



# ACCENT

On Lutheran Women's Missionary League  
English District  
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Most of us are picture takers and love to record events. With the digital cameras we can take even more pictures. We review them and discard ones we don't like and those that are out of focus – even with the automatic focus cameras!

When we prepare to take pictures we look to make sure the background is good, the light is right and then we focus. We look through the lens and make sure the scene is what we want and in focus.

The holiday season is about to start – Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years. We become very focused on our preparations – decorations, food, cards, friends and family. We want good pictures to show everything that happens so we can remember and share the activities.

Through all of these activities what is our focus on God? Does it show up on the edge of our planning? Is it just the time we spend in church? Or is it sharp and the primary focus of all we do?

Throughout the Psalms the word thanks or thanksgiving appears in 46 verses. The word praise appears in 137 verses. "Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to Him with songs of praise!" Psalm 95:2. Daily we need to come into His presence with thanksgiving for all the many blessings we receive – far more than we can imagine or request. Let us sharpen our focus on gratitude for all that God is and the grace He extends to us.

This gratitude extends right into Christmas as we sharpen our focus on Jesus. "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:11. As Martin Luther states this is great news for YOU to receive joyfully! The greatest gift ever given is for YOU! That is the focus we should have each and every day of the year. Sharpen your focus this year to rejoice in the gift of the Savior, sins forgiven, eternal life given.

And then there is New Year 2014. What do you focus on – the party, the New Year's resolutions? "The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation."

Psalm 118:14. Our focus for the New Year should be to place our trust in the Lord who is our strength and will work

all things for our good. Then we can sing songs of praise for He is our strength and power and salvation.

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As we focus on the blessings God has given to us through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, let us respond with many mites so we may share this good news. We started strong in our giving; let us finish strong so we can complete our remaining mite project. These are God's children who need our gifts of love.

*Shirley Holle, LWML ED President*  
[shirleyh@longrealty.com](mailto:shirleyh@longrealty.com)

**Start making plans to attend the LWML English District 36th Biennial Convention in 2014! Registration and information materials will be sent to all English District congregations soon.**



*He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life."*

Rev. 21:6

**LWML English District 36th  
Biennial Convention 2014**  
William Tell Holiday Inn & Suites  
6201 West Joliet Road, Countryside, IL 60525  
May 2-4, 2014

# Meet Our Guest Speakers for the LWML English District 36th Biennial Convention 2014 in Chicago, IL!!

**Megan Birney**, was born in West Palm Beach, Florida. She serves the Lord through The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod as a GEO missionary in Hong Kong. (GEOs are globally engaged in outreach missionaries serving one- to two-year terms.) Megan serves as the director of Family Life Ministry at Church of All Nations. Church of All Nations is an English-speaking international LCMS congregation located on the campus of Hong Kong International School.

Megan provides leadership for the youth, children, and family ministry programs within the church and also coordinates outreach programs at Hong Kong International School. In her role, she also partners with local congregations within The Lutheran Church—Hong Kong Synod (LCHKS). These ministries give Megan the opportunity to spread the Gospel to many students and families throughout Hong Kong.

As an LCMS missionary Megan feels greatly blessed and encouraged to continue serving the Lord in Hong Kong. Some of the activities include: “Street Sleepers Party”, distributing clothes, snacks and a hot meal along with the gift of song and a message of hope to the homeless population. And, working with children at an orphanage, feeding and playing with the babies, renovation projects, and a VBS program for the urban street kids has been a joy for Megan.

Megan says, “The joy of the Lord has been present among our brothers and sisters in Asia!”

**Carolyn Blum**, Vice President of Organizational Resources has been active in LWML since 1996 when her local unit invited her to be a delegate to the South Wisconsin District LWML convention. Since then she has served as District President, Associate and News Editor of the *Lutheran Woman’s Quarterly*, and as a Mission-Ministry Vision Consultant. Passionate about mission work at the very young age of eight, Carolyn recognizes the LWML as her go-to place for all things mission related. She appreciates the options and resources available including short-term mission trips, servant events, prayer, Mite Box contributions, and information about missionaries and their work. Enjoying close friendships with her sisters-in-Christ is an added bonus!

**Cynthia Mehdi Khan**, was born and raised in Pakistan. She has lived in four countries and has personally dealt with Muslims and people with other Eastern Religions backgrounds in a variety of settings and cultures. She now resides in Troy, Michigan. Her personal real-world experience makes her workshops very interesting. Her unique real life stories have had a significant impact on many attendees.

Her rich background with people from around the world and her experience of rapidly moving from one culture to another have helped her develop novel ideas for outreach, profoundly affecting the world view of her audiences. Her unique life and vast knowledge have made her a charismatic speaker at many conferences. She has conducted many workshops internationally.

Cynthia serves as Director of Cross Cultural Ministries. She offers different out-reach strategies through human care services. These services meet the needs of Refugees and new Immigrants from all over the world.

**Kristi Roegner** (nee Sandmann) was born into a loving pastor’s family on December 25, 1955, in Pittsburgh, PA. Kristi is married to the Rev. Dr. Robert M. Roegner and together they are blessed with four children and three grandchildren.

Kristi has served in mission ministries with her husband - in Africa, as well as the United States. When the LCMS’ *Ablaze!* initiative kicked off, Kristi felt the Holy Spirit nudging her to serve Him in outreach. This led her to various opportunities - working with immigrant and refugee women on behalf of Christian Friends of New Americans; serving as Small Group Missionary at her home congregation; teaching English as a Second Language to refugees just arriving in the United States; and assisting in a variety of other short-term outreach avenues.

Consequently, serving with Heart to Heart Sisters comes as an honor and a delight! God is once again using the gifts and talents He gave her to draw together women of various backgrounds to *serve the Lord with gladness* through the LWML.

*speakers continued on page 6...*

## “All God’s Gifts!”

Susan Fleischmann, Treasurre  
suefleischmann@verizon.net



Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. James 1:17

I am a member of my company’s community cares committee. Although we support some very worthwhile charities, the company’s motivation is client driven, and the committee is strongly encouraged to partner with charitable organizations where many of our clients are affiliated. The LWML’s motivation is God driven. We are instructed by His Word to feed the hungry, clothe the poor, and spread the good news of Jesus. LWML mites, our little gifts of loves, continue to enable us to serve the Lord with gladness and share His many blessings

As the Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons come upon us, I am taking time to reflect on the past year and all God’s gifts. My daughter was recently diagnosed with advanced breast cancer, and the tremendous love and support she and our family have received have been overwhelming. I give thanks for family, church family, friends, LWML Executive Committee, and work colleagues who have all offered care and uplifted her up in prayer. I give thanks to all our LWML sisters and brothers who continue to give selflessly with their time, talent and treasures. Most of all, I give thanks for the gift of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, from whom all blessings flow.

We have two remaining mission goals to complete, and just a reminder that the fiscal year’s books will close on March 31, 2014. Any mites received after that date will go toward the next biennium goals, yet to be determined. PLEASE have all mite money to me no later than March 1 so we can complete our last mission grant, the Lutheran High School Library Project in Pittsburgh, PA. We are all God’s gift givers through our mites!▶

**ACCENT Deadline: January 15, 2014.** Please send current news, zone and society reports, minutes, photos, etc. to: Cherie Voorhees 1305 Lower Ferry Road, Ewing, NJ 08618 or FAX to: 609.896.0341 or send me an attachment through e-mail: voorhees@rider.edu

## Our Mission Goal for the 2012-2014 biennium is \$15,000

1. Redeemer Crisis Center in Cleveland, Ohio - \$3,000—PAID
2. Campus Mission at the University of Arizona in Tucson - \$3,000—PAID
3. D.O.C.K. Ministry, The Discipling of Christ’s Kids, Wyoming, Michigan - \$3,000- PAID
4. Nepali Refugee Ministry in Lancaster, Pennsylvania —\$3,000 - PAID
5. Lutheran High School Library Project in Pittsburgh, PA—\$3,000.

### Short Term Mission Trip July 2014!

The LWML English District Executive Board has chosen the Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch (DBGR) in Minot, ND as our destination for the next short term mission trip in July of 2014.

The DBGR is a Recognized Social Ministry Organization of the LCMS. It exist to help at-risk boys and girls and their families succeed in the name of Christ.

The Servant Team Program is designed to give teams from churches and organizations an experience that addresses the needs of the Ranch and accomplishes its specific vision and mission.

Our servant team will work with the children in several different areas i.e.: Landscaping, the Horse Program, Office Support, Buildings and Grounds, and the Thrift Store. All of our meals will be with the children. Travel and lodging costs are the responsibility of each team member.

Information regarding registration will be sent to your society soon. If you want to know more about DBGR go to: <http://www.dakotaranch.org/>

Cherie F. Voorhees, Coordinator

## “Bylaws, Fall Blessings & Christmas Joy!”

Stacie Garland, Vice-President Organizational Resources  
staciegarland@ymail.com

It is hard to believe that Fall is upon us and the blessed Advent and Christmas season is around the bend! It seems only a few short weeks ago that we gathered in Pittsburgh, PA for the National LWML Convention. Also, can you believe that in a few short months, we will gather in Chicago, IL for the 36th English District Convention and 70th anniversary of the English District LWML? With this in mind...MITES are needed and appreciated! We have one mission grant left to pay prior to the end of our biennium in March 2014.

Speaking of fall and winter; what a perfect time to have each of your ZONES review your bylaws. In the coming weeks and months I will be in touch with the Zones to assist with bylaw questions. My committee and I have only received two zone bylaw updates reflecting the changes from the 2012 English District convention, and we are now upon another convention where there will be more proposed bylaw changes. I challenge each of you to get your Zone bylaws updated and sent to my committee prior to January 10, 2014, so we are all compliant with our district bylaws, and with national bylaws. This will make it easy to update your bylaws immediately once new bylaw proposals are adopted in 2014

As you and I gather with our loved ones for Thanksgiving and Christmas, may we all remember the blessings that have been given to us and the precious gift of our Lord! Prayers to each of you and I look forward to receiving those bylaws!!

Please email me at [staciegarland@ymail.com](mailto:staciegarland@ymail.com), call me at 919-413-3450 or snail mail me at 7 Dorchester Drive, Apt 512, Pittsburgh, PA 15241, anytime for any reason!

Blessings and Happy Fall, Advent and a blessed Christmas ahead!►

[www.LWML.org](http://www.LWML.org)

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## “Thankful Hearts!”

Jennifer Peterman, Vice President Gospel Outreach  
RJsPlow@aol.com

Well, the holidays are upon us and like so many others I try not to get overwhelmed by the commercialism of it all. How thankful we can be when we realize that God is at the heart of not only this joyous season of his Son's birth, but in each and every day of our lives. He continues to bless us and give us so much more than we deserve. I ask each of you, to keep the way He has given to us so freely, and without asking for anything in return, in your day to day life.

Give as you are called with a heart of thanksgiving and joy. Allow Him to work through you in a new way, or with someone new in your life. Consider this your gift.

Also, please continue to give your mites so that we may pay off our final mission grant.

Don't let the holidays commercialism overwhelm you. Always remember with a thankful heart the birth of our Lord and Savior!►



### God's Plan

One day in God's plan, an angel did appear  
to a young girl, Mary,  
who met the time with fear.  
“It's O.K.” the angel said,  
“I'm from your God above,  
I have a message just for you;  
a message filled with love.”

“Soon you'll have a child, and God will be the dad,  
our Savior, Christ the Lord,  
and this will make you glad.”  
“Joseph will hear these words,  
and yes he'll have your back,  
months from now will be the time,  
and then you'll have to pack.”

“To Bethlehem you will go, it will be a bumpy ride.  
Don't be afraid for heavenly hosts  
are always by your side.”

“Baby Jesus will be born, so very cute and small,  
so when He grows, your little man  
will be the Lord of all.”

Rev. Mark Matthews

## “ So Many Blessings to Share!”

Pat Gilde, Vice-President Christian Life/Human Care  
patqilt@verizon.net



**I** will praise the name of God with song, And shall magnify Him with thanksgiving. Psalm 69:30

Well, I have been blessed. How about you? I wake up in the morning and He says to me, welcome to a new day, make the most of it and know that I am with you. I have been blessed. I have so many blessings that a long time ago I started to share them. There are so many ways to share; putting money into mite boxes; getting those extra cans of veggies or some extra food to add to the groceries the church gives away at Thanksgiving; wrapping mittens and hats for Christmas presents to someone who may not get too many Christmas presents; simply writing notes during the year to those in nursing homes to cheer them up and let them know God loves them.

*Whoever has a bountiful eye will be blessed, for he shares his bread with the poor.* Proverbs 22:9 ESV

As we count our blessings this glorious season, remember that you have so many you can afford to share.

*“When we lose one blessing, another is often most unexpectedly given in its place.”* – C.S. Lewis ►

### Convention Goal and Objectives for 2014.

**Goal:** I will come to worship God as HE connects with me through Word and Sacraments, enabling me to Go and Serve others.

**Objectives:** That all attendees:  
Glorify the Father, Son and Holy Spirit;  
Drink Deeply from His Word; and  
Share His overflowing Love.



### Mustard Seed DEVOTION

#### Peace and Goodwill

They shattered the darkness and filled the air with anthems. Those angels who appeared on that first Christmas night had an announcement to make, and they made it in a way matched neither before nor since in power and intensity. To this day, their announcement resounds for all to hear.

The angel chorus praised God, singing, *"Glory to God in the highest."* Then they went on to say two startling things, *"on earth peace,"* and *"goodwill toward men."* Peace? Goodwill? Yes and yes! In Jesus alone we find true peace. The angels from heaven were declaring God's attitude toward His people — one of complete goodwill, seen in the birth, death, and resurrection of His beloved Son.

Despite our failings, God's loving kindness has never failed, and it never will. He sent Jesus into the world so we could see His glory, live in spiritual peace, and enjoy the gift of His goodwill at Christmas time and always.

*This is a Mustard Seed Devotion.* You can receive daily Mustard Seed devotions in your email everyday by going to [www.LWML.org](http://www.LWML.org) and sign up. Lutheran women of all ages, stages of life, races, locations and cultures find guidance, encouragement and inspiration from these daily devotions.

**To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing.**  
**Martin Luther**

### Equalization for the English District Convention in 2014

It is time to think about sending in your equalization payment for helping with the travel expense for your delegates for the Chicago convention. Each zone is entitled to one delegate, and each society is entitled to have two delegates to represent them at convention. The cost per delegate is \$200. We need your delegates to participate in having a voice at the convention.

Each zone and society is responsible for sending delegates, and this fund helps pay their way, if they have paid into the fund. We must all participate for the Equalization Fund to work properly. Those delegates that live close to the convention site, and have minimal transportation expenses, must pay the \$200 per delegate to help defray the cost of those who live far away. **That's what makes it EQUAL!**

MAY is just around the corner, so I will need to receive your payments by April 15, 2014. Make your check payable to **EDLWML Equalization Fund** and mail them to: Elsiena Velazquez, 2121 S. Pantano Rd. #326, Tucson, AZ. 85710.

If you have any questions please call me at 520-731-9475. I look forward to seeing you at the convention.

## “JESUS IS COMING!”

Rev. Robert Rogner, Jr. Pastoral Counselor  
pastorbob@peacewinghaven.org



**I**n the Book of Revelation, chapter 22, verse 16, Jesus says, “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give this testimony to you for the churches. I am the root and descendant of David. I am the bright morning star.”

How exciting it is that once again during this Advent and Christmas season we await the coming of Jesus, our Lord and Savior, “the Bright Morning Star!” Yet, for many in this world there is confusion and plenty of unbelief about this time of year. It’s easy to see why. In the weeks before Christmas—Advent we call it—the Church, with the help of John the Baptist and other prophets, call sinners to repent, to be baptized for the forgiveness of sins, to flee to Christ the coming Savior. And if you already are baptized, your call is to return to the purpose of your baptism—to repent daily, to see your sins washed away daily, to have Christ born anew and formed in your heart daily, to know yourself united to Christ in His death, burial and resurrection daily, to look up and joyfully await His coming daily.

That’s the traditional emphasis of Advent—not Santa Claus, parties and Christmas trees, but that Christ is coming with awesome power and glory! Then, when you are terrified beyond words in fear for your very soul, the Mighty One comes, born as a helpless Baby, homeless, spending His first night in a crude shelter, sleeping on a bed of straw. He’s nursed at His Virgin Mother’s breast. His body is wrapped in rags.

However, let us also remember that this Jesus, “the Bright Morning Star,” comes to us in other ways as Scripture reveals to us other than at Bethlehem and at His Second Coming. There is Calvary and His death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven. And we live everyday with His Sacramental gifts of Baptism and Holy Communion giving us forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and rescue from death and the devil.

This Christmas Day you can see Him if you’ll just look, not with a protective lens or a pinhole camera, but with a special gift, FAITH! Peer through the lens of faith and you’ll see Jesus, your “Bright Morning Star.”

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, “Bright Morning Star,” come to me as Bethlehem’s Child. Come to me in Your Word as I hear and believe. Come to me in the promises of my Baptism and with your forgiveness and righteousness in the Sacrament of the Altar. Come to me at the last day and take me home to be with You forever! In Your name I pray. Amen ►

## Meet our Guest Speakers for the LWML 36 Biennial Convention...

*continued from page 2...*

**Reverend Fred Gerlach**, is the sole Pastor at Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church in Ewing, New Jersey. He graduated from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis in 2005. For 18 years He worked in the mortgage banking industry until 2001. Before entering the ministry Rev. Gerlach was chairman of the Board of Lay Ministry at his home church of Immanuel Lutheran, in Danbury Ct.; when by the grace of God He was encouraged by the Holy Spirit to serve as a pastor of God’s people. He served in a dual vicarage in Cape Girardeau, Missouri at St. Andrew and Hanover Lutheran Churches in 2004.

Rev. Gerlach was called by Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church in 2005 a multicultural congregation where since 2001 the church has welcome people from Liberia and other African countries to be part of their congregation. It has been a rewarding ministry for Rev. Gerlach and his family; in that God is gathering people from many parts of the world around His Word and the Sacraments. This ministry reflects the diversity of our country while sharing the never changing truth of the Gospel. Reverend Gerlach is joined in this ministry with His wife Lenore, and his three daughters. Rev. Gerlach has also participated and completed Pastoral Leadership Institute Training (PLI). ►



*Dear Jesus, we pray that the Christmas lights of the season pierce through the darkness of winter, and that a wonderful warm feeling will spread through us. Each time we see a display of lights help us to remember that you are the light of the world! Lord please use us to be a light that shines in the darkness; to sparkle out Your love to everyone we meet. Amen*