire Esther to be brave and speak up in defense of her fellow Jews. God put her in the Persian palace "for such a time as this." Likewise, God has put you and me where we are "for such a time as this." Confident in Christ, then, keep up your faithful work, serving your families, congregations, communities, and the wider Church and her mission in so many wonderful ways. Wherever God has located you to live and serve, you're in a good time and place to be Lutheran Women in Mission!

Grace & Peace, Pastor Kory Janneke

Zones in Action

News, reports, and activities from the
10 Zones of the LWML Mid-South District

East Tennessee Zone

Christian Life Spring Retreat

Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand (Isaiah 41:10).

More than 70 women gathered at Grace Lutheran Church in Knoxville, Tennessee, on April 6 for food, fellowship, song, Bible study, missions, and crafting. Rev. Jake Childers, Associate Pastor at Grace, served up a moving Bible study, reminding many of our catechism days. Also from Grace, Deaconess Intern Christina Childers talked about how social media impacts our youth today. Emily Hager, PhD, shared her story of increasing awareness of suicide prevention and her new role as Regional Director with the Tennessee Governor's Faith-Based and Community Initiative. We enjoyed some craft time making an envelope with care notes for LOSS (Local Outreach to Suicide Survivors). It was such a blessing to have the opportunity to be with our sisters in Christ!

—Vicki Simpson



Rev. Jake Childers with his wife, Deaconess Intern Christina Childers.



Emily Hager, PhD, Regional Director with Tennessee Governor's Faith-Based and Community Initiative



Left: Gifts from the Heart included resources to provide comfort and support to LOSS (Local Outreach to Suicide Survivors) clients. Above: Ladies enjoy lunch and fellowship.



Chattanooga Zone Spring Christian Life Workshop

The Chattanooga Zone LWML Spring Christian Life Workshop was held on April 20, 2024. Our theme for this event was “God’s Blessings Rescue Us,” based on the scripture reading

*“Do not be afraid...
for I will be with you
and will rescue you,”
declares the Lord
(Jeremiah 1:8).*

Our program speaker was Brother John Dotson, Chapel Speaker at The Chattanooga Rescue Mission (CRM), a ministry that works and serves the community to Bring Hope to The Homeless. Brother Dotson has preached at the Mission for 25 years. He spoke in depth on the physical and spiritual needs of the homeless. CRM provides many services to the homeless, including overnight shelter, showers, clothing, evening meals, and church services. They also provide addiction recovery services in their Christian Life program.

In support of CRM, we were ready to assemble 360 Snack Blessing Bags for the mission’s Food Bag Ministry. Many homeless come to the mission but do not stay,



so a Snack Blessing Bag is given, and it may be the beginning of a change in their lives. Brother Dotson’s talk gave a good insight into the work of the CRM, and we were most grateful he came to speak to us. Mite offerings were also collected. A luncheon was prepared by the First Lutheran LWML and we enjoyed good food and fellowship!

*And the King will answer them, “Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.”
(Matthew 25:40).*

Above: The ladies of the Chattanooga Zone LWML prepared 360 Snack Blessing Bags for the Chattanooga Rescue Mission Food Bag Ministry.



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