



*In Epiphany, we celebrate the Magi's journey to worship Jesus.*

## Christmas to Epiphany. . . and Then Where?

*A message from District President, Sandie Harjala*

**B**y the time you read this you probably have taken down the Christmas tree and put the decorations away. But Christmas doesn't end until Epiphany — which we celebrate on January 6. As a child, and still as an adult, we leave the tree and lights up until at least January 8, my birthday. As a little girl my birthday presents were always put under the Christmas tree.

So what does Epiphany mean? First, the name epiphany comes from the Greek *epiphaneia*, meaning “appearance” or “manifestation.” This refers to the celebration of God manifesting as the baby Jesus and revealing Himself to the world. When the Magi found Jesus, he was not in the manger, but was likely closer to being a toddler, living in a house in Bethlehem. Jesus's baptism is also celebrated during Epiphany.

The next important day to stop and think about is Ash Wednesday, which is celebrated on March 5, 2025. Ash Wednesday is the beginning of Lent, the season of the church year which leads up to the crucifixion of Christ. This is a time to repent and look for ways to leave our pet sins behind. Do you give something up for Lent? This year, how about trying to give up an attitude or response that doesn't reflect Jesus? Maybe it's an anger issue or speaking disrespectfully to people who get on your nerves. Many years ago I did just that — gave up disrespectful speech. As a result, people I didn't even know asked me if I found Jesus. It was then that I realized how badly I had been acting. Not long after that I really did open my heart and life to Jesus.

May 2025 be special as you spend more time with Jesus and letting others see you reflecting His love and grace. Have a blessed and Happy New Year!

*Serving the Lord with Gladness!*  
*President Sandie Harjala*

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# How's Your Race Going?

by Diane Reimold, Second Vice President

Professional and college football is coming to an end—after four months of playing games and trying to make it to the Super Bowl or college bowl games. It's a race to the finish for these teams to see if they can win a championship. Christians are also in a race of sorts, living our lives for God until He calls us to our heavenly home.

*And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us (Hebrews 12:1b, NIV).*

How do we know if we are running the race God has marked out for us? If you are serving God with your time, talents, and treasure, regularly attending worship services, helping those in need, praying, and telling others about Jesus and what He has done for you, you can be sure you are running the race you are supposed to run. But how long are we to run this race?

*However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me — the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace (Acts 20:24 NIV).*

For Christians, it's a life-long race we are to run. It's not a sprint. There are so many people in the world that do not know Jesus and since we do not know the hour when Jesus will come again, there should be a sense of urgency in telling people about Jesus. Christmas and the beginning of a new year are perfect opportunities to invite friends or family members to attend worship with us. Unchurched people may be more receptive to an invitation during the Christmas season, so identify someone in your circle of influence and extend a personal invitation to them to worship with you this Christmas and as we begin a new year.

## Dates and reminders

Payments for the *Lutheran Woman's Quarterly* from each group are due to your zone treasurer by January 15, 2025. Zone payments to the district Financial Secretary are due February 15. Each zone president and *Quarterly* Chairman will receive a spreadsheet showing the number of subscriptions ordered by each zone group and the cost for each group. Thank you in advance for making these payments on time.

*God's continued blessings and Happy New Year!!*



*Returning God's Blessings*

Your estate plan can enable you to express your Christian faith. Have you ever thought to express your faith and desire for your family to remain in the faith in a short, succinctly written piece you can share as a lasting testimony even after the Lord calls you home? You might also consider letting your loved ones know the impact they made on you during your life with a short letter to be included in your estate plan or will. Linda Gage, LWML Gift Planning Counselor, can help you to initiate this project, including sharing some examples.

To get started, contact Linda at [linda.gage@lfnd.org](mailto:linda.gage@lfnd.org) or call her at 800-741-4138. Diane Reimold has put a gift plan together and is available to answer any questions you may have. She can be reached at [giftsoflove@midsouthlwml.org](mailto:giftsoflove@midsouthlwml.org).



## Endowment Fund Update

Have you ever stumbled upon a unique plant? That is what this one was. Beautiful and yet unusual. It's called *Taxus canadensis* or Canadian Yew. I saw it at Silver Dollar City in Missouri, October 2022. I love its Christmas look! The LWML Mid-South District Endowment Fund is kind of like this. It has a long name and sounds complicated and very formal. But it has allowed wonderful things to happen and will continue to be a blessing. It has provided scholarships for individuals to attend conventions and a young woman to attend deaconess camp, just to name a few. As contributions are added to the fund, its principal grows and produces interest income. This annual interest income is used to further the spiritual growth of the women of the LWML Mid-South District. What a blessing—and one that will continue far into the future!

It will soon be time to submit applications for funding for training or other enrichment opportunities. Watch for details as the unique beauty of this funding source continues.

—Mary Pruitt, Endowment Fund Committee Chairman

## New Devotion Available



*God's Grace in a Lemon-Filled World* is a delightful booklet of 20 devotions, written by Aretta Gordish, that covers a myriad of situations where life throws a lemon, but God provides grace. The booklets are \$3.50 per copy, and are available at [cph.org](http://cph.org).

[lwml.cph.org/gods-grace-in-a-lemon-filled-world](http://lwml.cph.org/gods-grace-in-a-lemon-filled-world)

## Deadlines, Dates, and Events — Oh My!

Sometimes the number of events we need to track is overwhelming. So, here's a handy list of LWML Mid-South District resources to help you manage your calendar.

Resources	Content and URL
<a href="#">Planning Calendar on Website</a>	<p><b>Deadlines</b> for member contributions, Quarterly payments, Mission Grant submissions, League Letter submissions, Endowment Fund requests, convention delegate submissions</p> <p><b>Event dates</b> for board meetings, retreats, zone events, and conventions</p> <p><a href="http://www.midsouthlwml.org/web_documents/Mid-South%20District%20LWML%20Planning%20Calendar.pdf">www.midsouthlwml.org/web_documents/Mid-South%20District%20LWML%20Planning%20Calendar.pdf</a></p>
<a href="#">Event Calendar on Website</a>	<p>Detailed information for deadlines (see above), and events (see above)</p> <p><a href="http://www.midsouthlwml.org/event-calendar">http://www.midsouthlwml.org/event-calendar</a></p>
<a href="#">Events on Facebook</a>	<p>Major district events such as retreats and conventions. Zones may request that zone events be added.</p> <p><a href="http://www.facebook.com/MSD.LWML/events">www.facebook.com/MSD.LWML/events</a></p>

## Mission Grant Committee Update

Since June, we can thank and praise God for the blessings of 2024, with a total of \$36,136.00 for mission grants paid through year-end. Our economy has been difficult for many, and to me, this total reflects your faith and the faith of many others. These grants are so important in God's mission field of winning souls for Jesus. For ongoing updates on grant payments, visit the website at [midsouthlwml.org/mission-grants](https://midsouthlwml.org/mission-grants).

Please continue to encourage your groups to collect those mites. If you need ideas for collecting, please *email me* at [missiongrants@midsouthlwml.org](mailto:missiongrants@midsouthlwml.org) and I will help you with ideas to encourage your groups and churches to fill those mite boxes.

As you continue to collect those mites,



I would like to challenge you with a few questions to reflect upon. December is here and it's time to remember that our gift has arrived in the form of the baby in the manger, Jesus Christ our Lord. It is now time to be about the work of the new year—feeding the hungry, supporting the homeless and ministering to those in need.

What will you do to share Jesus with those in need? What will your “work of Christmas” be? For all of us, the closest choice is to fill that mite box to bursting so that we can finish our last grants in 2025!

Remember, with the Lord's blessing our mite goal can be met! Happy New Year!

*Serving our Lord with Gladness  
Laurie Sanders, Third Vice-President*

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## The Willing Servant

This time of year, we often reflect on the past year and contemplate our goals and purpose for the upcoming year while basking in the joy of the celebration of our Savior's birth. Oh, to respond with such conviction when the angel, Gabriel tells Mary that she would have a son and name him Jesus. Mary's response is humble, yet incredibly endearing and powerful:

*Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word (Luke 1:38).*

The nominating committee will be filling the ballot for officers to be elected at the LWML Mid-South District Convention in 2026. The positions to be filled are Second Vice President, Fourth Vice President, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, a new Nominating Committee (3 members), and Pastoral Counselor. Pray for our efforts to find candidates willing to serve and contemplate if you might be that candidate. Are you the willing servant ready to fulfill one of these roles?

The responsibilities for each position are listed in the District Directives and By-Laws which can be found on the LWML Mid-South website ([www.midsouthlwml.org](https://www.midsouthlwml.org)) under the About tab. If you would like to serve, or know someone who would like to serve, please contact us.

*God's Peace, LWML Mid-South Nominating Committee 2024-2026*

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# Your Mites' Journey

*Erin M. Foster, Financial Secretary*

**H**ave you ever given any thought as to how the mites you contribute to your local group actually make it to where they are used? When you put your mites in a basket or give them to your treasurer they don't just disappear into an endless tunnel.

Your group treasurer faithfully sends those mites to the treasurer for your zone. The zone treasurer collects the mites from all the groups in the zone and reliably sends the money to the financial secretary of the LWML Mid-South District. At the district level the financial secretary makes the deposits and reports them to the board of directors, among others. The district treasurer confirms the deposits reported and sends 25% of the mites collected to the national office of the LWML. That means 75% of the mites you give stay at the district level.

The mites that stay at the district level are used to fund all the grants that were approved at the LWML Mid-South District Convention. At our last district convention, we approved \$130,000 in grants. That means 75 cents of every \$1.00 you

contribute to mites stays in the district and is given to organizations that not only help people with their physical and mental needs, but also share the Gospel with them to strengthen their faith. But that is not all. Remember the 25% that goes on to our national organization of Lutheran Women in Mission? At the national convention in Milwaukee in 2024 \$2.35 million was approved for Mission Grants. Your 25% that you contribute goes to fulfill that commitment for missions around the world.

As your district financial secretary, collector of mites at the district level, I want each member of Lutheran Women in Mission to understand the path your mites travel and to know that the money is safeguarded the entire way to the end use. Your mites are a real and personal way you can serve the work of the Lord.

**Keep sending in those mites!**

Find the District Grant Table here:

[midsouthlwml.org/grantinfo/MissionGrantsTable.pdf](https://midsouthlwml.org/grantinfo/MissionGrantsTable.pdf)

## 2025 LWML Prayer Service Available



**T**he 2025 LWML prayer service is based on some of the most beloved words of Jesus: the Beatitudes, found in Matthew 5:1-12. In them, Jesus highlights people in various stations of life that are not always easy to envision as a child of God. And yet, our Lord calls each of them “blessed” and assures them of their place in the kingdom of heaven. As you hear the precious Beatitudes from our Lord and pray for people in many stages of life, may you indeed be blessed and encouraged in your life of faith. You can find all the details along with downloads for bulletins, logos, and PowerPoint at [www.lwml.org/prayer-service](http://www.lwml.org/prayer-service).

# Partners in the Gospel

*A message from Pastor Kory Janneke, Junior Pastoral Counselor*

**I**t's the season of new year's resolutions! Are you making any for 2025? New year's resolutions have become synonymous with efforts that people begin but don't complete. Home exercise equipment and gym memberships take off in January, only to gather dust or be canceled by spring.

One of the weaknesses of new year's resolutions is that they tend to be individual efforts. Some folks do a great job of staying on task and motivated on their own, but many others need the support and encouragement of a friend or a group. It's much easier to stick with a new exercise program if you know your friend will be waiting for you at the walking trail. Likewise, it also works better when a group of people are walking together in the same direction.

Let's apply that to the LWML and other church groups. We don't have to adopt new "resolutions." Our churches and LWML groups already have plenty of existing mission objectives for us to focus on. At the same time, it's good to revisit and discuss our goals, and a new year is a good time for that!

As my congregation looks ahead into 2025, we'll be applying a new annual ministry theme to various areas of our congregation, from our church council's work to individual volunteer efforts. The basis for this theme is St. Paul's words to the church in Philippi.

*I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now.*  
(Philippians 1:3-5).

Paul didn't act alone. As he traveled around the Mediterranean, and even when

he was corresponding with the church from behind bars, he was part of the overall work of the body of Christ. Although Paul had a role in founding churches in places like Philippi, he still viewed them as partners in the Gospel.

The LWML is a great example of such a partnership. Christian missionaries, schools, and charities look to the LWML for the partnership they need to carry out their work. LWML groups partner with their congregations and communities to bless people on a local level. Like Paul, we ought to begin

with thanksgiving for the partnerships the Lord has forged in His church today!

What might be some good goals for your LWML group or committee for the new year?

This would be a good discussion to have in your meetings at the beginning of the year.

How can you strengthen the partnerships among the members of your own group? How can you reach out to ladies who may not be in the LWML? Are there ways you might partner with them on a project? Is there a local charity that especially needs more partners for its work? Is there a new missionary who is still building up a support network? How can you partner with your pastor and church leaders to support them and care for needs within your congregation?

Although I'm still just getting to know the women in mission around our District, I thank my God for the partnership in the Gospel that we are part of, and I pray that He would richly bless the groups, zones, and all the collective efforts of the LWML, that we might continue serving the Lord with gladness in 2025 and beyond!

—Pastor Kory Janneke

St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Conway, Arkansas



# Let's Get Busy, Spread the Word!

Vicki Eubanks, Fourth Vice President, Deaf Ministry Liaison

About two years ago, a friend and I went on a short trip to visit another friend. To break up the drive, we stopped at a boutique. While at the boutique I was “drawn” to the small decor you see here. There were many things there that were beautiful, but everytime I walked away from that one little saying, I was drawn back to it. I finally gave in and purchased it.

The words sounded good to me so I put it out on a table. You know what I mean. Bet you have read those words too and thought “yes, God is good, even though I didn't get exactly what I wanted or prayed for.” A year flew by and I physically moved elsewhere, so the plaque was packed up and put in storage.

When unimaginable tragedy struck my family in December of 2023, I could not even speak the written words out loud. To be honest, I just could not find or think of any good that there could ever be in that tragedy. When I finally unloaded the last of our storage boxes a few weeks ago, I found and unpacked the little table decor.

The moment I laid hands on it, it was like a revelation. God was using that little piece all this time. He knew



what was going to happen and He knew I would need to hear the words and feel them in my heart. Now, when I read it, there is so much truth to it that I never saw before!

God is good, no matter what!! God even loved me and you enough to send His own Son to die for us! That is the greatest sacrifice that can be given. I don't know why God chose to allow us to experience this tragedy but I DO know that God is still in control and that I DO believe He is still good!

This little sign has helped me to begin my journey

back — to come alive again to share with everyone the gift I have been given. It is the greatest gift that you can give to your family, your friends, your enemies, to everyone, everywhere. By knowing Christ, we are promised a heavenly reunion in our permanent home when we leave this temporary home here on Earth. There is just no gift greater than spending eternity in Heaven and it is a gift that is free!

Lutheran Women In Mission gives us the platform to spread the word! We can go, we can give, we can pray, we can share! Thank you to everyone who helps in any way. If you have not found your area to serve in, my prayer for you is that you do! We are not guaranteed time, so let's get busy! Spread the word!

Thank you to everyone that has served in my absence. Please keep praying for me. Blessings to you and yours!

## Find us on Facebook!



Facebook is a great place to keep up with programs and activities! Visit [facebook.com/MSD.LWML](https://facebook.com/MSD.LWML). Click “Like” to follow, and please “Like” and “Share” posts from the page to allow us to share with more people.





# Zones in Action

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

## Our Savior Lutheran Church, Nashville

### Celebrating with Sisters in Christ

Our Savior Lutheran Church (OSLC) Women in Mission recently prepared and served dinner to the friends, families and residents of Oak Cottage for Women, who gathered to celebrate the graduation of three Oak Cottage residents. Oak Cottage is a faith-based life skills residential program that gives women a safe and loving environment as they prepare to re-enter society following release from the Tennessee State prison system. They have two homes located in Franklin, Tennessee. The residents are provided support and strength physically, emotionally, vocationally and spiritually.

During the six-month program, residents attend mandatory classes five days a week that help with addiction, conflict resolution, budgeting, Bible studies, etc., and help them gain employment. The program's focus is to help these women with everything they need to restart their life.

A program of celebration occurs when a small group of women meet the graduation requirements. OSLC Women in Mission are happy to celebrate along with these women, demonstrating love and support for sisters in Christ.



*Volunteers, left, prepared a dinner to celebrate the graduation of three young women (above), part of the Oak Cottage community.*

## Northeast Arkansas Zone Fall Rally

The NE Arkansas Zone Rally was held October 5, 2024, at Redeemer Lutheran in Paragould, Arkansas. It was hosted by the Mary Martha Circle, Redeemer Lutheran Church. There were 25 women and one Pastor attending. The Offering and Ingathering totaling \$1,000 went to Tim Rollings, a student at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis.

The guest speakers, Megan Neugebauer and Stephanie Neugebauer, shared their experiences as wives and mothers at the Seminary while their husbands were studying to be pastors. They each gave a beautiful and inspiring talk concerning the love of fellowship and grace they received. Ariana Rollings also expressed joy and shared what life is like for their family of four since Tim started seminary this past June.

Lunch was served by the ladies of Redeemer and we watched a short film from LWML.

Beginning in 2025, the NE Arkansas Zone will have one rally a year, which will be held in the fall.

New officers for 2025-2026 are: President, Ann Batey; Vice President, Sharon Anderson; Corresponding Secretary, Betty Harden. Pastor Kirk Neugebauer completed the installation of new officers and the meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

*—Ann Batey, Northeast Arkansas Zone President*



# Zones in Action continued

## Grace Lutheran Church, Murfreesboro, Tennessee

Women of Grace kicked off October with LWML Sunday and a wonderful display of some of the quilts our quilting group completed this past year. We had a table set up to share more information on LWML, served at both services, provided delicious snacks during the Sunday School hour and held a raffle for two beautiful, quilted wall hangings. It was an LWML Sunday to remember.

Also, on October 14 at our monthly meeting, Shakia Craig from Blue Monarch was our guest speaker. Blue Monarch is a recovery program that seeks to help mothers and their children who are dealing with addiction, domestic violence and economic hardship. Their mission is to provide a long-term, residential and therapeutic Christian community for these women and their children to break adverse cycles and rebuild their families. Not only is Shakia the Officer of Development and Community Relations, she is also a graduate of Blue Monarch. What a privilege it was to hear and see first hand how this program transforms lives! We presented her with some much needed baby items for Blue Monarch, including five baby blankets.



*An LWML Sunday to remember at Grace Lutheran, Murfreesboro.*



*The October meeting included information about Blue Monarch recovery program with an ingathering of baby care supplies and blankets.*



# Zones <sup>in</sup>Action continued



A beautiful display of the quilts and lap throws made by the ladies of Faith Lutheran Church, Tullahoma, Tennessee.



## Redeemer Lutheran Church, Nashville

On November 3, Geal Goldbeck, President of Redeemer's LWML, presented a check for \$5,000 to Candi Boudreau of Trinity Hope.

## Lutheran Early Response Team, Hurricane Helene cleanup



Our Lutheran Early Response Team (LERT) included Dave Hart, Rich Cole, and Jim O'Hatnick, from Grace Lutheran in Knoxville; one volunteer from Alabama, three from Texas, and one from Kansas. They cut and moved trees and debris to the road at three different homes. One young single mother in the country had four trees down. She'd received a quote from a tree company of \$10,000 for the work. The volunteer team cut and had everything at the road in about five hours. She was so touched by the work that she was in tears when the team left.



We left our mark. Carving by Rich Cole.



Our team, with the single Mom we helped. Her yard is shown in the photo above.

Below: The neighborhood we worked in. The damage was formidable.



Right: Other Lutheran Early Response Teams (LERT) cleared yards on this street.



## Do you want to help?

[Click here](#)

to learn more or contribute to Mid-South District Disaster Response fund.



## East Tennessee Zone Fall Retreat at Eagle Rock Camp

On September 27, 2024, ladies of the East Tennessee Zone gathered for fellowship, Bible study, hymns, skits, dining and hiking! The ladies from Grace Lutheran in Knoxville (known as the LWML Drama Mama's) presented "The Puzzling Game of Life" skits. Various Sisters in Christ shared Bible studies on the "Joy in the Journey." The weather did not deter the annual Saturday hike nor the campfire singing. The beautiful sidewalk between the lodge and the dining hall (pictured below) was part of a district LWML mission grant! Ann Larson provided a bookmark craft and a plant decoration craft. Saturday Vespers were led by Pastor Mike Thureau. Our new LWML Mid-South District President, Sandie Harjala, was installed. We are so thankful for Sandie's willingness to serve as our President!

—by Vicki Simpson  
East TN Zone Quarterly and  
Publicity Committee Chair



*East Tennessee Zone Fall Retreat at Eagle Rock Camp, a beautiful place, a wonderful event.*

*And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28).*



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The League Letter is published quarterly by the LWML Mid-South District. All rights reserved. ©2024