

A Clean Heart? Not so much.

Often during my prayers, after I finish confessing my sins, I sing (out loud!) the offertory based on Psalm 51:10-12. I BEG God to create a clean heart within me. As I do this, I usually get a picture in my mind of the Holy Spirit living in my heart. And it's not pretty.

The dear, precious, Holy Spirit, my Helper, and my Comforter, is living in a hovel. My heart is filled with cobwebs covering good intentions that were never carried out. There is the filthy residue of impure and unkind thoughts. There is the chaos left from hurricanes of selfishness and pride that regularly sweep through. And it's not pretty.

But I sing.

Verse 10 - *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.*

Yes, please God, sweep those cobwebs away, mop up the filth and straighten the mess.

Verse 11 - *Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.*

Please God, I need the Holy Spirit! Don't let Him leave me! What would I do without Him?

Verse 12 - *Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.*

God, I know I don't celebrate the joy of your salvation, I'm too busy making a mess of my heart!

And then I remember.

God gives the Holy Spirit to anyone who asks:

If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him (Luke 11:13)!

I am a baptized child of God and received the Holy Spirit through my baptism:

And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

The Helper is here to teach me:

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you (John 14:26).

The Holy Spirit gives me hope:

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope (Romans 15:13).

And then I smile.

May the Holy Spirit forever live in your hearts.

Love you to pieces,
President Candy



The Augsburg Confessor

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father, and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

What is a Church?

For what purpose has Christ established the Church?

Is our focus on the right things within the Church?

What do the Scriptures say about Church?

The way we use the word “church”, we often talk of it more in the way of a social club or a gathering place. We tell friends that we “go to church”, and by that, we mean that we gather with other believers at 93 Augsburg Road in London, Arkansas on Sundays (that’s my church!). Or, if we have a social event – say a youth group gathering at the bowling alley – we may tell other friends that we are going to a “church event” and that they are welcome to join!

But is that all church is? Is it just an adjective to describe an event we have together or an address at which we gather on Sundays? Is that what we have in mind when we confess our belief in the Creeds, “the holy, apostolic church”?

No. That’s not the church. The church is much more than that – more holy, more divine, more important than an adjective or a building. It’s a people! Augsburg Confession VIII says that the church “is the congregation of saints and true believers.” The foundation of the church is built not on us – our events, our programs, our mercy work to our communities, or even our relationships with each other. Rather, the foundation is built on Christ, and His love for us! Christ says in Matthew 16, that Peter’s confession - that Jesus is the Christ - is the foundation on which the church is built.

Apart from Christ, we are nothing. We have nothing. We have no faith. No forgiveness. No eternal life. We are left abandoned in our sins and are turned inwardly towards ourselves because Christ has not changed our hardened hearts to obey God and serve and love our neighbor.

But thanks be to God, for Christ has won life for the Church by purchasing us with His precious blood. Only in and through His sacrificial act can the true church exist. Without His blood, we are just a social club. Yet, God makes the church by gifting Word AND Sacraments to the Church. Augsburg Confession VII says, “The Church is the congregation of saints in which the Gospel is purely taught and the Sacraments are correctly administered.”

So why does the Church exist? What is its function? We aren’t a social club. We don’t meet just to socialize with others – though that certainly is good! We meet together to grow in Christ, for He is the foundation of the church. We grow in our understanding of faith in Bible Study, where Christ reveals Himself to us in the Holy Scriptures. We are strengthened by hearing the Gospel preached in word, and received in material bread and wine. Only by receiving the Gospel that Christ gives, we are equipped to share the love and mercy of Christ with others. Apart from it, we will run empty, being left lonely, unloved, and in search of godliness and holiness.

Through these things, Christ makes us the church. He makes us His beloved bride whom He serves from the physical altar at that physical building at which we gather. Thanks be to God for the grace-dripping gifts which He gives!

In Christ,

Pastor Ralston



Lutheran Schools – A Local Mission Field

On the January Munch Bunch gathering, we heard from a Lutheran K-8 school Principal and the Director of a Lutheran Preschool and they both gave us wonderful insights of the needs of their schools and especially teachers. Not all churches have a school ministry, but any congregation can adopt a nearby Lutheran school. Our LWML groups can spearhead this initiative by contacting a nearby school's principal and ask what kind of help is needed, then get the church's members involved too.

The most important thing we can do is PRAY for our schools and teachers. Other ways to help would be to get a list of supplies that the teachers use and provide them (a Thrivent Action Team could help with this); if the school has a lunch program, do they need additional help serving lunch or watching a class so the teacher can eat their lunch; do the teachers need adults to help their students with reading; do teachers need help with grading papers or copying. The K-8 school Principal stated that we lose a lot of teachers during their first 3 years for a variety of reasons – one of which is financial. Maybe one or more groups can financially support a new teacher during her first few years of service.

If a school has a major project to fund or needs to purchase new equipment (Smart Boards, computers, playground, etc.), an LWML group might want to consider sponsoring and submitting a grant application to be considered for the 2024 LWML Mid-South District Convention. Those applications will need to be submitted to the 3rd Vice President by December 31, 2023.

If you have a Lutheran school or pre-school in your zone, contact them and ask about "adopting" them or a first year teacher for the upcoming school year. If you have more than one Lutheran school in your zone, coordinate with the other LWML groups on who will contact which school. More than one group could adopt a school or support a teacher. Our Lutheran schools are on the front line of spreading the love of Jesus to children. They are a mission field of both church and unchurched children and we are Women in Mission. Sounds like a match made on earth to me!

Serving the Lord with gladness,
Diane Reimold
2nd Vice President



Mission Grant Check Presentation



On March 26, 2023 at the end of service at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Welcome Home of Chattanooga received a mission grant check for \$5000.00. The grant will be used for groceries for Welcome Home residents. Welcome Home's mission is to create a community of hope, healing, and compassion for those facing a serious illness or death and need safe shelter. Welcome Home is one of only two hospice homes in the state of Tennessee. They provide shelter and family-style care for those who need end-of-life care or cancer respite.

Kim Nosis, LWML Chattanooga Zone President, presented the grant to Sherry Campbell, Founding Director of Welcome Home, along with Pastor Christopher Sheets and Peggy Alsop, President of the Good Shepherd. LWML.

The Endowment Fund Has Continued to Grow.

Contributions have been abundant, unfortunately celebrating the loss of some of our dear sisters. But we are glad to know they have gone to be with our Lord and that we will see them again when we join them.

Grant requests are open until April 15. Please submit your request through the website but if you do not immediately hear back from me that I have received it, resubmit it to marycpruitt53@gmail.com. We have a modest amount to disburse but are excited to be able to support those who wish to grow in leadership in the LWML-Mid-South District and for scholarships for events to benefit the service in LWML.

God Blessings,
Mary Pruitt
Mid-South District Endowment Chair



Mission Grant Committee Update

I am happy to report that we have paid three (3) additional grants for a total of \$16,250. We have paid a total of \$67,000.00 (64%) so far this biennium. This means we have \$38,000.00 (36%) of the \$105,000.00 remaining. Please keep those mites coming!

Mission Grants that were paid In January, February and March of 2023 are as follows:

- ♦ January 2023 - Welcome Home of Chattanooga - \$5,000.00
- ♦ February 2023 - 2nd Installment for Financial Aid for Professional Church Workers - \$6,250.00
- ♦ March 2023 - Change Point Pregnancy Center - \$5,000.00

The Mission Grant status table may be found at <http://www.midsouthlwml.org/grantinfo/grant%20table22.pdf>

The Mission Grant Committee is in the process of redoing the Mission Grant application. Please stay tuned for any updates.

Serving our Lord with Gladness

Sandra Arnold
Third Vice-President



What are an Officer's Responsibilities?

Have you been asked to run for office, but would like to know what your responsibilities will be before you say yes? If so, visit www.midsouthlwml.org and look at the bylaws and directives. These documents will be found under the ABOUT tab in the menu at the top of the webpage. The bylaws and directives list each office and what the duties are for that office. I found them very helpful to understand what I would be required to do as First Vice-President. If you still have questions, you can go to the website and click on the CONTACT menu item to email the district and we will answer your questions.

The Nominating Committee is still looking for people to run for President, 1st Vice President, 3rd Vice President, Financial Secretary, and the Nominating Committee. If you would like to be placed on the ballot, please email the district using the CONTACT form. I have also been meeting with the Structure Committee. We are in the process of making sure each zone has sent us updated bylaws and we are updating the district bylaws.

My committees are busy working to prepare for next year's convention. I hope and pray that everyone has a blessed year!

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope" (Romans 15:13, ESV).

Jane Hubsch
1st Vice President

Lutheran Woman's Quarterly

Click to view articles from each issue of the Lutheran Woman's Quarterly.

Please download and save to your computer before printing.



For Such a Time as This

Based on an LWML Bible study that examines God's timing through the stories of Esther and Joseph.

West Retreat	Middle Retreat	East Retreat
September 15-17	September 22-24	October 6-8
Mount Eagle Retreat Center	Camp Garner Creek	Eagle Rock Retreat Center
Home (mouteagle.org)	Home (campgarnercreek.org)	Home (eaglerockcamp.com)
935 Beal Road Clinton, AR	700 Sam Hollow Road Dickson, TN	7143 Flats Road Tallasse, TN
Registration Form – West	Registration Form – Middle	Registration Form – East
Participation Waiver – West	Participation Waiver – Middle	Participation Waiver – East
Flyer – West (Color)	Flyer – Middle (Color)	Flyer -East (Color)
Flyer – West (B&W)	Flyer -Middle (B&W)	Flyer – East (B&W)

Autism Awareness and Teen Quilters

The LWML ladies hosted an Autism Awareness program at Grace, Knoxville. Parents of children with Autism and a Pediatrician presented information about how to diagnose and treat children with this condition that now includes a broad spectrum of struggles. We were made aware of the day-to-day challenges of living with children who can not communicate their needs very well and will continue to support those families with the love of Jesus for All His children.

The Grace Quilters have invited Teen and Preteen girls to help tie Quilts for Lutheran World Relief. Several girls have participated and came back to do more for the International Day of Quilting on March 18. They especially like to make quilts that children around would enjoy and feel the warmth of Jesus' love.



Spring Forward!

Spring has sprung! We have changed our clocks to spring forward. How will you spring into service for our Lord? He is calling you! He is equipping you! The Mid-South District Nominating Committee is asking women to serve with gladness beginning in June 2024.

We are looking for women to serve as President, First Vice President, Third Vice President, Financial Secretary, and on the Nominating Committee.

The First Vice President serves as the coordinator for Administration. She oversees the Finance Committee, the Nominating Committee, the Structure Committee, and the Endowment Fund Committee as well as the Archivist-Historian. She fills in for the President as needed and is authorized to sign checks for the Treasurer in an emergency.

The Financial Secretary receives all funds for the district LWML and deposits them in a financial institution. She keeps records of all deposits, reports to the Treasurer and Executive Board, and serves as a member of the Finance and Endowment Fund Committees.

Additional responsibilities for each position are listed in the District Directives and By-Laws which can be found on the Mid-South LWML website (www.midsouthlwml.org) under the ABOUT tab.

Each potential candidate for a district position should have served as a voting member on a zone board of directors. If you have served as a zone officer, group president, or as an appointed committee chairman, you can spring into action. If not for the district, would you be willing to serve in your zone or your local group? Tell someone!

Are you willing to spring forward with a resounding YES to serve the Lord with gladness?

Contact your zone president or any of us on the Nominating Committee

Serving Joyfully,

Becky Grese, Chairman, Stephanie Rohrer Rebecca Maplesden

Gifts of Love Ministry

Ministry leaders often appreciate unrestricted gifts to their organization that allow leaders to apply the dollars to the current pressing needs when received. A danger of such unrestricted gifts is that they can become generic in our minds, and we don't imagine what the benefit will be some day, robbing God's intended response of joy from giving ("God loves a cheerful giver"). However, predicting future needs can be tricky.

Three sisters taught Sunday School for all their adult lives. They loved children and appreciated the chance to share Jesus with them. Their estate plans all included gifts to support the Sunday School. But today, that same congregation is planted in a community where only 1.5% of the people are below the age of 18. You can see how difficult it would be for the congregation to use substantial gifts for supporting Sunday School when there are no children.

Gifts can be earmarked for certain ministry projects. Yet it is always a good idea to include language that gives ministry ability to redirect dollars if the planned need no longer exists in the future. Your LWML Gift Planning Counselor can help you think about the language that makes the most sense for your favorite ministry. Contact Linda Gage at linda.gage@lfnd.org or 800-741-4138, Ext. 1 to get started. Diane Reimold, Gifts of Love Advocate for the Mid-South District, has gone through this process and would be happy to answer any questions. Contact Diane at giftsoflove@midsouthlwml.org.

Zone historians,

Please, please, please send me your yearly zone historian reports. They were due Jan 31, but I have only received one or two of them. If you will help me with this, I can do my job better. Remember Ecc 9:10, "Whatever **your** hand finds to **do, do it with all your might**". Thanks, Judy Graham, District Archivist/Historian

Special Focus Ministries Update

There is much going on behind the scenes with our Deaf Ministry. One thing that I will be working on for our Deaf Ministry is to obtain a grant from LWML for a deaf interpreter at our district convention in Memphis, TN in June of 2024. Stay tuned!

Here is some information for American Sign Language (ASL) classes. How does FREE sound? The Oklahoma School for the Deaf is offering free online ASL classes. Learn more at <https://courses.osd.k12.ok.us> or google "Oklahoma School for the Deaf". Now is your chance to sign up! They are offering 2 parts, ASL 1 and ASL 2. The lessons are pre-recorded so you can do these at your own pace. BUT you do have to sign up so be sure and check them out. You never know when you might need to know just a little sign language like this example below.

And last but not least, please pay attention to the commercials that are being aired using or about sign language. I recently saw a commercial that had to do with classes that a student was to attend and by body language you could tell she certainly didn't want to be there with the professor who was going to introduce her to the class. Once she was inside the classroom and stood to face the entire class, they immediately signed "welcome" and an acknowledgment that made her feel a part and brought a smile to her face. You see she was deaf! It truly changes the mood and attitudes of someone when they feel like they belong. So, learn that sign language and put a smile on someone's face one day if you get the chance!

As another facet of our ministry, I will be attending a Heart to Heart Sister training session in Milwaukee at the convention this summer. I hope to learn more about the program such as how it works, who, when, where, how, etc., and then return to work with volunteers to help put our team together for this important ministry.

Mid-South District Deaf Ministry Liaison/Special Focus Ministries
Vicki Eubanks



This LWML Convention Central webpage will be the place to find current convention information including convention date, convention theme, convention registration, convention FAQ, convention polo shirt order form, convention hotel links, convention mission walk information, convention Gifts from the Heart info, convention offering recipients, convention news, convention resources, convention forms, convention ballot information, convention Tee Up 4 Mites information, convention blood drive information, convention tour information, publicity for convention, and more.

Leader Development Update

There are many topics from which to choose when discussing Leader Development. We have incredible numbers of resources available to us on the LWML website at www.lwml.org. I am thankful that I was able to attend the Assembly of Leaders gathering last fall to learn what we have at our fingertips. It is amazing. Those from our district who attended were able to present a small portion of what we learned at our Mid-South District board meeting in March. I also presented one phase to my local group at my church and it was a perfect tool to encourage dialogue about numerous issues that sometimes we fail to address so that we become stagnant and stale. We always want to bring excitement and anticipation to the forefront when we are sharing the Good News! That is what LWML does - and we do it well! If you ever have needs for any resources please contact our team. We are here for you.

I hope everyone is gearing up to attend the LWML convention this June. As 4th Vice-President, I have spent some time with our three Young Woman Representatives virtually, and I can affirm that our district is well represented. We have a wonderful team of young women that we can be proud of. Let's pray for them and for their ministry along with the Leader Development team, the Deaf Ministry and the Heart 2 Heart Sisters Ministry.

Mid-South District Leader Development Committee
Vicki Eubanks