



TEXAS MESSENGER

From the president

'Relational gift, joyful blessing'

PART 3 OF 'WE HAVE THE SACRAMENT'

By Rev. Michael Newman
President,
LCMS Texas District
txlcms.org
mnewman.org



A blessed new year to you! Over the past two months we've seen how the church is a caring, replenishing and witnessing community — person to person, loving one another with Christ's love. We've seen that the church stewards technology and media to bring people into relationship with Jesus and to draw people together under Him. Then came COVID. Shutdowns scattered communities of faith. The fear of illness separated people from each other. But local congregations stepped up with God's gifts and care. Parking lot services, small-group worship, Zoom Bible classes and online worship broadcasts sprung up. Heroic and gifted lay people, church workers and pastors exerted a speedy response and tireless effort to connect God's people to His gifts and to one another. Their boldness, innovation and fearlessness to

adapt under adverse conditions while holding fast to sound biblical doctrine is emblematic of who we are in the Texas District and who we have been in the LCMS. We care about reaching people with the Gospel.

During that frightening and disorienting time, a few dozen congregations in the LCMS (out of nearly 6,000) implemented home communion, or "online communion." The goal was pastoral care for shaken and isolated church members. In most cases, church members were instructed, given elements in advance or asked to provide bread and wine at home, and waited for a live online consecration by their pastor, who then directed them to receive the elements. As this practice emerged, the question arose, "Is this what the church should be doing?" Much study and conversation began.

What emerged was a focus on the biblical purpose of the church, the godly stewardship of media and the important relational facet of Holy Communion. The Lord's Supper is a high point of community for God's people. The Lord's Supper was designed to gather members of God's family around His table. This holy

meal joins believers with Jesus and each other. The past two articles have highlighted the beautiful blessing that, even in a digitally advanced culture, our in-person, non-virtual, three-dimensional presence as God's family is both a lifeline for our faith-life together and a beacon of hope and life for the world.

God's Word and gifts point us to the realization that Holy Communion is not meant to be shared apart from each other, but is best administered in person, pastor and people together receiving God's gifts and shining the light of Christ to the world. That is the beautiful practice we need to follow, not as a chore or hardship, but as a relational gift and joyful blessing.

But what about exceptional situations? Our churches have the practice of administering the Lord's Supper in hospital rooms, rehabilitation centers and homes for ones in need. We have respected and supported these situations of special pastoral care. Can new technology ever assist with these or other unique Gospel needs?

Next month, we'll wrap up this series as we look at key questions.

Questions for reflection:

Read Matt. 26:26-30

What do you learn about Holy Communion in these verses?

Prayer starter: Thank God for the blessings you receive in His Holy Supper.

Resources for more study can be found at lcms.org/communion-covid-19



THANK

For being a partner in Gospel outreach in Texas!



YOU

SUPPORTING MISSIONS ACROSS TEXAS

GIVE NOW!
txlcms.org/tpim

Every dollar contributed to Texas Partners in Mission goes directly to bringing the Gospel to people who don't know Jesus Christ. Thank you for your dedication to the mission of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Want to Increase Your Investment & Double Your Donation?
Learn more about the **TEXAS DISTRICT CEF TEXAS TWO-STEP**.
For more Information visit texascef.org/texastwostep



"Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation." - Mark 16:15



Let's go fishing!

Lightstock

By Rev. Dr. David Bahn
Congregation Support Specialist

One of my favorite stories is written by Max Lucado. Titled “When Fishermen Don’t Fish” (from his book *In the Eye of the Storm*), Lucado tells the story of a fishing trip ruined by bad weather.

Max, his dad, and his friend, Mark, spend three days trapped in his father’s camper with no time for fishing. Max begins to see personality flaws in his friend and his father.

Max begins seeing Mark as more irritating every hour. He sees his dad as incompetent and unsupportive when he offers his supposed constructive criticism of Mark. He wonders how his dad could have raised such an even-tempered son. He questions his own judgment, which prompted him to think Mark would be a good camping buddy.

Tiring of *Reader’s Digest* articles, stale jokes, soggy food and endless games of Monopoly, the three begin to bicker and fight. Max’s

moral: When fishermen don’t fish, they fight.

Jesus prays:

“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”

JOHN 17:20-21

Jesus’ prayer points us to a purposeful unity. We must be one in Christ in our witness to the world that Jesus is the One sent by the Father. God’s call to unity is not just so we can feel happy and at peace. Our unity is a witness to Jesus’ work in our lives. It is God’s gift. True unity is centered in Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit and honors the Father.

Psalm 133:1 puts it this way:

Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!

Not just good, but also pleasant.

Not just pleasant, but also good. There is a great joy and blessing in a church that is united in faith and purpose. Those churches are most likely to be effective in witness and evangelism as they draw strength and encouragement from one another.

To some extent, we have been kept in the camper by the pandemic these past two years. Maybe you’re frustrated with your brothers and sisters in Christ. Maybe people are angry and irritated with you.

It seems the pandemic is over. It’s time to go fishing. It’s time to spread the Good News of Jesus’ love and engage in His mission.

When we’re fishing for people, we’ll find just how abundant life can be. Purposeful, meaningful and united in God’s goodness and love, we will be living out our true destiny.

God will be glorified.

People will be saved.

Let’s go fishing!



TAKE CARE TO PREPARE



Rev. J. Brown
Legacy Giving Ambassador

I started thinking about this article while riding out Hurricane Ian in central Florida in September. A colleague and I were there for a conference when we got the news that activities were canceled — and so was our return flight home. Although we eventually made it safely back to Texas, there are a number of people who didn't fare so well. Of course, there was severe property damage, but worse yet many were injured or even lost their life. My heart goes out to those dear people, and I pray for all who were adversely affected from that terrible storm.

Even days before the storm made landfall, and while some were evacuating, linemen and rescue workers were flooding into Florida from surrounding states. Emergency protocols were being enacted and supplies were being stashed for the impending disaster. The hotel in which we were staying went to great lengths to carry out safety precautions to keep us from harm. I thank God for all those who had the service and safety of others on the forefront of their mind. They knew that the key to making it through the storm was preparation. Those looking out for our well-being had a plan!

While caught in the storm and briefly stranded in Florida, I felt the love and care of my co-workers, family and friends who were all praying for my safety and wishing me well. Each one of them wanted to know what steps were being taken to ensure my safety, and almost all asked if there was anything they could do to assist with my plans. It is a great sign of caring for our loved ones when we take time to prepare, or assist others with planning, for life's

storms of many kinds — especially ones that involve death.

Planning is one of our specialties at Legacy Deo. We help congregations with plans to ensure continuity of their ministry and individuals with plans to be the best stewards of their assets while preparing to leave a legacy for both family and faith. If you want to help your family weather upcoming storms, let Legacy Deo walk beside you and develop a comprehensive estate plan so that you can have peace of mind if disaster strikes.

We can help with funeral planning, red-book preparation, a will guide, trusts, endowments, donor advised funds, transfers of stock or land, and even significant tax strategies to help you start a living legacy today. Give us a call if you want a personal consultation or if your ministry would like to explore options about a group presentation.

Whatever you do, take care to prepare.



Legacy Deo is not licensed by the Texas State Board of Public Accountancy to practice public accountancy, nor does it provide legal, tax, or financial advice. We encourage you to seek the advice of your own legal, tax, or financial professionals in connection with planning and gifting matters.

DUMAS

- ▶ Wrenlee Maenette Friese was baptized at St. John's on Oct. 30. Pictured are, from left, sponsors Avery Bontke and Addison Bontke; parents, Faith and Brady Friese; Rev. Troy Scroggins; and sponsors Case Friese and Savanna Friese.
- ▼ Avery Bontke, with Pastor Scroggins, was confirmed at St. John's on Oct. 30.



ALEMAN

St. Paul's welcomed three new members on Nov. 13. Rev. Don Poole (back) is pictured with Jim Schrank and Lisa and Philip Beard. Jim's great-grandfather, Rev. Emil Moerbe, served as pastor of St. Paul's from 1909 to 1939.



WALLER

Cross of Christ welcomed these three new members by profession of faith. Pastor is Rev. David Cecil.



Blessings at Faith Lutheran Sch

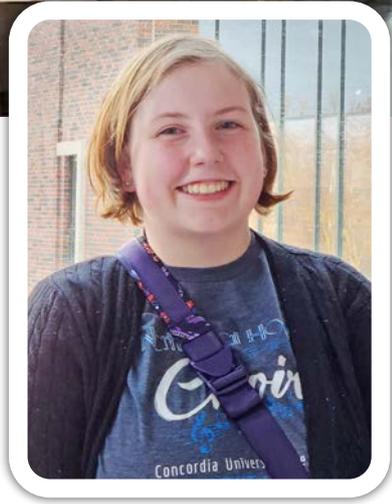


The Concordia National Honor Choir held a concert at St. John Lutheran Church, Seward Neb., on Nov. 4. The choir included **Elizabeth Crawford**, a junior at Faith Lutheran High School, Plano. Elizabeth was one of 120 talented high school singers chosen to participate. Earlier in the day, the choir members had an extensive rehearsal on the Concordia University Nebraska, Seward (CUNE), campus, directed by Dr. Kurt Von Kampen, CUNE’s renowned music department chair, and guest clinicians

and CUNE alumni Michael Palomaki and Paul von Kampen.

“It is always a great pleasure to see our dedicated and talented students recognized,” said Rev. Stephen W. Kieser, Faith headmaster. “We are very proud of Elizabeth and her accomplishments.”

The concert also featured the university’s popular A Cappella Choir, which includes three Faith Lutheran School alumni: Aaron Cumming of Allen, John Merritt of Plano and Nathan Kieser of Wylie.



Elizabeth Crawford

HOUSTON

The Gethsemane Lutheran Church LWML Ruth Circle assembled and packed 100 school kits for Lutheran World Relief on Oct. 3. Those pictured are, from left, Marliese Armstrong, Donna Ratcliffe, Viola Bade, Joyce Heckmann, Edward Johnson, Mary Ann Caton, Sharon Arney, Cathy Schreiber Smith and Alice Kaspar.



chool, Plano



Colin Mildred, Faith Lutheran School board member, (left) presents the check to Matt Babisak, Faith athletic director.

Faith Lutheran School hosted its 11th annual golf tournament on Oct. 7 at Heritage Ranch Golf and Country Club. The event raised more than \$9,200 for the athletic programs and tuition assistance

“This golf tournament is an excellent opportunity for us to raise funds for our school, raise awareness about our school and its mission, and for us to simply gather for fun and fellowship together,” Pastor Kieser said. “Proceeds will provide our athletic teams the opportunity to replace old uniforms and buy needed equipment, and add to our tuition assistance program for families in need.”



Faith Lutheran School senior **Julia Hitz** received a letter of commendation from the National Merit Scholarship Program for her PSAT scores in October 2021. Julia was in the top 50,000 of the 1.5 million students who took the test.



Among those playing in the tournament were, clockwise from below, Matt Rivers, Jeff Martin, and Kevin Starbuck (left) and Ben Crawford.





Zion welcomes new youth director

Zion Lutheran Church and School, Walburg, is rejoicing over its rostered church workers, including Laura-Li Gaide, who was installed as director of Youth Ministries.

Laura works exclusively with the middle and high school youth. She was born in China, adopted at six months and grew up in a Lutheran family, consisting of her parents and two older

sisters, in Colorado. She attended Bethlehem Lutheran Church and School, Denver, for elementary and middle school, Denver Lutheran High School as a freshman, and then Faith Christian Academy, Arvada, Colo., for the last three years. Her DCE undergraduate studies were at Concordia University Nebraska.

She enjoys hiking, camping, football, basketball, play-

ing guitar, singing, board games, spending time with friends and family — and teaching others about Jesus.

God has carried her through every aspect of her life. “I’m so thankful for the opportunity He gave me to be here in Texas at Zion Lutheran Church and School to love, teach, and hopefully inspire others in their own relationship with God,” Laura says. At Zion, she is welcomed with open arms!

Laura-Li Gaide is pictured at right with a group of youth at Zion, Walburg.

GARLAND

The Tree of Life Lutheran Church Board of Outreach recently held its annual food drive for the community and filled more than 44 boxes.





LAMPASAS

The LWML of Faith Lutheran Church hosted a baby shower for New Beginnings of Restoration and Hope Resource Center (NBRH). A fun evening of food and games was held, and the center was blessed with donations of formula, diapers, wipes, clothing and toys. NBRH helps women and families during an unplanned pregnancy and beyond.

DALHART

Included are those who were confirmed at Grace Evangelical on Nov. 20. From left (front row) Beverly Lasley, Dee Newton, Rev. Troy Scroggins, Nikki Robinson-Reeder (who was also baptized), Justin Reeder; (back row) Lynn Beecher, Joshua Robinson and Grif Lasley.



HOUSTON

On Nov. 27, Rev. Lonnie Gonzales was installed as associate pastor of Outreach at Trinity Downtown. Participants are, from left, Revs. Vince Parks, John Kieschnick, Michael Dorn (senior pastor), Lonnie Gonzales, Aaron Richert and Rodrigo Fernandez. Not pictured are Revs. Steven Henze and Jesse Gonzales.



‘Respond, Recover and Rebuild’

The 2022 Texas District Pastors Conference was held Oct. 24-25 at Concordia Lutheran Church, San Antonio.

Pastors from all over the state attended a series of presentations under the theme “Respond, Recover and Rebuild.” The pastors were reminded that though these times are very difficult for families, congregational leaders should never give up to stresses they have because they also have exactly what the current culture needs — the Gospel.

Presentations were given by Rev. Rich Snow, Nebraska District president; John Busacker, author; Rev. Jim Otte, associate pastor of Messiah, Plano; and Rev. Dr. Chad Lakies, Lutheran Hour Ministries (LHM) regional director for North America.

LHM was present with a booth and an assortment of printed materials to support the event.



Pictured at the Lutheran Hour Ministries booth at the Texas District Pastors Conference are, from left, TC Lipe and Jim Binneboese.

BIG SPRING

The members of Alive in Christ Lutheran Church celebrated Rev. Carroll Kohl's 87th birthday on Aug. 17 with a surprise potluck supper. Shown with Pastor Kohl are, from left, daughter Dana Johnson, daughter Angela Newton and granddaughter Breanna Guillermo.



CONGRATS!

These Lutheran friends of yours celebrated or will celebrate wedding anniversaries of **50 YEARS** or more.

San Angelo, Trinity
Don and Billie Brosig
60 years, Nov. 10

Jim and Sue Taylor
56 years, Nov. 25

Abilene, Our Savior
Eddy and Deborah Day
50 years, Nov. 2

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY TEXAS SPRING REGIONAL MUSIC TOUR

True Light



The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. ... The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. **JOHN 1:5, 9**

The Concordia University Texas choral and instrumental ensembles will share the **Light and Love** of Jesus Christ in True Light Spring Music Tour with performances in the Houston area Feb. 3–6. The schedule is:

- Friday, Feb. 3, 7 p.m.
St. John Lutheran Church, Cypress
- Saturday, Feb. 4, 7 p.m.
Hope Lutheran Church, Friendswood
- Sunday, Feb. 5, 9 a.m.
Trinity, Houston
- Sunday, Feb. 5, 3 p.m.
Salem Lutheran Church, Tomball
- Monday, Feb. 6
St. Mark Lutheran School



Marvin and Barbara Karstens, members of Bethel, Bryan, will celebrate 50 years of marriage on Jan. 6.

Share your news with us!

Send photos, stories and newsletters for *The Lutheran Witness* insert to:

- ▶ txmess@txlcms.org
- ▶ Texas Messenger;
LCMS Texas District;
7900 E. Highway 290;
Austin, TX 78724-2499

Please be sure all photos sent electronically are in color and 300 dpi (high resolution). Also, send your news to us well in advance, if possible.

The *Texas Messenger* is available online at txlcms.org.





Celebrating early childhood leaders

By Dr. Bill Hinz
Director, School Ministry

Early childhood leaders were “Walking on SONshine” while attending the Directors Retreat Nov. 7–8 in San Antonio. This year’s theme verse was Is. 60:1:

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.”

Each year these leaders gather to be replenished in the Word and to learn and grow with help from the presenters and one another. Our group was blessed with an opening devotion from Rev. Mike Newman, Texas District president. In addition, our group gained new insights as our keynote speaker, Michelle Thompson, director of the Executive Coaching and Consulting program in the Townsend Institute at Concordia University, Irvine, Calif., led our time of learning.

Also attending the retreat was the Texas District Early Childhood Council, whose mission is to communicate that early childhood ministry is a vital outreach in sharing the Gospel with children and their families.

Our early childhood ministries are blessed to have a number of partners alongside, including Texas District Church Extension Fund (CEF), which provides a variety of resources to our centers and schools.

May God continue to guide and direct all of our servant leaders as they share the wonderful news of God’s never-ending love, and His gift of grace and unconditional mercy.

Solo De Gloria – To God alone be the glory.



Early Childhood Council members and guests are, from left (front row) Christine Armstrong, Resurrection, Spring; Celeste May, St. John, Cypress; Diane Dillow, Crown of Life, San Antonio; Kelly Brymer, Redeemer, Austin; Kathy Entzenberger, LEAH Downtown Academy, Houston; Michelle Thompson, Concordia University, Irvine, Calif. (keynote speaker), Amy Sanders, Crosspoint, Katy; (back row) Lee Gaines, district School Ministry; Adam Countryman, worship leader; Tiffany Kirkwood, St. Paul, Thorndale; Sheri Losoya, Salem, Tomball; Brandy Simmons, Lamb of God, Flower Mound; Dr. Bill Hinz and Rev. Mike Newman, Texas District president.



From left, CEF’s Cheryl Springer, Cynthia Segrest and Debbie Potter gather Noah’s Ark storyboard pieces to share as resources for the early childhood directors.

Professors complete update to special education guide

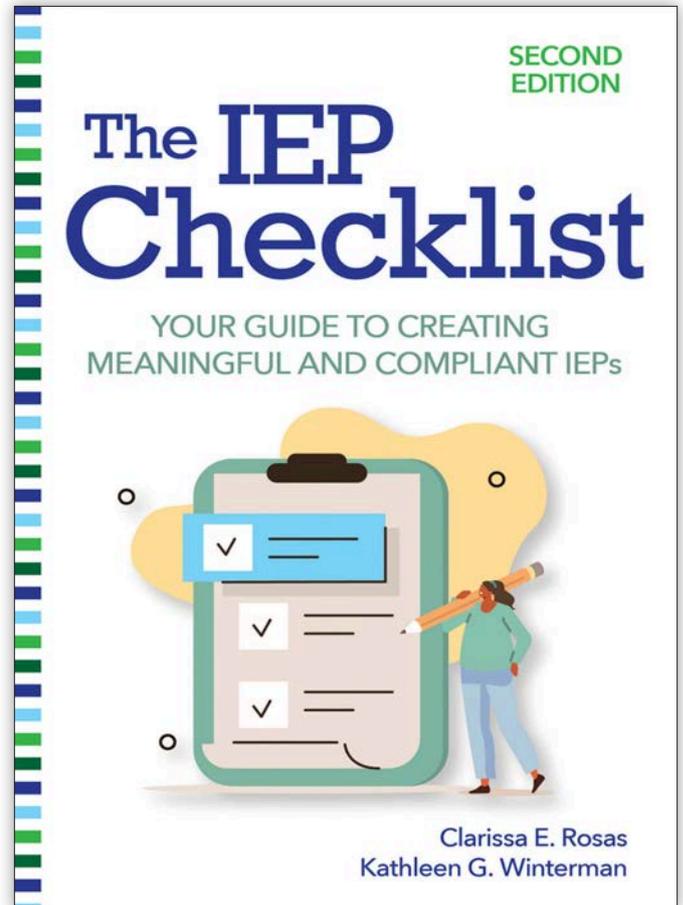
Any K-12 teacher will tell you that they spend a lot of time on paperwork. When a student gets identified with a learning disability, the documentation only multiplies. Educators must develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that outlines a plan to ensure that the student with a disability thrives in school.

“Special education (SPED) and classroom teachers alike report that planning and writing an IEP is one of their most common challenges,” says Clarissa Rosas, associate professor of education at Concordia University Texas.

To work toward a solution, Rosas got busy. Her book, *The IEP Checklist: Your Guide to Creating Meaningful and Compliant IEPs*, resulted from six years of research by four SPED professors across three states. The professors piloted the guide content in many school districts and universities. In 2014, Rosas coauthored the book’s first edition with longtime colleague Kathleen Winterman, who directs the School of Education at Xavier University in Cincinnati. The practical, step-by-step guide for how to prepare for writing an IEP quickly became a trusted resource.

“Many school districts and also universities have implemented our content into their procedural documentation for existing teachers and into class material for education majors,” Rosas says. “The guide is like a road map, organized by IEP section with research-based activities and guidelines to follow at each stage.”

Released in October 2022, the book’s second edition offers stronger guidance for assisting high school SPED students with the transition into the world beyond graduation. The new release also incorporates new research in cultural responsiveness. The relatively new SPED



concept enables teachers to develop curriculum that is accessible and sensitive to students’ cultural and language differences, turning them into strengths instead of liabilities. The IEP guide’s content serves as standard curriculum for all education majors at CTX, a point of pride for Rosas. She teaches the material during her “Introduction to the Exceptional Learner” course.

To purchase copies of the book, visit brookespublishing.com and type “The IEP Checklist” in the search bar (upper-right corner of page) or call 1-800-638-3775.





STRENGTH to SERVE

By Pat Fick
CAN-DO Director



Whenever I travel, I still try to get up to go for a run every morning. I lace up my shoes and head out the door to see some new scenery and raise my heart rate. Since I never learned to drink coffee, endorphins are my form of “caffeine” to start the day off right! It is also a great time to pray, listen to the Word, or just be still and know that He is God.

Recently I was in an area where three of the four directions I ran abruptly stopped less than a mile from my host house. Three times I retraced my steps back to the house and ran a different direction, only to find myself at another dead end. The fourth option was running down the road that brought me to their house in the first place. And there I saw it! The NO OUTLET sign. Obviously, I didn’t pay attention to the sign, or I would have known that in this neighborhood, there is NO OUTLET on all adjacent roads.

Then a lightbulb went off in my brain. The NO OUTLET sign sometimes resembles my spiritual life. I take in lots of great preaching and teaching, listen to cool Christian

music and read amazing Christian books, but if I never have a chance to put what I learn into practice it is like posting a NO OUTLET sign on my life. Not very helpful!

God saves us for eternal life, and He does not need our good works, Luther said, but our neighbor does (Wingren, *Luther on Vocation*). As I put into practice what Jesus has taught me, I find great joy and others are blessed.

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. **EPH. 2:10**

As I share the Good News that Jesus sacrificed everything in order to rescue a lost world from sin, death and Satan, I find purpose for living. Which is more appealing, a stagnant pond that has no outlet, or a free-flowing river that brings fresh clear water and abundant life to others?

Ps. 100:2 says we should serve the Lord with gladness!

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace. **1 PETER 4:10**

As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good. **2 THESS. 3:13**

Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. **ROM. 12:11**

And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. **GAL. 6:9**

God is with you. He gives you strength to serve. Don’t let your life illustrate a NO OUTLET policy. Let the rivers of living water flow through you to all those around you.

Share Jesus. Serve joyfully. You’ll be glad you did!

**Donations for
CAN-DO
Missions are
welcome!**

Call 512-313-4332 to donate via credit card

Visit can-do.concordia.edu

Send to:
Concordia University Texas
ATTN: CAN-DO MISSIONS
11400 Concordia University
Dr.
Austin TX 78726



BECCA JONES
Executive Director



DEBBIE POTTER
Investor Services Rep.

2023



RUBY CRUZ
Financial Controller



KENDA ZAWADZKI
Investor Services Rep.

Happy
New Year

*May you be richly
blessed in hope and love!
We look forward to
serving you in the new
year.*



CHERYL SPRINGER
Operations Supervisor



CYNTHIA SEGREST
Loan Associate



RAELYN PRACTH
Marketing Specialist



JUANITA SHELBY
Administrative Clerk

**Texas District
Church Extension Fund**





Photos: Getty Images

MEMORIES FOR A LIFETIME

From the moment they met in a San Antonio dance hall, Lawrence and Tabatha Thompson have built a beautiful life together. But once their children grew up, they realized they weren't quite ready to be empty nesters. They'd heard about the huge need for foster families, and their curiosity led them to **Upbring Foster In Texas**.

Before long, the Thompsons welcomed 3-month-old Benji* and 17-month-old Bryce* into their home. The couple's top priority was to help the brothers cope with the feelings of confusion and anxiety that naturally came from being parted from their parents.

The boys have thrived on a consistent schedule and stable home. The Thompsons' days are filled with movie nights, trips to the park and holiday celebrations. Along the way they've proudly captured special milestones: Benji's first steps, Bryce's first school photos.

There have been challenges, but the Thompsons have made it work. "Having caring professionals, like those at Upbring, at our side reminds us we're not in this alone," Tabatha says.

Soon, Benji and Bryce will be adopted by their biological aunt and uncle. With each memory they make, Tabatha diligently prints photos for a set of albums — one for her and Lawrence to keep, and one for the boys to take with them. It's hard to know what the boys will remember from foster care, being so young. But the Thompsons hope they will come to appreciate that two complete strangers loved and cared for them during a tough time in their lives.



Thanks to your support, we have the privilege of guiding foster parents through their journey. To learn more, visit Upbring.org/FosterInTexas.

**This story is true, but pseudonyms and stock photos have been used to protect identities.*



Upbring.org	 /UpbringOrg	 @UpbringOrg	 UpbringOrg
--	---	---	--

WOMEN'S RETREAT is Feb. 3-5

When people think about camp, very often they think about summer camp. The reality is, camp is so much more than that. During the non-summer months, Camp Lone Star staff are hard at work serving more than 10,000 retreat guests. In addition to facility rentals, our friendly and professional staff put their retreat expertise to work creating intentional Christ-centered events designed to foster authentic relationships and spiritual growth for adults and youth. One of our most popular events Camp Lone Star hosts is our annual Women's Renewal Retreat.

This year's retreat is Feb. 3-5 at our La Grange campus. This weekend is time set aside for ladies to reflect on Christ and His Word, be in fellowship with other sisters in Christ and spend time in His creation.

We will have the privilege of being led by speaker Christina Hergenrader, who grew up in Galveston and now lives in Friendswood. She is wife to Mike and mother to Catie (18), Sam and Elisabeth (twins, both 15) and Nate (12). She is the author of 12 books. Her Bible studies include *God Loves Moms*; *Starring Roles*; *Love Rules: A Study of the Ten Commandments*; *Family Trees and Olive Branches*; and *Shine: Reflecting God's Love*. Christina is a gifted and enthusiastic speaker. She has a passion for connecting women to their Savior and sharing practices to keep God's people close to Him.

This year, our women's retreat theme is "Abide," based on John 15:4-5:

"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit



Two women participate in a Bible study during the 2022 Women's Renewal Retreat.

by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."

Together we will explore what it means to abide in Christ. This fun weekend includes opportunities for hiking, archery, tomahawk throwing, crafts, star gazing, a prayer walk around the lake, campfire devotions, quiet meditation outside and conquering the climbing tower.



Christina Hergenrader, shown here presenting at the LWML district convention last June, will be the featured speaker at the Women's Renewal Retreat, to be held Feb. 3-5.

The Women's Renewal Retreat costs \$178 per person and is open for registration at camplonestar.org/womens-renewal. Join us and be renewed physically and spiritually and experience the love Christ offers!



EST.

1941

+ CAMP +

LONE STAR

2016 Camp Lone Star Road
La Grange, TX 78945

LOOKING AHEAD

Jan. 20-22 Junior Staff Workshop

CONTACT US

**Lutheran Outdoors
Ministry of Texas**

P.O. Box 457; La Grange, TX 78945
info@camplonestar.org
979-968-1657 • camplonestar.org

Teaching children about Jesus

Children are a special gift from God. They bring joy to our lives, and are a source of a family's energy. Teaching children about God is our responsibility as parents and guardians, and our children need to begin learning about Jesus and the Bible's teachings at an early age.

Lutheran Hour Ministries has many resources for children of all ages at lhm.org/kids.

Here are some examples of kids booklets (also available in Spanish):

- ▷ **Welcome**
Hospitality is one of the best traits a child can learn. This begins at home.
- ▷ **Do You Know Who Jesus Is?**
Children discovering our Savior and the love He has for them.
- ▷ **Learning to Pray**
God is always available. This booklet encourages children to pray.
- ▷ **The Bible Tells Me So**
Guides children in how to love God and how to bless and serve their neighbors.
- ▷ **I Love My Neighborhood**
Emphasizes how we should love our neighbors and neighborhoods.
- ▷ **Sharing Your Faith**
Words and actions are part of telling others about Jesus.
- ▷ **Precious in His Sight**
Shows children to be mindful and respectful of differences in others.

Booklets and videos are also available on bullying, understanding the differences in others and raising children with respect. Other titles focus on helping your child welcome others, helping your child have a relationship with God and helping your child grow through faith. Lutheran Hour Ministries authors also have written books on how God teaches us about love, forgiveness and reconciliation.

Related pieces for parents are also available. "Everyone is a Gift" is written to remind us that all people are



God's creation and a special gift from Him. "Overcoming a Painful Childhood" is for adult survivors of abuse and gives insight on how to build a better and faithful future. "Parents of Prodigals" is a story about God teaching love, forgiveness and reconciliation to apply in all parent-child relationships.

Teaching children about Jesus should also include "Why Did Jesus Die?", "Who is Jesus?" and "What Happens When I Die?"

Helpful resources from Lutheran Hour Ministries can answer questions parents have about raising children, introducing them to Jesus and their first steps to becoming a Christian. The resources can also introduce children to their God, first dealings with their faith and the value of self-worth.



Table Talk

New year, new title

Happy new year my friends. Here we are, with the start of another brand new year — same seasons, same months, same days of the week. Yet it will not be the same.



Frances Molitor
LWML Texas
District President

To begin this calendar year and with the help of our Communication department, a different title has been chosen for this message. Same purpose, similar messages; yet with a fresh new label for a fresh new year — “Table Talk.” The term is not new, but with the Lord’s blessings and guidance, much prayer and hope, this format will aid us all in the service to our Lord.

Unlike Martin Luther’s “table talks,” there will be no deep theological tutelage here, but it is our hope that you find this informative and encouraging, while stimulating you to actively participate in inspiring women to “joyfully proclaim Christ, support missions, and equip women to honor God by serving others.”

“Table Talk” brings to mind the inspiring, innovative and productive conversations commonly held at a table. It can be a dining table, or a side table between two comfy chairs. It is a place where conversations can be warm, relaxed and comfortable — many times lasting well past the consumption of food and beverage.

These occasions can lead to many productive and memorable times. Visions and dreams are discovered and discussed. Both laughter and tears will make an appearance. This is the experience we are hoping to provide over the upcoming months. Along with sharing news and up-

coming events, may the Lord bless these “Table Talk” articles with the message He needs to be shared, a message to stir you up to action and to provide reassurance and support as our groups and members seek to impact the generations and cultures with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Lord placed us all here at this time, in this season, in this place to continue in humble service to Him through Lutheran Women in Mission. Remaining constant in prayer and the Word, may faith, hope and love prove to be the steppingstones in our endeavor to follow where He leads.

With time running short on making a final decision on this fresh title, a post was shared to my Instagram account which led to this final choice. It was a gift from God — a reassurance to make this change. The post was a poem written by Tanner Olson, author, poet, speaker and follower of Jesus. Permission was sought and graciously granted from the author to share a portion of the poem with you. The poem is titled “You Don’t Have to Have it all Figured Out.”

For it is gentleness that turns the noise of the world into an invitation to sit at the table.

A place where you can say I don’t know. A place where you can ask for help. A place where you can admit to being wrong. A place where you can say I love you.

Where the fear of the unknown once yelled, hope now sings.

And it is a beautiful song.

One that I am learning as I whistle along.

www.linktr.ee/writtentospeak

My whistle is pretty sad, but I sure can hum! You are invited to join me at this table — a place where hope now sings. Let us whistle (or hum) along together, for serving the Lord is indeed a beautiful song.

Seeking banner designs!

The LWML 40th Biennial Convention will be held June 22-25 in Milwaukee, under the theme “Celebrate the Lord of the Nations.” Details can be found at lwml.org/2023-convention.

In continuing the celebration of LWML’s 80th anniversary, each district is being asked to either create a banner using the 2023 convention theme or bring a vintage banner from prior conventions. The Texas District has access to several vintage banners, yet we do not wish to stifle the creative talents of our members.

Please consider crafting a banner to “Celebrate the Lord of the Nations” by submitting a rough sketch, with samples of materials to be used, to President Frances before Feb. 10 (mailing address can be obtained from your zone president). For instructions, email a request to president@lwmltxdist.org.

Scholarships available

Applications are being accepted for the 2023 LWML Texas District Scholarship. Female members of a Texas District congregation who are attending an LCMS college or university and studying to become an LCMS full-time professional church worker are eligible.

For eligibility requirements and to apply, visit lwmltxdist.org (go to “Menu” and select “Scholarships” from the “Committees” drop-down menu).

For more information, contact Melissa Houchin, Scholarship Committee Chairman, at scholarship@lwmltxdist.org. Completed applications must be sent or emailed to Melissa, time-stamped or post-marked by March 31.

Greetings from H2H!

By Liz Burnett
H2H Sisters Leader

As your LWML Texas District Heart to Heart (H2H) leader, I spoke at the Bayou City Zone's Fall Rally at Pilgrim Lutheran Church, Houston on Sept. 17.

Following my presentation, I had the privilege of meeting many of our ethnic sisters from Holy Cross, Houston. Holy Cross is one of the oldest black Lutheran congregations in Houston. It was an honor to meet the sisters, who shared a little about themselves and some of the issues of bringing families back to fellowship following COVID. Many prayers are needed for support, and to seek God's will for members to return, support of the

community in their faith, and perseverance following many changes.

We had a joyful fellowship time getting to know each other. Plans are currently underway for a half-day H2H training in the Bayou City Zone.

I also recently spoke to the Joy Mission Circle of Faith, Georgetown, during its monthly Bible study. I shared a little about myself and the purpose of the H2H Sisters, which is an intentional effort to welcome and encourage multicultural women to work side-by-side with all LCMS women in the life and work of the LWML. The H2H Sisters Committee helps motivate, equip and challenge women

of diverse ethnic groups as they serve the church, participate in the LWML, witness to the world and grow in relationships.

At present there are 19 trained H2H sisters in Texas. These sisters are also ready to reach out to other women in their respective areas. I am willing to speak at group and zone events or help with finding a H2H sister in your area. I am also available to lead a half-day training so you can learn more about the H2H Sisters program.

For more information about the H2H Sisters, please reach out to me at 979-218-8583 or liz.burnett@teex.tamu.edu. We are always looking for people to join our team.

It is my privilege to serve you and the LWML Texas District as your Heart 2 Heart leader!



▲ Bayou City Zone Fall Rally



◀ Faith, Georgetown Bible study



What's your 80?

Faith, Lampasas, held an ingathering with a goal of collecting 80 pairs of socks for a homeless shelter. Instead, 127 pairs of socks were delivered! All glory and honor to our Heavenly Father!

**2022-24 Mite Goal:
\$390,000**

Mites received through Oct. 31: \$97,710
(\$292,290 still needed)

Mission Grants paid through Sept. 30:
\$41,532

Send your mite offerings along with a remittance form to:
LWML Texas District Attn: Kathy Walther,
Financial Secretary,
P.O. Box 124, Giddings, TX 78942