LWML English District February, 2020

Dear Women of the LWML,

Well, I don’t like to be a nag although my children say I do. So this is just a gentle reminder to get those registration forms sent in for OUR English District Convention in April. The convention is April 24-26, but registrations MUST be sent in by March 23rd, 2020, to receive the discount. Also, the equalization monies have to be mailed to Elsiena Velaquez by March 31st. Deadline for the fabulous preconvention tour is Tuesday, March 3, 2020.

The LWML English District grant #7, from Cradle to College – Lutheran Books for Immigrant Children and Campus Ministries has been approved for payment of $2,945.00. We have met our 2018 – 2020 mission grant goal. Praise to the Lord!

The LWML MITE report as of December 31, 2019 with a goal of $2,100,000 has received mites in the amount of $796,720.90. Per eNews issue #280 that Mission Grant #20, Music Outreach, Classes, and Resources on the Border - Ysleta Lutheran Mission Human Care, El Paso, Texas, has been paid, in the amount of $98,400.

2021 LWML Biennial Convention will take place in Lexington, Kentucky from June 24-27, 2021. The theme will be “Running the race…..Looking to Jesus” based on Hebrews 12:1-2. Start your plans now! But first come to our English District Convention this April in Pittsburgh.

NEWS FROM OUR MISSIONARIES

**Rev. Dale and Suzanne Kaster – Missionaries to the Czech Republic – Prague.**  These are excerpted from their January 2020 letter. “The Czech Republic has, on the one hand, a low reported depression rate but, oh so sadly, a high suicide rate. Many Czechs despair. The problem is not just the absence of the light of the day that illumines a room but also an absence of the Light that enlightens men. Here in this little part of Central Europe, the atheist/agnostic rate is around 85%. Many ask why is it so bad here. Often the communist past is pointed to as the cause. But many former Communist-block countries have a strong Christian presence (Poland, Slovakia, etc.) We fear the answer is far too complicated to point to one reason. Besides, we care less about the “why” and are concentrating on the “What can we do about it”.

“The Christmas season this year was blessed to have a number of LCMS Lutherans in our church services. One family in particular came all the way from Saudi Arabia, where Christianity is persecuted. Another was an Egyptian and his family seeking an LCMS-connected congregation. And there were several other places represented. On top of that, there were locals looking for a Lutheran presence. We pray that all these people were fed and will be back to visit with us”.

“In connection with the work of training our deacon, Martin Damasek to be a pastor, we attended the Theological Symposia held January 21-24 at the seminary in Ft. Wayne, Indiana. It was a great few days of theological presentations and reflections. We thank God for this opportunity to further our theological abilities. It also afforded us an opportunity to reconnect with a lot of old friends and current colleagues.

**Rev. Pastor Jonathan and Deaconess Cheryl Naumann - Latin America – Dominican Republic –** As quoted from Pastor Jonathan “At the beginning of January Cheryl and I participated in a meeting of all LAC Regional Team leaders in Belize. We discussed mission strategy for the coming year and had the privilege of seeing property that is being donated to LCM missions for a future church and school, as well as a camp site that has potential for retreats, various types of mercy work, and a place to house short term teams that visit Belize. What a joy it was to see that the school is already functioning as a Lutheran preschool! The icing on the cake is that the church and school building are located in a part of Belize called Valley of Peace.”

Cheryl writes: While we were in Belize there were two large-scale earthquakes in Puerto Rico (PR), with aftershocks and smaller earthquakes that still continue. Our mission church in the city of Ponce sustained structural damage, as did our mercy house next door. **The GOOD news that I want to share is that YOU, who support us with prayer and gifts, have made a difference to the earthquake victims in Puerto Rico!** You See, the LCMS has been training people in our LAC region – lately, in conferences that I organize as coordinator of all regional disasters strike. You may remember that in April 2019 the Mercy Center sponsored the training of a Disaster Response expert for each of the three areas of South America, Central America, and the Caribbean. Pastor Gustavo Maita, the trainee and now Disaster Response Leader for the Caribbean, is based in PR. Because of this long-term training, our missionaries in PR were able to be on the ground assisting people within a few hours of the earthquakes, even before any official aid agencies or government help arrived.

This mercy work has brought about an abundance of opportunities to minister to both body and soul. Our missionaries pray with people;our pastors read and expound on Scripture and pray with large groups of people sleeping in temporary quarters. New Bible classes are springing up. In all of this, we are also keenly aware of the need to care for our workers in PR. Hence missionaries in our LAC region have been “rotating” in to help with things like food preparation and packing and distributing basic need packets to communities, as well as providing spiritual are.

We have been thankful for an unusually cool winter, with the temperate often being in the high 70s instead of high 80s. This has been especially helpful as Pastor Jonathan works in the new seminary library space to get all of the books catalogued and on the shelves. **If any of you are interested in spending a week or two here between now and March 22, simply to assist (as a volunteer) with cataloguing and preparing books to be shelved, please let us know!**

In a recent visit to the Centro Leon cultural center, I was once again reminded of the pagan gods worshipped here on the island of Hispanola. Though Christianity came with Christopher Columbus, many here are still very superstitious, or have a “hybrid” sort of “faith” that mixes Christian and Pagan beliefs into one world view. Thinking about this gives us renewed energy in our witness to Jesus Christ – the Way, the Truth, and the Life.”

**The Apple of His Eye Society – Israel -** Steve Cohen, founder of the Society wrote “Did you know: 99% of the world’s 16 million Jewish people are unsaved? Have you ever thought of the people God brings across your path that there has been a divine appointment since the foundation of time. God knows whom we will meet and the condition of their heart in terms of salvation. For those who are heaven bound, we can rejoice with them and their confession of faith. On the other hand, those who are facing a Christ-less eternity have a genuine urgent need – that being for the salvation of their souls. God uses each of us right where we are to bring a witness of the great news – provision has been made and sins can be forgiven through faith in Jesus.

Words from Rev. Roegner: “As I write this article for this month’s Apple of His Eye newsletter, Kristi and I are just arriving in Tel Aviv, Israel, to begin our work as Bible Teachers. So much has happened over the past four years since God called Kristi and me to Israel, to help make this possible. Not the least of which is the untold hundreds of “partnerships” that have been so critical to seeing God’s plan being realized. Of course, being granted RSO status by the LCMS is a great privilege and a great partnership! Being able to BOLDLY declare Y’shua as Messiah, through Word and Sacraments, a part of God’s plan that now has begun. Thank you, LCMS!

As with any new work, whether it is in the United States or a place like Israel, startup financial support is critical. Our arrival into Israel a few days ago was made possible by the partnership of thousands of women (and a few men) from the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League (LWML). Through those mighty mites, a grant of $100,000 was approved in Des Moines in 2015 and presented to the AOHE in Albuquerque in 2017. Now, two and half years later, BOLDLY declaring Y’shua as Messiah, a part of God’s plan that now has begun. Thank you, LWML!”

As we now plan for LWML Spring Rallies, anticipate the Lenten season, may God bless each and every one of you.

Yours in Christ,

Ruth Crowl

VP Christian Life/Human Care