



TEXAS MESSENGER

From the president

Moving forward

PART 4 OF 'WE HAVE THE SACRAMENT'

By Rev. Michael Newman

President,
LCMS Texas District

txlcms.org
mnewman.org



During the pandemic, an evangelical pastor said, “We’re going to have trouble getting people back together when this is over, but you Lutherans will be just fine. People will come back to your churches. You have the Sacrament.”

That was an insightful statement. It hearkens to the blessings of the church and the Lord’s Supper covered in the past three articles. The Lord’s Supper is God’s family meal, Christ’s real presence for us and our presence with one another. We receive forgiveness of sins and proclaim Christ’s atoning death to one another and to the world. Holy Communion forms community that everyone needs.

As I noted last month, our churches have also “extended” the table of the Lord for special situations of pastoral care. It is normal practice to administer the Lord’s Supper outside of worship services as pastors bring

the Sacrament to those in need in hospital rooms, rehabilitation centers and their homes. A new question arises: Can technology ever assist with exceptional Gospel needs?

The LCMS is very good at addressing exceptional situations. In 1865, when a shortage of pastors was hindering Gospel outreach to millions of immigrants, the Western District of the LCMS formulated “Theses About the Call and Position of Missionary at Large.” The theses noted the exceptional circumstance that allows certain orders and practices to be set aside: “An emergency occurs then when, through a legalistic retention of the order, souls, instead of being saved, are lost, and thus love is thereby violated” (Carl S. Meyer, *Moving Frontiers*, p.207).

If souls are being lost, emergency measures were called for. Our forefathers noted that exceptions can be considered in “the case of unusual spiritual trials” (Meyer, p.208). Why? So love — Christ’s love for all — is not violated.

Can an exceptional circumstance of pastoral care for the administration of the Sacrament ever warrant the use of a live internet connection? Could “unusual spiritual trials” ever open the door for the

church to extend the table of the Lord’s Supper using technology? This is the conversation we need to continue in a humble and thoughtful manner, keeping the Word of God at the center of the discussion.

We will never sacrifice biblical truth. At the same time, we can never bury the Gospel treasure in the ground or place the light of Christ under a bushel. So let us move forward, addressing every issue in a robust and collegial manner to the glory of God and for the sake of His mission.

As ongoing preparation for such conversation and conduct — and for all we do as servants of Jesus, I invite you to join me in the Texas District’s annual Day of Repentance on Ash Wednesday (Feb. 22). This is a day to confess our sins, to ask the Spirit of God to renovate our hearts, and to receive God’s restoration and direction. For every issue and for every season, we heed the apostle’s word:

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you. **1 PETER 5:6**

Questions for reflection:

Read Luke 18:9-14

- How do you see yourself in this parable?
- How do you need to repent?

Prayer starter: Ask God to lead you in humility and self-sacrifice.

SUPPORTING MISSIONS ACROSS TEXAS



GIFTS

No gift to Texas Partners in Mission is too small. We need gifts to reach the thousands of people in Texas with the life-saving Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ.

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!



TEXAS TWO-STEP

Join the "Texas Two-Step" Program to increase your investment and double your donation.

STEP ONE:

An individual opens a new fixed-rate investment of \$5,000 or more and gives a gift of at least 10% of the initial investment amount to Texas Partners in Mission.

STEP TWO:

Texas District Church Extension Fund will match the gift 100% to Texas Partners in Mission AND pay an additional 1% APY during the first term of the new investment.

Learn more at: texascef.org/texastwostep



"We want to raise people to share the gospel with other people in their community. And if that becomes a church, then God bless it. If it doesn't then we're still sharing the gospel. God bless it."

~ Rev. Eric Hiner Hope Lutheran Church, Lubbock

GIVE NOW!
txlcms.org/tpim



PRAY

It is our number one priority. Our goal is to have 10% of the Texas District, LCMS members praying regularly for the mission.
bit.ly/missionprayertx

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



PLENTIFUL HARVEST, MANY WORKERS



By Rev. Ben Gonzales
Mission Strategist, Area B

One of the joys of serving in the Texas District, specifically in Area B (North Texas), is that I get the privilege of helping our churches, ministries and six networks identify new church workers. This includes church planters, evangelists, deaconesses and everyday missionaries. This is an incredible joy!

Growing up as a son of an LCMS Hispanic pastor and having the privilege of attending Lutheran schools from grade school to seminary, it seems that this prayer request by Jesus has always been on the lips of God's people:

Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." **MATT. 9:37-38**



"That the Lord of the harvest would send out laborers into His harvest" — what a courageous and dependent prayer, which I have prayed and heard the church pray for as long as I can remember.

And God has answered — and He continues to answer. And it is just like God to answer it in a way we may not have expected. And yet this should be expected, at least in some part, because when we pray, we pray according to His will and not our own. In fact, after He answered a prayer in a way that didn't look like I thought it would, I sometimes humorously say, "I should have been more specific."

Yet the truth remains that God is answering our prayers through the many workers that the Spirit is leading to the LCMS, and who come from many ethnic backgrounds and nations speaking many languages.

Pictured are a group at the chartering service for Grace Divine Lutheran Church.

One of many examples is in the Dallas area. Rev. Brian Weaver, senior pastor of Peace, Hurst, has experienced the joy of this prayer being answered. At Peace on Aug. 28, Pastor Weaver and his congregation celebrated with Vicar Sammy Roberts in the chartering of Grace Divine Lutheran Church, which worships on the Peace campus.

"We at Grace Divine are very grateful and thankful to God for establishing this great partnership in the Gospel because we know that God has chosen this time and season to bring us together as partners to share the Gospel around the world," Vicar Roberts said.

What a joy it is to be the church today and to be a part of seeing God answer an ongoing, courageous prayer! Let us continue to earnestly pray knowing we serve a God who hears and answers prayer.



My heart's desire

February brings Valentine's Day, when we think about our loved ones and gift them with hearts, candy, flowers or a simple "I love you."



Debbie Curry
Legacy Deo
Ambassador

We desire to show our love.

What is your heart's desire? Can you sum it up in one sentence? Mine is that my family and friends will all know Jesus as their Savior and join me in heaven. I pray that God will give me the wisdom and opportunities to share Jesus with those I hold dear here on earth.

The Christmas season brought many opportunities to see and think of family and friends, many of whom I hear from only at Christmas. As I look back at those cards or gifts I received, I pray for them. The prayers for those without evident faith in Jesus are the most fervent. As I grow older and closer to the time Jesus will call me home, the urgency of those prayers grows. I also think more about the legacy I will leave for them. Will it include my faith? How can I assure that will happen?

We will not hide them from their children but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders that he has done. **PS. 78:4**

Going to church, reading my Bible, praying for others and serving are all ways to share my faith. Making estate plans, writing a will and planning a funeral are also important steps to sharing my faith with my children, grandchildren and those I hold dear. Even more important is having conversations with them on these topics, which isn't easy and they quickly want to change the subject, but I remind them that I want them to know my heart's desire. And when I am no longer here physically, they will be reminded of my heart's desire when they learn my faith has been so dear to me that I am leaving part of my estate for the work and mission of the Lord.

When planning our estate, my husband and I wanted our earthly gifts to benefit our family, church and the faith-based organizations that were important to nurturing our faith. We also didn't want to burden our family with unnecessary taxes. We are grateful for the advice and expertise of Legacy Deo for helping us establish a plan.

We used the funeral and will-planning guides available for free at legacydeo.org. Knowing that our situation and tax laws are always changing, we will continue to consult with Legacy Deo to tailor a charitable giving plan to our needs.

One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts. **PS. 145:4**

Can Legacy Deo help you plan your estate? Legacy Deo: God's Gifts. Your Legacy. How does it all fit together? We can help. It starts with recognizing that God (Latin: *Deo*) is the giver of all gifts. What you do with His gifts is the legacy you leave. Legacy Deo is here to help establish and nurture your God-honoring legacy, one that demonstrates your faith and benefits your family for years to come.

As a Legacy Deo ambassador, I am available by phone, email or in person, and all information given to me is kept confidential. In addition, I would love to speak at your church or any event and share information about the services Legacy Deo can provide. Our mission is to inspire giving that impacts life forever.

 legacydeo.org	 info@legacydeo.org	 800-880-3733
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Giving back to **SEAFARERS**

A ministry of Joy Lutheran Church, Houston, is the Christmas shoebox program, which serves seafarers/crewmen who stay at the Houston Ship Channel (part of the Port of Houston, one of the busiest seaports in the world). Many seafarers who arrive at the Houston Ship Channel are not able to leave their ships for months at a time, and they miss spending Christmas with their families because they have no way to get home.

To help, the Houston International Seafarers' Center (HISC) collects shoeboxes filled with items such as toiletries, clothing, small electronics, games and treats to brighten the seafarers lives, letting them know that someone cares. More than 150 churches of all denominations and other groups from over 60 countries contribute to help HISC.

Betty Copaus spearheads the effort at Joy Lutheran Church, and 73 shoeboxes filled with goodies and love were recently collected to send to the seafarers.



Volunteers who helped with the shoebox program are, from left, Kathi Hawn, Kaye Reichle and Betty Copaus.



SULPHUR SPRINGS

The ladies quilting group of Our Savior made 192 quilts and 104 school kits for Lutheran World Relief (LWR). The quilts, which LWR will distribute to those in need, were blessed during worship on Oct. 23.

DEVINE

Divine Savior Lutheran Church held its annual Gift of Hope (GOH) fundraising event on Nov. 12. The event includes a barbecue, golf tournament, silent auction and entertainment, including live music.

This year's GOH beneficiary is Audrey Capps, a four-year-old with a neurodegenerative genetic disorder that affects the nervous system. Over time, affected children typically develop difficulty with walking, balance, hand coordination, involuntary jerking movements, muscle twitches and neuropathy.

Since 2015, the congregation has raised more than \$90,000 to give to friends and family in need.

Audrey (second from left) is pictured with, from left, parents Brittany and Josh and brother Kenny; Robert Cappella, GOH chairman; and Rev. Randall Wehmeyer, Divine Savior pastor.

BELOW: Pastor Wehmeyer and the Divine Savior congregation welcomed to their family Vernon and DeDe Jackson, who were confirmed on Dec. 11.



WALLER

On behalf of the LWML of Cross of Christ Lutheran Church, Sandra Nettles presented a fruit basket to the Waller Volunteer Fire Department.



Standing up for life

On Dec. 18, St. John Lutheran Church, Hamilton, was blessed to give \$85,000 to Care Net Pregnancy Center of Central Texas for the purchase of a new 4D ultrasound machine.

For many years St. John has used its Endowment for Life to help fund pro-life ministries in and around Hamilton County. This year St. John started with more than \$35,000 in the endowment

account. The congregation was challenged to raise an additional \$15,000 and then St. John applied for a matching grant through the LCMS 1 John 3 Initiative Million Dollar Life Match. What a great Christmas gift!

St. John is already exploring how it can continue to help pro-life organizations in 2023.

From left, Calvin Fredrich (congregational president), Deborah McGregor Caperton (Care Net CEO), Rev. Aaron Kalbas and Quin Hansen (Board of Finance chairman).



HOUSTON

The Gethsemane Lutheran Church early childhood Christmas program was held on Dec. 7. The program was led by Kim Perry, preschool director. (Photo: Ed Johnson)

FAITH LUTHERAN SCHOOL, PLANO



On Dec. 16, Faith Lutheran High School students enjoyed the 2022 aurora borealis-themed winter formal dance – a great evening of food, fellowship, swing dancing, waltzing and more!



On Dec. 15, Faith Lutheran School students in kindergarten through eighth grade presented their Christmas program, “This is My Son.” The students told the Christmas story through recited verse and song.



WAXAHACHIE



Christ the King Sunday school students assembled Advent-at-home kits for elderly and homebound members. The kits included a Christmas card, devotion book, Advent calendar and Christmas tree craft.





NIGHT OF LIGHT

Redeemer Lutheran Church and School, Austin, has developed a meaningful relationship with their neighboring public school, Wooten Elementary, over several years. Redeemer has provided Wooten students opportunities to participate in a leadership program along with reading mentors, and financial assistance for many families.

The COVID pandemic had restricted some of these activities over the past few years, but Redeemer invited the entire Wooten community to celebrate the start of Advent at the Night of Light celebration. While fun and food were shared, the Good News of Christ's birth was proclaimed through special music, Scripture displays, and a reading of the Christmas story in both English and Spanish.





Night of Light

(continued)

Photos: Dave DeVore



DEL RIO

On Oct. 23, the congregation of Iglesia Luterana Cristo el Salvador celebrated its 40th anniversary. The celebration consisted of a bilingual Vespers service with founding pastor, Rev. Gary Martin, preaching, followed by a meal. Members of at least seven other Lutheran congregations made the trip to rejoice with the Iglesia members.

CONGRATS!

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

Houston, Gethsemene

Herbert and Junelle Nittsche
69 years, Feb 27.



José and Irene Hernández, members of Iglesia Luterana Cristo el Salvador, Del Rio, celebrated 65 years of marriage, on Nov. 3.



Bob and Joanne Allen, members of Zion, Walburg, celebrated 68 years of marriage on Dec. 29.

Share your news with us!

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

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



Getty Images

By Dr. Bill Hinz
Director, School Ministry

You, me, and the staffs of our Lutheran schools have the privilege each day of serving our children, who are gifts from God. Our Lutheran schools are engaged in “Holy Work.” We thank God for the many opportunities to share His love with students and families.



Holy work is all about sharing the love, forgiveness and life found in Jesus Christ — for now and eternity.

Holy

H is for Hallelujah, praising our God daily, our Creator, our Provider of all things, the Eternal God of the universe, the Alpha and Omega, King of Kings.

O is for our community, which we always minister to and with others. In our Lutheran schools we minister to students and their families. We minister with all those in our churches and schools.

L is for love. We love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19).

Y is for you, who brings the Good News of Jesus to those you meet.

Work

W is for wind. We are powered by the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13, John 14:16-18).

O is for others. We love others as ourselves (Matt. 22:39).

R is for redemption, which we have by the blood of the Lamb.

K is for strike. We daily will strike out sin. We receive God’s forgiveness in Jesus. He empowers us to receive that forgiveness and to forgive others.

What our Lutheran schools do is eternally important work. What our Lutheran schools do every day is holy work. What you and I are called to do is holy work. What you do daily with your family and friends as you share the truth of Jesus is holy work.

To God be the glory!



Feb. 17-19
Lutheran Middle School Basketball Tournament, Tomball

June 7
Marketing, Recruitment and Retention Leaders Day, Tomball

July 17-19
Administrators Conference, San Antonio

Nov. 6-7
Early Childhood Directors Retreat, San Antonio

Nov. 19-21
Texas District Educators Conference, New Braunfels

ANNOUNCING:

The 2023 athletics Hall of Fame class

Concordia University Texas Athletics will induct five new members into its prestigious Hall of Fame of former student-athletes, coaches and teams.

The newest members include Collin Janssen (baseball), Jack Cersosimo (golf), Kassandra Bills (women's basketball) and the 2013 men's basketball team.

Stacie Watkins McCollum will receive the first-ever Linda Lowery Lifetime Achievement Award. The award recognizes an alum who has excelled and demonstrated leadership skills in their chosen profession. Recipients must also have lived out their vocation while embracing Concordia's values and mission.

Lowery held various leadership positions at Concordia University for nearly 30 years. She served as the school's head volleyball coach, athletic director, and head men's and women's golf coach.

"Each athlete contributed to the success of their Tornado team while collecting tremendous individual accolades," said Ronda Seagraves, CTX vice-president of

student experience and athletics. "All inductees should be extremely proud of their achievements, and we are truly honored to recognize our latest members."

Collin Janssen was a two-year letterman for the baseball team in 2011 and 2012. The catcher was the program's first-ever D3Baseball.com Preseason All-American and was also a two-time American Southwest Conference (ASC) West Player of the Year and earned D3Baseball.com accolades as a member of the 2012 All-West Region Team and 2012 All-American Second Team.

The **2013 men's basketball team** won a program-best 24 games on their way to claiming the program's first ASC tournament championship. The Tornados then won the school's first NCAA tournament game and finished the historic season with a record of 24-6.

Jack Cersosimo was a four-year letterman for the men's golf team (2011-15). His six first-place finishes and nine ASC Golfer of the Week nominations are second in school history. He earned four

All-Conference selections, and he was Concordia's first ASC individual champion.

Kassandra Bills ranks in the top 10 in women's basketball program history in minutes, field goals made, offensive rebounds, points scored, steals, assists, rebounds and blocks. She is one of nine members of the exclusive 1,000-point club. She was the 2008-09 ASC West Co-Player of the Year and a four-time ASC All-West selection.

Stacie Watkins McCollum served as a volleyball defensive specialist for CTX (1992-95). Starting her career in programming for CBS, helping supervise broadcast at such as the NCAA men's Final Four, the 1998 Winter Olympics, and the College World Series.

In 2000, she accepted the role of operations manager in the NHL. She moved to ESPN as a director of programming and acquisitions in 2005, playing a vital part in launching the ACC Network. In 2015, she was promoted to senior director, overseeing the Longhorn Network's business operations. Watkins McCollum moved to head the SEC Network in 2019. In 2022, she was appointed vice-president of programming at DraftKings.



God's lavish love

By Pat Fick
CAN-DO Director

Have you recently had a sleepless night? Have you tossed and turned with anxiety, fear or frustration?



I recently had one of those nights, and the cause was the sound of my dog constantly licking his rear. I apologize if that is too much information, but here's what happened. Sonny loves to go for walks, and during those walks he is keenly aware of anything that appears to be edible. Even if it is spoiled or just a food wrapper, he tries to gobble it down before we can pull him away or get it out of his mouth.

When Sonny's stools became watery (diarrhea alert) and he started constantly licking his rear, we turned to Google for advice. In case any of you are curious, a dog's anal glands can easily become infected. This is pretty painful for the dog since this area has a lot of nerves. It also causes extreme itching and may indicate they have a parasite.

So we decided to get through the night and take him to the vet the next morning.

I'm happy to report that the medicine and special food the vet sold us remedied the problem. We can now sleep without the constant sounds of tongue touching tail!

It would be accurate to say that Sonny's behavior was lavish. Merriam-Webster describes lavish as expending or bestowing profusely; prodigal. A prodigal is described as one who spends or gives lavishly, in abundance or excess. Synonyms of lavish are exorbitant, extravagant, unconscionable, plethoric, overmuch, excessive, extreme, inordinate, undue.

Lavish, and all of these synonyms, describe God's love for us!

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!
1 JOHN 3:1A (NIV)

God's great love for us resulted in His sending His son Jesus to live and die for us so that we might be

forgiven and freed to serve Him without fear. He is a prodigal God, recklessly extravagant in offering forgiveness, help and hope to hurting humans.

I want to leave you with one more verse that encourages us to share God's extravagant, excessive love with others.

Our great desire is that you will keep on loving others as long as life lasts, in order to make certain that what you hope for will come true. Then you will not become spiritually dull and indifferent. Instead, you will follow the example of those who are going to inherit God's promises because of their faith and endurance. **HEB.6:11-12 (NLT)**

Let's be real. People are often licking their wounds and need someone to keep on loving them. When we love others we live in hope, and hope does not disappoint.

Lord, don't let us become spiritually dull or indifferent. Help us to love lavishly, like You do. Amen.



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

Call 512-313-4332 to donate via credit card

Visit
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11400 Concordia University
Dr.
Austin TX 78726

Walking with you, SHARING JESUS



Getty Images



Raelyn Pracht
CEF Marketing
Specialist

Dear faithful partners in ministry,

Last year brought economic challenges, and many of our Texas District congregations and investors felt their impact. Texas District Church Extension Fund (Texas District CEF) has boldly and responsibly turned these challenges into opportunities.

Let's revisit our mission statement:

Through investments from Texas District LCMS congregations and their members, Church Extension Fund will be the preferred financial resources partner for district ministries focused on multiplying followers of Jesus.

In this statement, are reminded of the Great Commission. It is by His grace and loving hands that we can remain focused on meeting the needs of our wonderful partners in ministry — congregations and you!

We stand ready and committed to being and remaining the preferred financial resources partner for our investors and congregations by:

- ▶ Raising our investment rates, so we can continue to be a low-cost loan provider for district ministries focused on multiplying followers of Jesus.
- ▶ Developing new investment products, like the Jumbo investment, to fit specific needs.

Texas District CEF walks together with you — serving you, your family and your congregation



LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford

— wherever you are and wherever you hope to be financially.

Maybe you haven't partnered with us yet. We are here and ready to help you get started. Call one of our Investor Services Representatives today at 1-888-951-1233 and they would be happy to assist you!

You can find out about our offerings and the current interest rates at texascef.org.

Thank you for your wonderful and faithful partnership in Texas! Together we are taking steps across Texas to share Jesus.

Keeping dreams alive

BeREAL helps young adults envision a better future



Photos: Getty Images

Skylar* spent most of her childhood — which she describes as “stressful and traumatic” — in foster care, not knowing where she belonged. After high school she set her sights on college, fully aware that she would have to work hard to make it on her own. Sadly, she was convinced that her first “grown-up” Christmas would be an unhappy one.

But then the 18-year-old joined BeREAL, Upbring’s Supervised Independent Living program for young adults. BeREAL supported Skylar by providing her with an apartment close to the Texas State University campus in San Marcos, where she is studying to be a social worker. The Upbring staff gave her gift cards to buy food and assisted with medication when she was sick with COVID-19.

At Christmastime, Upbring gave Skylar a few gifts, a small tree to decorate and notes of encouragement, making her holiday a little happier. “I just felt special,” she said.

Skylar eventually wants to pursue a master’s degree. Her dream is to help people coping with addiction or domestic violence. Inspired by her own experience, she also wants to make the world better for children in foster care. Toward that end, Skylar has thought about starting a business — an after-school program that

would include fun activities for children and give them a place to do their homework before returning to their foster homes or shelters.

BeREAL is helping Skylar realize her dream. Reflecting on the program, she said: “Thank you for believing in us and making us feel like we’re part of something.”

Because of your support, young adults like Skylar can work toward their goals. To learn more about the BeREAL program, visit Upbring.org/BeReal.

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



Upbring.org

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 UpbringOrg

THE HEART OF THE MINISTRY

Lutheran Outdoors Ministry of Texas is the ministry it is today thanks to the many dedicated people who have given support over several decades.

While we believe all who enter the camp play an important role at LOMT, there is a special group of people whose impact on the ministry cannot be overstated. The Development Council truly reflects the heart of the ministry.

In 1985, the Development Council was created to help support the camp financially and help with volunteer work. In 1992, the membership requirements were revised to a renewable three-year commitment of regularly praying for camp and financially giving a minimum of \$500 annually. Members of the Development Council were also to be advocates for LOMT in their congregations as well as help raise money and awareness by inviting friends to the annual barbecue and auctions.

Last year, the Board of Directors had revisited the purpose and financial commitment. It was voted that the purpose of the Development Council does not change, but only needed to be reemphasized.

However, the financial commitment needed to be adjusted since the impact of the dollar has decreased due to inflation. The minimum Development Council pledge was raised. However, those current members were “grandfathered” in at their current amount if they were not able to meet the increase.

As of today, the stated purpose of Development Council members is to serve as supportive leaders of LOMT and Camp Lone Star through prayer, advocacy and financial giving.

Responsibilities:

1. Pray regularly for camp and the staff
 - As available, attend the annual Development Council weekend
 - Receive Development Council e-newsletter for updates and prayer requests
2. Advocate for LOMT/Camp Lone Star in your congregation
 - Submit prayer requests for camp to your congregational prayer list
 - Encourage the use of the ministry (retreats, summer camp, mission opportunities, etc.)
 - Share the stories of camp and

encourage others to get involved

- Invite guests to the annual barbecue celebration and auction

3. Financially support at a minimum cash gift of \$1,000 annually
 - Development Council members who are also Thrivent members can direct Choice Dollars to LOMT/Camp Lone Star and submit requests for Thrivent Action Teams for specific projects

We are blessed to have a group of more than 100 Development Council members who are champions of this ministry. Their dedicated support and advocacy help the camp staff plant seeds of transformation through the power of the Gospel.

We cannot thank them enough. If you are interested in joining them or for more information, visit camplonestar.org. Click the “Support Us” link in the upper-right corner, and then click the “Development Council” box.



EST. 1941

♦ CAMP ♦

LONE STAR

2016 Camp Lone Star Road
La Grange, TX 78945

CONTACT US

**Lutheran Outdoors
Ministry of Texas**

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As we enter February, our thoughts turn to love. We read in Scripture that “God is love” (1 John 4:8), so we should remember that every day and live our lives accordingly. Most all of the creatures of the earth exist with some capability for love, admiration or respect. But it is man who can take that blessed characteristic of love and move it to the next level. We can be loved and recognized as being loved, and we can also love back.

The *Random House College Dictionary* defines love as “a feeling of warm personal attachment or deep affection, as for a parent, child or friend.” It also states love as “the benevolent affection of God for His creatures or the reverent affection due from them to God.”

Love may apply to various kinds of regard: the charity of the Creator, reverent adoration toward God or toward a person, the relation of parent and child, the regard of friends for each other, or the romantic feelings for one of the opposite sex.

We are all still recovering from the past two-plus years of difficult times dealing with the pandemic, including the distancing we had to practice hoping to minimize the spread of the virus. Lessons learned during that time included increased affection for our loved ones, our newfound freedom to reach out to each other, and to go to our children and give each of them a special hug.

Lutheran Hour Ministries (LHM) addresses this love in a slightly different direction. An LHM Learn four-part mini course has been developed, titled “Love Thy Neighborhood.” The first of the four courses is titled “What Does

Neighborly Love Look Like?” You may remember the story of the day an expert in the law asked Jesus what he should do to inherit eternal life. And in response, Jesus asked the man how he would summarize God’s Law. The expert’s summary was perfect. Luke 10:27 reads:

And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.”

The expert, wanting to justify himself, asked Jesus “And who is my neighbor?” The answer may surprise you. Jesus wants us to love our friends, the down-trodden, the sick, the needy and even our enemies.

This LHM mini-course is worth reading and clarifies God’s most important commandment. For more information visit lhm.org/learn/course-lovethyneighborhood/index.html#

Ambassadors wanted

As we move along in this first part of the new year, we would like you to prayerfully consider becoming an ambassador for LHM. An ambassador is a congregation member who nurtures a relationship with LHM for the purpose of sharing LHM resources with the congregation.

Ambassadors put LHM materials to use. They lead Bible studies. They promote Project Connect booklets and other materials, and host a LHM Sunday at their congregations. Please consider joining the LHM ambassador team.

For more information visit lhm.org/ambassador.

Mission Grant spotlight

Serving children with autism

By Patti Samsel

Vice-President of Gospel Outreach

Let It Shine Enrichment Academy in Austin was established by Lutheran Special Education Ministries (LSEM) in partnership with Bethany Lutheran Church, Austin, as a preschool to serve children on the autism spectrum in a caring Christian environment. Since its inception, the school continues to see growth in attendance and a desire for services.

Let It Shine is a multi-sensory, holistic preschool program for children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, and also includes children with developmental delays, difficulties with socialization, and/or sensory processing deficits. Small class sizes allow teachers to give individualized attention and help children learn at their level. These children are often turned away or removed from standard early-learning centers.

In addition to the structured curriculum and therapies, students attend chapel weekly, engaging in Christian songs and Bible stories. Teresa Danner, occupational therapist and Let it Shine director, shared that a parent was amazed and overjoyed that her child was singing Bible songs learned in chapel.

With the first installment of their mission grant for the 2022-24 biennium, Let It Shine Enrichment Academy was able to award scholarships to students. Future installments will be used to purchase classroom materials and resources to meet students' unique needs, and provide teacher training. Staff wish to thank the Texas District for their continued monetary support and prayers.



Teresa Danner (center), Let It Shine Enrichment Academy director, is pictured with academy teachers, who are excited to work with these special children and give them a loving, welcoming, structured environment where they can learn, grow and thrive.



A child participates in therapeutic listening to promote regulation and auditory processing while completing a craft.



While gaining strength and endurance, a child uses his walker to play in the gym and kick the ball to a peer.

District offering scholarships for church-work students

Who doesn't need help paying college tuition bills? If you know of a female member in your Texas District congregation studying to become a full-time LCMS professional church worker at an LCMS college or university, we have a wonderful opportunity for her. The Texas District LWML Scholarship Endowment Fund Committee will award scholarships for the 2023-24 school year to eligible applicants.

Visit lwmltxdist.org for eligibility requirements and to

apply. From the menu bar click "Committees," choose "Scholarships" from the drop-down menu, and download the 2023 scholarship application packet.

For more information, contact Melissa Houchin, Scholarship Committee chairman, at scholarship@lwmltxdist.org.

Completed application packets must be sent or emailed to Melissa, time-stamped or postmarked by March 31.

Table Talk



Grab a cup of coffee or tea, and let us visit a moment.

WE ARE ‘BOLD IN HOPE’

I am truly excited about the revised primary focus for the 2022-24 biennium, *Bold in Hope*. If you have not seen it yet, please visit lwmltxdist.org. You will find the logo and initiative for the remaining months of the biennium on the homepage.

I have become so drawn to the revised LWML mission statement, and I also aspired to bring that to the forefront of our district activities. The focus on hope sustained and reassured us over the past two years as our lives tumbled around in that “new normal” that none of us genuinely liked. Thanks be to our merciful Father — normality appears to be on the rebound.

The world is on the move again. As congregations have returned to worshipping together, and many of the pre-pandemic activities re-

turn and flourish, we are being called into action and that is where the “bold” comes in. The Lord is providing opportunities for us to proclaim Christ, support missions, honor God and serve others. Let us be bold in these actions, staying true to the Word of God and the doctrine in which LWML has been planted, yet willingly open our hearts and minds to new or different initiatives in meeting the goals of this focus.

Are you ready and willing to be *Bold in Hope*? There will be opportunities over the remaining months of this biennium for discussions, in which I encourage all of you to look for and participate. We may not be able to figure it all out, but you have all been invited to sit at the table.

Frances Molitor
LWML Texas District President

Plan for convention

The LWML 40th Biennial Convention is scheduled for June 22–25 in Milwaukee. Now is a good time to make plans to attend. Register, find a travel buddy and make those hotel reservations.

Join your Texas District delegates to “Celebrate the Lord of the Nations.” Information can be found in the winter issue of *Lutheran Woman’s Quarterly* or at lwml.org/2023-convention. Looking forward to seeing you there!

Equip, encourage, invite YOUNG WOMEN

When will it be my time? Children often ask this question, curious when they will get to the next step of “growing up” so they can feel like a big kid. So I ask you, when will it be their time? Do you have young ladies involved in your group? How about teens? We often express frustration when we invite young women into our groups and are turned down due to schedules or family obligations. What if we made the involvement in LWML routine at a young age?

Young girls are seeking approval from anyone and anything during their formative years. Let’s be that encouraging group that welcomes them in and trains them up in the ways of the LWML. Give them the opportunity to understand our mission and help them to live it out in their schools, homes and on the practice fields.

When the girls get involved at a young age, they will be excited about climbing the ranks of the LWML. They will form the friendships with others that will result in leadership roles as they mature. Not only will our groups flourish with young faces, but they will also bring fresh perspectives and new ideas to the group. Keep an open mind and see where each young person can take your group.

Our groups meet at various times on various days with a variety of activities. Make your young ladies/teens group something that works for your congregation. Don’t worry about what another zone is doing. Reach out, connect and get started on including all ages into your group.

By Amanda Hankemeier
Chairman, Committee on Young Women

GREAT IS HIS Faithfulness!



Totals as of November 30, 2022

2022–2024 Mite Goal	\$390,000
Mites Received	\$118,305
Total Mites Still Needed	\$271,695
Mission Grants Paid	\$50,282

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