



LWML
Iowa West District

LWML Iowa West District



February/March 2025



LWML Iowa West District Mission Goal

2024-2026 Biennium

Progress as of
January 25, 2025

THRIVENT MEMBERS!

Have you directed all of your Thrivent Choice Dollars? Remember you can direct them to our district for inreach. When you are looking for our organization type in "Lutheran Womens Iowa" and "Lutheran Womens Missionary League Iowa District West" will come up as one of the choices. We registered with the district office so that is why it comes up like that. The choice dollars are deposited into our account automatically and some members have taken advantage of this and we are grateful. It doesn't cost you anything but a little time. Your agent can assist you.

The December/January eNews articles will be due to Editor Lisa Wilson by March 20.
Send articles to lisawilsonlwml@gmail.com

From our Iowa West District President

We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 2 He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. 3 And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. | John 1:1a-3

An advocate is “a person who publicly supports or recommends a cause or policy”

The advocate we have is Jesus Christ. He was born of a virgin humbly in a stable. To shepherds in the fields near Bethlehem, the angels publicly announced His birth. He began His ministry being baptized by John in the river Jordan. He healed the sick and taught publicly about the coming of the Kingdom of God. He was crucified publicly. He suffered and died for the sins of the world. What an amazing advocate we have! We are called to share this good news with world. Through our mites and missions, we let the world know that they too have this same advocate in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We will be gathering in our LWML National Biennial Convention this coming summer.



Penny Schuessler
LWML - Iowa West District
President



Date:
June 26–29, 2025
Location:
Omaha, Nebraska
CHI Health Center

We will be renewed, “Growing in God’s Grace,” serving our advocate of grace. I hope many of you plan to attend. We do not get the opportunity very often to have the National Convention so close to home. I will be attending the President’s Assembly this week January 22-25, meeting with my fellow LWML sisters for hugs and information to share with you. May God continue to bless us through our advocate Jesus Christ, who took all the sin in the world to give us eternal life with Him.

You are valuable

Have you ever felt worthless? Insignificant. Incapable. Unlovable. Shrink-down-in-your-chair, bury-your-head-in-your-hands, unworthy-of-the-time-of-day kind of worthless. It is easy to feel and to see yourself as worthless, isn't it? You lose your job. You search and search to find another one. But it seems that no one wants to hire you. You have nothing to offer. Worthless. You go on date after date, but you never really find "the one." Or you ask and ask people to go on a date, but no one seems to say yes. Worthless. You lose your spouse. You go through a messy separation or divorce. You feel that you have nothing to offer the opposite sex. You have no one to share your life with. Worthless. You're diagnosed with a debilitating illness: cancer, dementia, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, multiple sclerosis. Or simply just old age, which renders you incapable of doing the things that you normally used to do: mowing your lawn, shoveling snow, working in your shop or garage, driving, reading, feeding yourself, going to the bathroom alone, talking, walking, or seeing clearly. You feel incapable. Yes, you feel worthless.

Yet it is to us worthless sinners, that God speaks words that contradict our feelings of unworthiness. Today, God speaks a blazing word of hope and comfort through His mouth in the Baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ. You may recall when Jesus is Baptized, the Heavens are opened, we have the Holy Spirit descending and we have this wonderful message from the Father, "This is my beloved Son, with

whom I am well pleased. It may remind us of the angels' message at Jesus birth, "Good will to God on the highest and peace to those with whom He is pleased". Jesus was looked at as worthless. Once a person said, "can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Yet, God the Father says He is well pleased with our Lord. Well pleased that He is bringing about salvation for His people, carrying their sins to the cross and burying them in His death and then rising triumphantly.

We, in and through Christ; or as we say it, connected to Christ through Baptism are found pleasing to God also. You are valuable, precious in God's eyes. When you are feeling worthless for whatever reason, your feelings betray you. Nothing could farther from the truth when it comes to God and His love for us. God laid His life down for you. If we were worthless, He would not have done such a thing. Instead, we are the crown of His creation and He was not going to just let us go to our own condemnation. No greater love as ever been shown to a people, to you who are worth everything.



**Rev. Nicholas
Thackery**
LWML IWD
Junior Counselor



Decisions – Decisions

Considering distributions from your estate that will directly support ministries of the Church may present competing priorities that have existed in you throughout your life.

Greg and Deb sat down after Christmas to have a serious conversation about their future goals for the distributions of their estate, especially those that will go to ministry. For the last twenty years, Deb has been involved in an afterschool outreach effort through a local urban congregation that has opportunity to provide tutoring and intentional sharing of Jesus with young children. Greg is a trustee at their own congregation and is known as the guy who fixes everything.

In their conversation, Greg expressed his desire to make a gift to their congregation's endowment fund, specifically for long-term care of the building. Not surprisingly, Deb desires to support the local congregation involved in the children's ministry. At first, they were getting into a bit of an argument, as both were passionate about their feelings. Finally, Deb said, "I think we need to ask someone to help us work through this. Maybe it doesn't need to be an either-or proposition."

Your LWML Gift Planning Counselor can be the one to talk and pray with you as you discern God's will. Contact Ann Carrick at acarrick324@hotmail.com or 515-360-0709.

Financial Reports

Gifts received December 2024 and January 2025

Mission Account		Other Mites	
Memorial/Honor District 75%/National 25%		Beautiful Savior Polk City	
Tish Frazier	\$20.00	Noisy Sunday mites	\$119.72
Margaret Sunderman	\$20.00	Rally Mites	\$252.00
Rita Schroeder	\$25.00		
Elaine Olson	\$25.00	General Account	
Nancy Hall	\$25.00	Recycling	\$103.07
Marcene Von Dielingen	\$15.00		
Shirley Rex	\$20.00	Light That Endures Funds	
		Endowment	
Memorial Mites District 100%		Shirley Rex memorial (Penny's mom)	\$100.00
Jean Pride	\$10.00		
Josie Parker	\$10.00	Legacy	
John Baumann	\$10.00	Three Retirement distributions	\$4,000.00
Rory Plough	\$10.00		
Bill Kohnekamp	\$10.00		
Jeraldine Pautsch	\$10.00		

Quarterly Report October 2024 December 2024

Mission Account		District Gifts 100%	
Zone Mites	\$32,934.41	Stamps	25.00
Memorial mites 75%/25%	\$305.00	TOTAL contributed	\$35,477.93
Memorial mites 100%	\$70.00		
Rally or Special Mite offerings	\$1,484.80	Total for the last Quarter	
Other mites	\$421.72	should have been	\$20,439.44
		Total zone mites for July - Sept	\$18,797.29

A Reminder from the Financial Secretary

Mail all mites and memorials to Chris Mahnken, the financial secretary.
They can be sent to LWML Iowa West District % Chris Mahnken, PO Box 6, Schleswig, IA 51461

Please remember to make all checks payable to: LWML Iowa West District.

PLEASE MAIL CHECKS BY THE 20TH OF EACH MONTH, since our month gets closed around the 25th, so we can send our mites to National before the end of the month.

Christian Life

Help?!

Have you ever been assigned to come to the next meeting with a devotion or prayer and you have no idea? Me too! Even though my husband is a pastor, he is more than willing to direct me to the LWML.org. I say he's lazy, but he reminds me as a former LWML District Counselor that there are tons of resources on LWML.org. I have often began my search for useful resources there and I'm very blessed to be assured that the resources provided are theologically correct and interesting, too!

There, at LWML.org, you will find a two-year planner that provides Bible Studies, devotions, themes, litany's, they even have skits and can even help you plan what you can do at your meetings. So, here's the way to do it.

1. Go to LWML.org.
2. Click on the The Word to get its drop-down menu.
3. On that menu, click on Program Resources.
4. On the top right side of the page you will find a link to the downloadable two-year planner. The link also appears below the Featured Devotion and Bible Study. Another option is to use the search bar. Type in "planner," which takes you to the link.

Of course, you could always ask my husband, Pastor Max, don't tell him, but I'd suggest LWML.org!



Sherrill Phillips
Christian Life
Co-Chairman

Historian's Queries

By Gretchen Sump, IWD LWML Historian

I am praying for some response to my queries. Please reply by e-mail, phone (712-542-4561) or regular mail (609 N 15th St Clarinda, IA 51632). Remember to share these questions with your society members, especially older members of LWML and at the zone level also. Any comments you make will be helpful and interesting to share the value of LWML.

Query 1 – What is your memory of the first IWD Convention that you attended? When was that convention?

Query 2 -- What Mission trip(s) have you taken and what has meant the most to you from that experience?

Query 3 -- What other LWML events have been important to you ? such as retreats, prayer services, service opportunities, workshops, etc, on the local, district or national level?

Query 4 – What service that you have done for LWML has meant the most to you?

Gospel Outreach

Our Mites in Action

Last week I received a requisition from Mercy Meals of Siouxland for the \$10,000 grant that we awarded to “Serving Hungry and Starving Children with Nutritious Meals and the Gospel” last Summer.

Mercy Meals of Siouxland is a ministry of Faith Lutheran Church, LCMS in Sioux City. Mercy Meals are packaged by community volunteers, in an assembly lines process, using a scientifically designed formula containing rice, soy, dried vegetables, and a nutrient filled vegetable base powder that allows malnourished children thrive. Meals are usually cooked and served to the children in feeding lines or in orphanages.

I had the opportunity several years ago as part of a LWML District Board Meeting to travel to Sioux City to be a part of an assembly line that packaged meals. It was a rewarding experience and an enjoyable morning in fellowship with LWML sisters and other community members despite the not so stylish hair net that is a requirement of participating. Every packaging event begins with a prayer of thanksgiving, for compassion on the hungry and starving children of the world, and for blessings on the packaging of meals to feed them with food and the Gospel.

Jesus commanded His disciples to feed the hungry people who had come to hear Him speak in Matthew 14:16. The disciples having not yet received the Holy Spirit, were helpless to feed them. Therefore, the Lord provided the food, and the disciples distributed it to the 5,000 men plus women and children present.

Our \$10,000 grant paid for 62,500 Mercy Meals. To God be the Glory!



Brenda Dryer
VP of Gospel Outreach
& Special Focus
Ministries



The Power of 12 Break Out Session Ideas LWML IWD Convention 2024

MITE COLLECTION

- Don't forget to share the Widow's Mite Bible lesson, order the Arch Book to share the message with our children.
- Provide children mite boxes / activity to make their own box.
- Create displays that highlight where mite money goes (don't forget mission posters are available at both the District and National LWML websites)
- "Noisy" Offerings making money!
- Have a Box Day – encourage mite offerings collected that day.
- Set the mite box out one Sunday a month for mite collection.
- Make it personal.
- Make mite collection fun.
- Change it up and make a homemade mite box or mite box holder.
- Host an event and feature mite collection – pizza night, movie night, popcorn, outdoor show!
- Host a pie & ice cream social or bake sale with the proceeds going to mites.
- Take our District idea of "silent auction" for mites' home to your congregation.

2024 – 2026 Biennium LWML Iowa West District Mission Grant Update (as of January 20, 2025)

Grant Recipient	GRANT TOTAL	BALANCE
Rev. Bryan & Deaconess Keah Payne – Tanzania	\$ 10,000	\$ -
Fund Haitian Seminarians	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000
Serving Hungry & Starving Children With Nutritious Meals and the Gospel	\$ 10,000	\$ -
Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch: Nutrition Center Transformation	\$ 2,000	\$ -
Unity Ridge Lutheran School Scholarship Assistance	\$ 17,120.05	\$ 17,120
Project Equip with Truth for Children, Families, and Church Workers Facing Gender Identity Challenges in Today's Culture	\$ 19,400	\$ 9,400
Financial Assistance for Iowa Great Lakes Lutheran School – Expansion and Curriculum	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000
Hispanic Ministry Outreach – English as a Second Language (ESL) classes in different churches of the IDW	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000.00
Serving "Our Elders" through Meals on Wheels Perry Lutheran	\$ 25,000	\$ 6,500
Financial Aid for Iowa District West Students Pursuing Full-time Church Work	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000.00
	\$ 161,520.05	\$ 111,020.05

A video detailing these grants can be found on the Iowa District West - LWML website for use in HIS Zones and group/congregation communications.

Young Women IN MISSION



Martha Sunderman
Leader Development
Chair

This past summer we were blessed with eight Young Women’s Representatives at our Iowa West District convention. Speaking with these amazing young women was such a great reminder of the good work the Holy Spirit is doing in our district. During our time together, the women shared how they came to be involved in their local Lutheran churches. Some women had traditional stories of attending church since childhood, but many shared a different story, such as attending church because their grandmother brought them, or they were invited by a friend. Hearing the testimonies of these wonderful young ladies was a great reminder to me that we are all missionaries and God’s work is alive and well all over the world, including here at home!!

The Leader Development Committee has exciting news to report! We have selected three National Young Women’s Representatives to send to the National Convention. All three of these young ladies have attended a district convention and are actively involved in their local churches and LWML groups. We are very confident that they will be wonderful representatives of the Iowa West District. Below is an introduction of our national YWRs!



**Catelynn
Klockslem**

Catelynn is 24 years old and attends Trinity Lutheran Church in Coon Rapids, Iowa, where she was confirmed two years ago. She has a job as a Sewing Supervisor; Parts and Service Representative. Catelynn is very active in her local LWML group, serving as secretary and volunteering in many capacities including: serving Lenten suppers, serving on the flower committee and calendar committee, and starting a Mailbox program at her church. When speaking about service, Catelynn stated, “I pray for courage and opportunities to share the Lord with others. I share in the duties of the church. I participate in my church LWML where we do things to serve as well. All of these things and others I do my best to do with joy. I try and keep a thankful perspective even when things are challenging. It puts things in perspective to say something like, ‘this may be a lot of work to set up for this event but I’m grateful that God gave me the physical strength to do this.’” Catelynn was a District YWR this past summer, 2024. Congratulations Catelynn!!

Sarah is 25 years old and attends St. Paul Lutheran Church in Garner, Iowa. She is currently finishing up her student teaching, and looking forward to graduation and a career in education. During the summer, she works in a Christian daycare center in her hometown. Sarah has attended LWML meetings since she was very young, as her mom was actively involved in LWML. In fact, Sarah attended her first district convention before she was even born, as her mother was a District YWR in 1998, while expecting Sarah! Sarah serves her local congregation in many capacities, including helping with VBS and Sunday school, and in the past she has served as the Children’s Music Director. Sarah was a YWR at the district convention in 2020, and was able to attend the district convention in 2022, as well. She also attended the National Convention in Milwaukee in 2023. Sarah is excited to serve as a National YWR and learn of further opportunities to serve, stating, “I may not be able to go overseas so I would like to know what other projects I can do that are here in the states.” Congratulations Sarah!



Sarah Sperr

Alexis is 36 years old and attends Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Creston, Iowa, where she has been a member for five years. Alexis is married to Mike and works as a homemaker and homeschool mom to their four children. Her



Alexis Swanson

husband and her are very active in their community, Mike serves as a volunteer firefighter, and Alexis and him are both actively involved with activities for their fire department. Alexis is also a volunteer 4-H leader and her children are 4th generation 4-H participants! Alexis stated that when Mike and her were first married they had a “mustard seed” faith, only attending their (Methodist) church a couple of times a year. The Holy Spirit has truly worked in their lives as Alexis stated that, “Our Christian faith is now the biggest part of our lives.” Alexis serves on the library committee at her church and she is helping to design church t-shirts that can be used for community outreach. She regularly attends LifeLite Bible Study at her church, and Naomi Circle, which is an LWML affiliated group. Alexis attended her first LWML rally in 2023 when it was held at her church. She was a YWR this past summer in 2024, and says of the experience, “I attended district convention as a YWR in June and learned a great deal about LWML. I was very inspired by the stories I heard and people I met, especially those that are working with children...It was an amazing experience. I feel so blessed that I was able to go...I came home with a number of ideas.” Congratulations Alexis!

We are very excited to have all three of these young women representing us at the National Convention! We know that our investment in them will do much to grow God’s Kingdom and continue his work. We are so thankful that we are able to send three young women representatives to this convention!

Girls’ Trip Idea! Did reading these bios remind you of a young woman that you think would enjoy serving in LWML? You don’t have to be a YWR to attend the convention! Omaha is very close to home for many of us! Consider inviting a woman or two from your congregation to attend the convention with you. Not only could it be a fun road trip, but it is also a great way to introduce women of the church to all of the wonderful ways that God is growing his kingdom through LWML! Let’s flood the Omaha convention with women from Iowa!!

Organizational Resources

Are you looking for ways to connect with other women in your group and your congregation or begin a local meeting or zone event with an ice breaker activity? A new publication, “Connection Building Activities,” is located on the LWML.org website and includes activity ideas such as short games, discussion questions, and artistic ideas that can be adapted for groups of all sizes. These will help your group connect and help women form friendships. You may locate this by searching “Connection Building Activities” in the lwml.org website or at this link: <https://www.lwml.org/posts/leadership/connection-building-activities>.

Have fun making new connections this year!



Jeanette Hinkeldey
VP Organizational
Resources and
Christian Life

Mission Servants

As I write this, we will be well into the New Year. With the New Year we can look to new opportunities to serve our Lord through our actions. We all have different strengths, abilities, and resources to use in serving others as gifts from God. 1Peter 4:10 says

“Each of you should use whatever gifts you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its varies forms.” Praying for those in need and helping to provide for their needs using the gifts God has given us is one of the most wonderful ways to tell people about God’s love for them. I challenge all of you in 2025 to look outside your comfort and through your LWML groups to find ways to serve your communities, your churches, and our world. I can’t wait to hear about all the opportunities God gives you and we can share those ideas with others as they may want to follow your examples. May 15th will be the date to send all your mission donations to us for the last 6 months.

As we prepare for the National Convention in Omaha, I have been looking at our Gifts from the Heart opportunities for Convention. They have chosen Camp Luther of Nebraska, Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska, and The University of Nebraska at Lincoln Campus Ministry as the recipients of our Gifts from the Heart. It looks like Gifts from the Heart will all be online this convention, which means you will not have to box up supplies and take to convention. From the LWML web site it appears that the Gifts from the Heart shopping will open in February and run through the convention weekend. You will select items from an Amazon Wish List for each of the recipients’ top needs and there will be an online link for you to use. The items will then be directly sent to the recipients. You may shop individually or make it a group event. Please follow on the LWML web site under Convention Central. There is a flyer you can download with information and in February you will be able to start ordering!



Nancy Medick
Mission Servants
Chair

ELECTED OFFICERS

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Nominating Committee Chairman	Julie Carstens	carstensjulie50@gmail.com

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