

What is LWML, anyway and how does it work?

Who are we? We are women, Lutheran women, in mission. That means EVERY woman in the congregation is part of the LWML. We are women doing God's work. Those women who are teaching Sunday School, working in the church office, working in the church kitchen, helping with VBS, cleaning up the church, and those who are praying in their homes and in the pews certainly are women with a mission. They are the grandmothers, mothers, daughters, aunts, sisters, friends, and young ladies of our congregations. Our LWML mission statement says we are to assist every woman of The Lutheran Church in affirming her relationship with God so that she is enabled to use her gifts in ministry to the people of the world. Before we start with the world, we need to start at home in our congregations. John 15:5 says, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing".

God says "love your neighbor as yourself". We need to look around us and see the needs of others—to care more about them than we do ourselves. We need to look at others and see what we can do for them and not what they can do for us. Have we offered to babysit, to cook a meal, to serve a meal, to take people to the doctor, to visit someone, to listen to someone, to pray for someone, and to love many? The list can go on and on. That's what mission is all about.

When we keep our branches in the vine, we are fruitful. Apart from God we can do nothing.

The Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) was organized in 1942, and is the official women's auxiliary of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS). It is composed of individual women and women's groups within congregations of the LCMS, on campuses, in resident homes, or in other settings. An LWML group within a congregation is called a **Society**. Individual membership is available to women in LCMS congregations with or without a society affiliated with LWML.

Several Societies are grouped together by locality and make a **Zone**. Several Zones are grouped together by region and make a **District**. All the Districts in the U.S.A. make the **LWML**. Our District is called the South Wisconsin District (SWD) and we have 21 Zones in our District.

One of the ways that the women of LWML work together is by funding missions. Based on the Biblical account of the widow's mite (Luke 21:1-4), the **Mite Box** is intended for regular contributions of "mites" – offerings above and beyond the support given to congregations and the LCMS. Mite Box contributions amount to millions of dollars that fund District and National mission grants and implement the LWML program. Our South Wisconsin District has a Mite Goal of \$213,200.00 for the 2016-2018 Biennium. LWML has a new Mite Goal of \$2,075,000.00 for the 2017-2019 Biennium.

Several different kinds of meetings are set up periodically for the women of LWML to meet one another in person, study God's Word, renew friendships, participate in service projects, learn about specific mission topics, and contribute to Mite goals.

The women of the Societies get together for **Society meetings** that are set up by each Society. The Societies grouped into Zones elect Zone officers and meet at a **Zone Rally**. Zone Rallies are scheduled two times per year and meet in the Fall and the Spring. This is an opportunity for all the women from all the Societies in a Zone to get to know one another and "Serve the Lord with Gladness" (Ps 100:2). All 21 Zones in our LWML South Wisconsin District have Zone Rallies. The dates of these rallies are set by each set of Zone officers. The officers in each Zone include Zone President, Zone Vice President, Zone

Secretary, Zone Treasurer, Zone Christian Life Chairman, Zone Special Focus Ministries Chairman, and Zone Pastoral Counselor.

All the women in the 21 Zones in southern Wisconsin make up the LWML SWD. The Zone Presidents make up the LWML SWD Board of Directors (BOD) together with elected officers of the Executive Committee (EC). The EC includes the District President, Vice President of Organizational Resources, Recording Secretary, Vice President of Gospel Outreach and Christian Life, Corresponding Secretary, Vice President of Special Focus Ministries and Mission Grants, Financial Secretary, Vice President of Communications, Treasurer, Junior Pastoral Counselor, and Senior Pastoral Counselor. The BOD conducts the business of the LWML SWD including voting on how administrative funds are to be spent, recommending mission grant proposals to be considered for the LWML SWD mission goal, and receiving information to be passed along to all the Societies in the LWML SWD.

Meetings for the entire LWML SWD are called **Retreats**. These meetings span several days and are intended to bring the women of LWML SWD together in person in a relaxed atmosphere to be renewed in body and Spirit through Bible Study, break out learning sessions, singing, playing games, having meals together, listening to speakers, doing service projects, and more. There are two Retreats each year; the Fall Retreat and the Winter Getaway.

Meetings for the women of the entire LWML SWD to conduct the business of LWML are called **District Conventions**. LWML SWD Conventions are held in June of even numbered years. All the Societies are invited to send delegates to the LWML SWD Convention to vote for the LWML SWD EC officers, as well as the mission grants to be supported for the LWML SWD mission goal. Individual members may represent a local society if invited to do so.

Meetings for the women of the entire LWML to conduct the business of LWML are called **LWML Convention**. LWML Conventions are held in June of odd numbered years. All Zones of all the Districts are invited to send delegates to the LWML Convention to vote for the LWML EC officers as well as the mission grants to be supported for the LWML mission goal.

You, as an individual count as an integral part of the LWML organization. You are surrounded by like-minded women to affirm your relationship with the Triune God so that you are enabled to use your Spirit-endowed gifts in reaching out with Christ's love to all the people of your church, neighborhood, and the world.

Organizational Structure of LWML: Member -> Society -> Zone -> District -> LWML

Meetings: Society Meetings, Zone Rallies, District Retreats, District Conventions, LWML Conventions

Your sister in Christ,

Ann Nehring

Vice President of Organizational Resources