



Always Learning to Listen

A message from District President, Sandie Harjala

May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us — yes, establish the work of our hands (Psalm 90:17, NIV)

In This Issue:

District President's message	1
Endowment Funds	2
Who Do You Rely On?	3
Gifts of Love Ministry	3
Here Am I, Use Me! Nominations Report	4
Easter Thoughts, Mission Grant Updates	5
Mission Grant Presentations . . .	6
Weathering the Storm, Rev. Gordon Smith	7
National Convention Details	8
National Mission Grants	8
Young Women Representatives	9
Zones in Action	10

After being elected to the presidency of the LWML Mid-South District, this verse became my go-to when I start to feel stressed and doubted God's call. This morning, I read a devotion that went along with the verse of the day on my phone. I should have read it before I started my day, but I did not. So, I ask you to open your Bible or your Bible app and go to Psalm 46:10. "Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in all the earth!" As I listened, I realized that I am not a still person. I am always wondering what I have to do next. What else is required of me? The solution is not just sitting and twiddling your fingers and then getting more stressed. It is to go to God! Listen to his voice through Scripture and prayer. Stop reading the newspaper and read your Bible. Turn off the television and the YouTube videos. If silence makes you uncomfortable put on some praise music and sing to the Lord.

**BE STILL
AND KNOW
THAT I AM
GOD**
PSALM 46:10

Many years ago, I had a wallpapering business. I loved being creative, but sometimes the walls were bowed, corners were not square, and I was working with a geometric print. I learned how to make the walls and corners look straight so the people I worked for didn't see the flaws. The secret came after I started bringing my boom box and playing Christian

continues on page 2



Always Learning to Listen *continued from page 1*

music all the while I worked. I was not still, but God's voice spoke to me through the music and calmed my spirit to allow Him to guide my hands and mind while I worked. It was His still small voice that guided and encouraged me then and it does now when I take my eyes off myself and focus on the One who doesn't worry. He wants to hear your voice so he can guide you on your journey to become closer to Jesus. He is always here!

Easter is just around the corner. Jesus is Risen and waiting to walk with you as you serve the Lord, Lutheran Women in Mission, the church, your family, and friends. Please join me in the garden because, "He walks with me, and He talks with me and He tells me I am His own!"

—God's Peace, President Sandie Harjala

Apply by April 15 for Available Endowment Funds

Spring is here! All sorts of flowers are beginning to emerge. It is also time when fruits of the LWML Mid-South District endowment fund may be used by women in our district. The endowment fund provides scholarships to conventions, retreats, and leadership training. Funds are available and the deadline to apply is April 15. Details may be found at midsouthlwml.org/endowment-fund or you may email Mary Pruitt, Endowment Fund Committee Chairman, at endowmentfund@midsouthlwml.org.

— Mary Pruitt, LWML Mid-South District Endowment Chairman



PHOTO BY YOKSEL ZOK ON UNSPLASH



His Love, Our Love:

Single-Session Bible Study on Love & Christian Living

Are you looking for a single-session Bible study for a small group or couples club at your church or in your community? The His Love, Our Love Bible Study focuses on passages from the New Testament. In it, we learn the source of love, how to share love, the obstacles we may face, and how God helps us. This two-page Bible study can be done independently or as a group. Download resources [here](#).

Who Do You Rely On?

Diane Reimold, Second Vice President

I had hip replacement surgery on February 20 (my recovery is going very well!) and I had to rely on my sister for the first few days after the surgery and enlisted friends to get me to and from physical therapy. I am a very independent person and I hesitate to ask for help, but I did.

Have you seen the acronym FROG —Fully Rely On God? I try to remember that and did rely on God as I asked Him to guide the surgeon's hands and to be with the medical team during the surgery. I also prayed that He would grant me a quick and full recovery, which He graciously has done. There are also times in our lives that we need to rely on others for assistance. There are many Scripture references in the Bible stating that God's people relied on Him for their food, safety, protection, and deliverance from their enemies. For example,

Thus the men of Israel were subdued at that time, and the men of Judah prevailed, because they relied on the Lord, the God of their fathers. (2 Chronicles 13:18)

When you need help, don't be afraid to ask. If you think someone needs help, don't hesitate, ask how you can help them. As Lutheran Women in Mission, we strive to be the hands and feet of Jesus. Helping others is a reflection of how Jesus served others during His ministry.

Zone Lutheran Women's Quarterly payments were due to our district Financial Secretary on February 15. Zone Presidents, please check with your treasurers to make sure these payments have been sent. If they have not, please remit at your earliest convenience.

God's continued blessings during this Lenten season!!

*Serving the Lord with gladness,
Diane Reimold
Second Vice President*



Returning God's Blessings

LWML Gifts of Love Ministry

Have you ever delayed planning a vacation? Maybe there will be a better rate. Who knows when the best weather will be. What if my health takes a turn and I am not able to go? The bliss of vacation will never happen if you continue living in paralysis of the unknown.

That same kind of paralysis can keep the Lord's people from putting estate plans in place and carrying out faithful stewardship of God's gifts. In the barrage of "what if's," we choose to do nothing. If that procrastination lasts long enough, we may choose to do nothing, expecting that our children will take care of things after the Lord calls us home. The trouble is we may not have communicated our wishes to our children clearly or they may not share the same priorities. God has made us stewards of His things and

continued on page 4



SHUTTERSTOCK

Here I Am, Use Me!

A message from your nominating committee

LWML Gifts of Love Ministry

continued from page 3

As we are now in the season of Lent we reflect on the sacrifices of our Lord and Savior who loves us so much. He went to the cross to save us from death. How do we respond to this sacrificial love? In love for Him we say “Here I am, use me!” It can be a difficult thing to step forward and show our love in service to Him. But, in all we do, we are not alone.

*Be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you
I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right
hand. (Isaiah 41:10)*

I am asking you to give prayerful consideration to serving LWML at the district level. The Nominating Committee is looking for candidates 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, and a new Nominating Committee (3 members).

Below is a description of the Second Vice President position on the LWML Board. Please review it and see if it interests you!



The Second Vice President may perform the duties of the President, in the absence of or at the request of the President, and shall:

- a. serves as coordinator of the Department of Christian Life and Communications, which shall include: the Christian Life Committee and the Media and Marketing Committee
- b. serves as Lutheran Woman’s Quarterly Circulation Manager;
- c. presents a report to the convention body, including department activities.

The responsibilities for each position are listed in the district directives and bylaws which can be found on the LWML Mid-South District website, 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,
Teri Miller, Lois Hobby-Clayton, Tiffany Nelson
LWML Mid-South District Nominating Committee*

it is our job to put a plan in writing that faithfully guides how financial assets should be handled through our estate. We can’t let the fear of the “what ifs” keep us from acting.

If you have been putting off creating a charitable gift or estate plan or maybe revising it to reflect the ministries you have a passion for now and want to include in your plan, our LWML Gift Planning Counselor can help you consider what you need to have in place today. Contact Linda Gage to get the process started at 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.



Easter Thoughts

Laurie Sanders, 3rd Vice President, Mission Grant Chairman

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25–26).

As a child growing up, I recall Easter was filled with excitement of getting a new outfit (including a hat and gloves), Easter egg hunt after church and a special Easter dinner. I did not fully understand the true meaning of Easter until I was older and started to attend Sunday school and confirmation.



Later I learned that Easter is the most important day in the Christian faith. God sent His only Son on a mission to save the world through His death and His resurrection. Jesus' resurrection brings the promise of eternal life to those who believe He is our Lord and Savior. God bless your Easter thoughts and memories.

Not only will we reflect upon the Easter joy that is coming, let us reflect upon what we voted on last summer. We voted on a \$130,000 mission goal. I know it seems like we just voted on our 2024–2026 biennium mission grants. God has blessed us mightily through all of you and the mites you have collected. We are halfway through fulfilling all our grants. We just recently paid two grants, one to First Lutheran School East TN for \$10,000 and Isaiah 117 House East TN for \$6,954. With these two gifts, we have paid out a total of \$65,831 of the \$130,000 mission grant goal. Great job everyone. What encouragement this gives to all of us.

With these thoughts of your great work in getting these grants paid. The time is NOW to start praying for LWML's upcoming Mission Grant Goal — or the next Biennium for 2026–2028. As you pray, pray for those who want to apply for grants. You can begin applying for grants. You will find the application out on the LWML Mid-South District website under [mission grant request forms](#). The deadline to turn in grants is November 15th to your zone president. Zone presidents have to get them to the Mission Grant Chairman Laurie Sanders, at missiongrants@midsouthlwml.org by December 31st. *Easter Blessings!*

Mission Grant Progress, 2024–26

Mission Goal:
\$130,000



Paid Out
to Date:
\$65,831



Key Dates Mission Grants for 2026–28

November 15, 2025

This is the deadline to **turn in your mission grants to your Zone Presidents.**

December 31, 2025

Zone presidents must **send grant proposals** to Mission Grant Chairman Laurie Sanders. Email Link [here](#).

Get Grant
Request Form Here:
[Grant Request Form](#)

Mission Grants Awarded



◀ Mission Grant Check Presented to Last Call Radio Ministry

Vicky Kline, Vice-President of Faith's LWML, Faith Lutheran Church, Tullahoma, TN presented Pastor Martin Nutter with the check for the Last Call Radio Ministry mission grant. This ministry brings God's Word to people in middle Tennessee. You can read more about this ministry at www.midsouthlwml.org/grantinfo. You can also find links to all the 2024-2026 mission grants at www.midsouthlwml.org/grantinfo/MissionGrantsTable.pdf.

Mission Grant Presented, Spiritual Support for Cancer Patients ▶

A check in the amount of \$5,000 was presented on Sunday, November 3 for mission grant "L – Spiritual Support for Cancer Patients" at Grace Lutheran Church in Knoxville, TN. This grant provides individualized devotions, and encouragement for cancer patients. Pictured, left to right, are LWML Mid-South District President Sandie Harjala, Kathy Crum, Steve Crum, Pastor Danny Anderson, and Pastor Jake Childers. Praise God for this wonderful ministry! To learn more, go to www.midsouthlwml.org/grantinfo.



◀ Mission Grant Payment Made to Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

Payment has been made in the amount of \$7,000 for grant Y – Concordia Seminary – Expanding Gospel Proclamation Worldwide – Supporting International Students. Shown in the photo are Rev. Dr. Thomas Egger, President and Rev. Dr. Ronald Mudge, Provost. To learn more, go to www.midsouthlwml.org/grantinfo/Y-ConcordiaSeminaryStLouis2024.pdf.



◀ Mission Grant Payment Made to Table Graces Food Pantry

On Sunday, February 16, 2025, a check for \$6,500 was presented to Table Graces Food Pantry at Athens Lutheran Church. Table Graces distributes food to men, women, and children with food insecurities in McMinn and surrounding counties in southeastern Tennessee. To learn more, go to www.midsouthlwml.org/grantinfo/F-TableGraces2024.pdf.

Weathering the Storms, We Praise and Persevere

A message from Rev. Gordon Smith, Senior Pastoral Counselor

*Our soul waits for the LORD; he is our help
and our shield (Psalm 33:20).*

We have made it...endured another winter season and find ourselves in the early spring. Spring, the season of renewal, as buds and blooms literally “spring” from the ground and plants...trees and bushes and bulbs bring forth beauty specifically designed to lure insects and birds to carry pollen from male to female blooms so that they would then mature into the fruit which much of life . . . man and animal can feed from to maintain their lives. And, if nature allows, the remnants of this fruit have their seeds distributed about in such a way as to propagate even more of the fruit. All in keeping with God’s wonderful design.

There is another feature of God’s designs we’ll enjoy this month of April . . . our celebration of our loving God and Lord enacting His plan to have His people propagated in His presence, by the gifting of His Son, our Savior Jesus, dying upon the cross and being entombed on that “Good Friday,” and “springing forth” after three days...victorious over death, the last of man’s foes. Jesus’ victory for us on that Sunday morning freed God’s people and opened to all believers the gates of heaven.

Do you know what else comes with the arrival of Spring? Rainstorms...sometimes even severe ones. While I’m sure we remember the saying, “April showers bring May flowers,” we also know that these rains

are often combined with great winds, and perhaps hail, bringing destruction upon these tender plants I just mentioned...and not just these plants, but upon everything else as well. To add insult to injury, that “everything else” includes us and our lives too. However, the things that can come upon us aren’t limited to rainstorms . . . are they?

Of course not, but whatever might come upon us, we do have a “help” and “shield.” We know Him as Jesus, our Lord. He can and does help us weather the storms of life. We are blessed to have Him with us throughout all the days of our lives. We come to know and to believe in His “ever present help” (LSB 953) as we face the troubles we encounter in this life.

So, whatever may “spring” upon us — the people of God — we can endure, persevere, and continue to live lives of patient waiting for what lies

ahead. Living as people beloved of a good and gracious God, enjoying the splendor of rebirth, of growth, of change as the world around us awakens from its winter slumber and once again enters into a cycle of newness, just as God designed it. And even more so as we also remember how that same loving God designed a way for us to join Him in that place where even now, our Lord prepares . . . much like the budding plants prepare a way for their continued transformation to bring forth fruit . . . we are, as we endure in our faith, being prepared for what comes next . . . now and forever, Amen!



*He is our help
and our shield.*

—Psalm 33:20b

PHOTO BY CHARLES TYLER ON UNSPLASH

Register Now for the National Convention in Omaha



Registration is now open for the 41st Biennial Convention of Lutheran Women in Mission, scheduled June 26–29, 2025, in Omaha, Nebraska.

Early registration offers key benefits with

- Savings of up to \$50 per registrant
- Priority in choosing convention schedule
- Access to events with limited capacity
- More time to plan travel
- Early access to choice hotel accommodations.

All attendees must register online for the convention.



If you are having trouble, reach out to someone in your LWML group for assistance.

For more information about the convention activities and presenters, click [here](#).

Register online [here](#).

We look forward to seeing you in Omaha!

Do you like to play golf?

Learn more about the Wednesday, June 25 golf tournament, Tee Up 4 Mites. Sign up to play or sponsor, and watch for our LWML Mid-South District sign—we are hole sponsors.



2025–2027 Mission Grant Ballot Set



Lutheran Women in Mission, also known as Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML), is excited to announce the list of mission grant proposals selected for the voting body to review and pray over, leading up to the 41st Biennial Convention in Omaha, Nebraska.

The LWML Mission Grant Selection Committee received 112 proposals from ministries focused on mercy and gospel proclamation work in the United States and overseas. After careful prayer and discernment, the committee narrowed the proposals to a final list reflecting the most pressing ministry needs.

As proclaimed in the book of Matthew, *The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few* (Matthew 9:37); we recognize the

immense need for support. While the need is great, Lutheran Women in Mission must focus on what is possible in this current time through its mite offerings and grants. We are grateful to each ministry that submitted a proposal and continue to pray for your mission work.

The final list of 47 proposals, approved by the Board of Directors and Presidents Assembly, can be reviewed [here](#). They will be voted on prior to the 2025 convention by the certified delegation through an online balloting process. For descriptions of the projects, see document [here](#).

WHOOO are the Young Women Representatives Headed to the 2025 LWML Convention in Omaha?

Meet the four young women from across the Mid-South District, who have applied and been selected by the Mid-South District YWR Committee to attend the LWML Convention in Omaha. They are:

- **Mackenzie Drozd** from Our Savior Lutheran Church in Cabot, Arkansas, serves as their church secretary, and so is involved in lots of activities there. She is part of a T.G.I.F. Group of "Twenties Growing Into Forties" who do book studies and community projects, including Operation Christian Child shoe boxes. She is also on the Mid-South District YWR Committee and does graphic design.
- **Erin Isham** from St. Paul Lutheran Church in Wartburg, Tennessee, wants to help others in need and share knowledge of resources that are available locally. She participates in LWML, ladies Bible study, and a bereavement group. Her new interest is in "extreme couponing" which she uses for donations.
- **Rachel Mehl** from Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Johnson City, Tennessee, sings in the choir and plays tuba, alongside her husband who is the organist. She is a legal assistant who is working to get pro-nuclear legislation passed in Tennessee. As an LWML member, she serves as Vice President and is helping with the church's 100th Anniversary challenge to each complete 100 hours of service.
- **Michelle Robbins** from Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church in Olive Branch, Mississippi, is their LWML Treasurer and is following her Mom in LWML service. She moved to Hernando, Mississippi from Omaha, so is looking forward to doing the State-to-State walk and other volunteer activities in her new community.

Look for more info and photos of these Young Women Representatives in the next issues of the LWML eNews. We thank the Lord for these young ladies who are excited for the Convention in Omaha and are willing to "Serve the Lord with Gladness"!



East TN Zone Spring Retreat

Saturday, April 5

9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. EDT

Concordia
LUTHERAN CHURCH

**725 Truxton Drive
Kingsport, Tennessee**

Bible study
"Always Changing,
Always the Same."

Fellowship
Singing
Lunch
Crafts

Ingathering:
personal care items for
Grace House, a homeless
shelter in Kingsport

LWML Resources for Lent

Are you looking for a devotion for a group or zone meeting? There are several available on the LWML website, lwml.org. From short devotions to multi-session Bible studies, you'll find resources that are a good fit for your event [here](#).



Zones in Action

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

Christ the King Lutheran Church, Memphis Grant Awarded to Tanzania Deaconess Home



Presentation photo, left to right: Christ the King (CTK) Senior Pastor Mark Goble, Mike Jurgensen, Cindy Jurgensen, Christine Acomb, LWML West Tennessee Zone President, CTK Associate Pastor Matt Lynch

An LWML grant in the amount of \$6,386 was graciously awarded to LWML member Cindy Jurgensen of Christ the King Lutheran Church, Memphis, and presented on January 5th, 2025, by Christine Acomb, LWML West Tennessee Zone president. The grant was requested for the Tanzania Deaconess Home for young women impacted by albinism. This ministry provides security, food, lodging, business education and vocational training for young women with albinism. It will allow the Deaconess Home to train 12 young women for 6 months. The modest home does not have electricity or indoor plumbing, but they are taught skills to survive and become self-sufficient and at graduation each young lady receives their own sewing machine and fabric.

Security and shelter are vital for these albino women to protect them from ongoing threats against their lives. Still to this day, witchdoctors teach that the body parts of albinos are necessary to bring luck into their lives, thus they are constantly at risk of dismemberment, or death.

This program at the Deaconess House provides a safe path for their lives.

Cindy Jurgensen and her husband Mike have led many teams to Tanzania over the years, raising funds to be able to go at least every two years, where their goal is to reach out and baptize Tanzanians from hut to hut, while teaching the word of the gospel. It was through this mission they first learned of the Deaconess House. Cindy states, "Meeting these women was a life experience that tugged at my heartstrings. I just felt so much compassion and it compelled me to want to do more, however much we can, as a team."



Photo, above, top: Cindy Jurgensen with an albino woman who participates in the vocational training.



Photo, above: The Tanzania Deaconess Home

Zones ⁱⁿ Action continued

Grace Lutheran Church, Murfreesboro, Tennessee



After their business meeting on February 10, the Women of Grace assembled nine fruit baskets to share God's love with some of our church family. A special handmade card was included along with fruit and other delicious goodies to let them know we were thinking of them.



Faith Lutheran Church, Tullahoma, Tennessee

The Faith Lutheran Women in Mission LWML celebrated their mission work this past December. They had treats, mulled cider, devotions and a few games of Bingo with prizes. Afterwards, they prepared six clothing bags to distribute to alternative school children. Additionally, their quilting group sent handmade hats, scarves and gloves to Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Johnson City, Tennessee, following Hurricane Helene. These items were distributed to the affected regions in Northeast Tennessee and Western North Carolina.



Experience the Joy—then Share It!
Rejoice always (1 Thessalonians 5:16).

Mark your Calendar for
Fall Retreats:

Click here for website
with up-to-date retreat
information!

Spring Rallies and Retreats



East Tennessee Spring One-Day Retreat

Theme: Always Changing ... Always the Same

April 5, 2025 • 9:30 am–3:00 pm

Concordia Lutheran, 725 Truxton Dr. Kingsport, Tennessee

Activity: Bible Study, Fellowship, Crafts, and More

Ingathering: Grace House Homeless Shelter

See flyer [here](#) for more information.



Southern Arkansas Spring Rally

Theme: God Works Change, James 1:17

April 5, 2025 • 9:00 am

Zion Lutheran, 252 E 2nd St., Ulm, Arkansas

Speaker: Pastor McDonald, Ft. Wayne Seminary

Offering Recipient: Mission Fund

Gifts from the Heart: Cash or gift cards for seminarians



West Tennessee Spring Rally

Theme: Jesus is Living Water, John 7:38

April 5, 2025 • 9:30 am–1:00 pm

Cross of Calvary, 4327 Elvis Presley Blvd., Memphis TN

Speaker: Dr. Shannon Cotton, Holmes Elem. School

Offering Recipient: Holmes Elementary School

Ingathering: House of Grace Domestic Violence Shelter;

Hospitality Hub, Memphis, Tennessee

See flyer [here](#) for more information.



Arkansas River Valley Spring Rally

Theme: My Rock of Refuge, Psalm 31

April 12, 2025 • 10 am–2:30 pm

River Valley Grace, 922 W Main, Lamar Arkansas

Speaker: Representative from Safe Haven

Offering Recipient: Safe Haven, Clarksville, Arkansas

Gifts from the Heart: Diapers and wipes for Pregnancy

Help Center, Clarksville, Arkansas



Middle Tennessee Spring Prayer Service

Theme: Renewing in mind, body, spirit in Christ, Romans 12:2

April 26, 2025 • 9 am–1:00 pm

Grace Lutheran, 811 E. Clark Blvd., Murfreesboro TN

Speaker: Susan Binkley of Blue Monarch

Offering and Ingathering: Blue Monarch

See flyer [here](#) for more information.

WEST RETREAT September 5–7

Mount Eagle Retreat Center

935 Beal Rd., Clinton, AR

mouteagle.org

[Registration Link](#)

[Participant Waiver](#)

MIDDLE RETREAT September 19–21

Camp Garner Creek

700 Sam Hollow Rd. Dickson, TN

campgarnercreek.org

[Registration Link](#)

[Participant Waiver](#)

EAST RETREAT September 26–28

Eagle Rock Retreat Center

7143 Flats Rd., Tallassee, TN

eaglerockcamp.com

[Registration Link](#)

[Participant Waiver](#)



Website:

midsouthlwml.org

Facebook:

facebook.com/MSD.LWML

Email:

webmaster@midsouthlwml.org

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