

## LWML Mid-South District History



The Mid-South District Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) had its beginnings in the Western District - which in turn had its origin in the Lutheran Women's League of Greater St. Louis - and was so identified at the meeting in Chicago, IL in July 1941. It remained a part of the Western District until it ceased to exist in 1968 when the Missouri and Mid-South Districts were created. At this time, there were five zones (Arkansas West, Central Arkansas, Northeast Arkansas/West Tennessee, Middle Tennessee, and East Tennessee), 89 groups, and 2,021 members. Between 1941 and 1968, Lutheran women in Arkansas and Tennessee were meeting and doing some local projects.

In 1938, women - in what is now the East Tennessee Zone - met for the purpose of forming a permanent organization of Lutheran women and named it "Lutheran Women's League". By 1940, they identified themselves with the Lutheran Women's League of Greater St. Louis. The Lutheran Women's Missionary League became official in July 1942.

In 1946, women in Arkansas and West Tennessee organized to become a zone in the Western District and some of these women served on the Western District Board of Directors and committees. In 1961, the East Tennessee Zone was divided into the Middle Tennessee and East Tennessee Zones. In 1962, the Arkansas-West Tennessee Zone was divided into 3 zones - Arkansas West, Central Arkansas, and Northeast Arkansas/West Tennessee.

At the 1965 synodical convention, permission was granted for the LCMS Western District to divide and become 2 districts (Missouri and Mid-South) and the LWML made plans for a similar division since we try to follow synodical boundaries as near as possible. This division was completed in May 1968. Bylaws were presented for adoption and were approved and Mrs. Fred Burger was elected as the first LWML Mid-South District President.

The first Board of Directors meeting was held in Memphis in June 1968. The first LWML convention of the Mid-South District was held in Nashville in May 1970. In 1978, the offices of 3rd Vice President, incorporated Departments, and Nominating Committee were added. Also at this 5th Biennial Convention, the Christian Growth Committee offered interest sessions for the first time. Our district continues to have a district convention in the even-numbered years.

Even before the LWML Mid-South District was organized, the ladies were doing service projects to help others. The LCMS Convention of 1943 urged each zone to collect German literature for distribution to German prisoners of war. East Tennessee participated in this activity and at the end of the war adopted four European orphans and sent food and clothing to Europe and later to the Far East. They also sent money to Concordia, Nashville to help buy communion ware.

From the first convention in 1970 through the present day, mission grants have been funded to help a wide range of organizations locally, domestically, and internationally. The mission project goal at the first convention was \$12,500 and that amount has increased biennially until it reached \$90,000

for 2010, 2012 and 2014. The Mission Grant goal for the 2016-2018 biennium was \$79,000; for 2018, 2020, and 2022 it was \$130,000; and for 2024-2026 it is \$150,000.

A total of approximately \$1,564,500 has been given through the mission giving of our members for the past 54 years to fund mission grants to help many organizations spread the Good News of Jesus Christ.

The women who have served as LWML Mid-South District President are Mrs. Fred (Sophie) Burger, Mrs. George Franke, Mrs. Richard (Janie) Ulm, Mrs. Rose Wallace (Klimek), Rose Marie Davis, Ruth LaChine, Bertha Jeske, Irma Pinkerton, Esther Mahnken, Ladell McWhirter, Martha Bergeron, Henrietta Gordon, Ramona Stevenson, Diane Reimold, Candy Habich, and Sandie Harjala

LWML Mid-South District currently has 10 zones, 85 groups and approximately 950 members. Throughout our short history, our focus has remained the same – supporting missions, serving others, and sharing the love and Good News of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. To God Be the Glory!

Diane Reimold

Past LWML Mid-South District President (2016-2020)

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