



# WOMEN OF THE WORD

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A Publication of the Pacific Southwest District - LWML

Winter 2017-18

## Perspectives from President Bonnie



Christmas will be here before we know it! I know people complain that the stores start decorating and selling too soon. Some feel that we shouldn't think about Christmas before Thanksgiving. That's how it was when I was a child. But, I prefer to think that they are so excited to celebrate our Lord's birth, they can't wait to begin the preparations. I know I'm excited to celebrate Christmas - I love the



Christmas Eve candlelight service, the songs, and the special feeling I get every Christmas knowing that God's promise of a Savior was fulfilled!

I hope everyone has their calendar marked for the "He Rocks!" convention in Las Vegas. The dates are June 8-10<sup>th</sup> and all forms will be posted to our website by December 10<sup>th</sup>. The South Point Hotel is a beautiful facility complete with a pool, bowling alley, and movie theater. Bring the whole family and make it a mini-vacation.

### CHRISTMAS CARDS



I pray that you participated in the Hope for the Holidays campaign to make Christmas cards for Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service. I can't imagine how lonely and depressing it is to spend Christmas in a detention center. I am grateful that they are surrounded by people who care for them, share the love of our Lord with them, and encourage them through these challenging times. I held a card party at my house, invited all my friends and we had a wonderful time making Christmas cards. I shared the need to help these refugees and encouraged them to become more involved. My speech was so good, I signed up to be a pen pal and so did a few of my friends. I'm excited to meet my pen pal and pray that you will also sign up to help in this ministry.



MITES! LWML is behind in Mites and we need to pray, spread the word and become proactive in encouraging others to support Mites and meet our commitment to those grants we promised to support!

God bless your Christmas celebrations!

*President Bonnie Karch*



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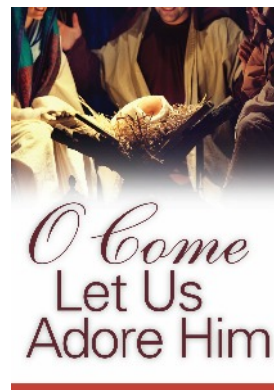
500<sup>TH</sup>  
Anniversary  
OF THE REFORMATION

## Talking with Pastor Tim



The year 2017 has been a wonderful blessing to the Lutheran Church all over the world as we celebrated the 500th birthday of the Reformation. Many churches with a variety of Christian backgrounds have joined us in this celebration of going back to the basics: Word Alone, Christ Alone, Faith Alone, and Grace Alone. Throughout the Christian world, people are joining us in giving thanks to God for moving Dr. Martin Luther to stand against the dark beliefs of the church of his time. His stance opened the door for many other reformers throughout Europe. Now, as we close 2017 and welcome 2018, I would like to take a moment to focus on Martin Luther's wife, Katie. Katie was all things to Martin and his many guests, students and

church workers who came to their house to learn from Luther. As the lady of the house, Katie was not only the hostess but also the manager, gardener, farmer, cook, nurse, cheese maker, and yes, beer brewer. Martin loved and cherished Katie's beer. Katie also was a loving spouse who held Luther in check. An excellent resource about Katie is available from Concordia Publishing House called "Katie Luther: the Graphic Novel" written by Susan K. Leigh and illustrated by Dave Hill. One of the recorded dialogues between Katie and Luther references a time when Luther was going through a depression due to his health and the pressures of leading the church. Luther noticed Katie wearing mourning clothes. He asked her, "Why Katie? Why are you wearing mourning clothes? Has someone died?" Katie responded, "You are so sad, Dr. Luther, that I thought surely the Lord must have died!"



As we say good bye to Christmas and enter the winter months, many times we also say good bye to the Spirit of Christmas. But let us hold on to the truth - a Savior has been born for us today! As we leave the manger and now are on the road to Calvary, let's join with the Shepherds of Christmas and rejoice in every situation and tell everyone we meet that Jesus alone is our Savior from all disaster, sadness, grief and whatever the Devil throws at us. Has someone died in your family or has your situation caused you to mourn? Look to Jesus and clothe yourself with Easter clothing, for Christ not only was born here on earth, but then, after dying for us, He rose victorious over sin, death and the Devil!

This past fall your LWML District pastoral counselors passed out over 400 bags of candy and snacks during the Fall Pastors' Conference. **Congratulations to Pastor Adam Stetson from Christ Lutheran in Boulder City** for winning the two nights in a hotel room for him and his wife at the LWML District Convention.

*Pastor Tim Blau*





## Report from Recording Secretary, Linda Merkle



I am Linda Merkle, Recording Secretary for the Pacific Southwest District LWML. As Recording Secretary, I am responsible for recording the business of the Executive and Board of Director's meetings, as well as at conventions.

I have been part of the LWML for 50 years, after I came to faith through the Holy Spirit working in a friend of mine to encourage me to go to Sunday School. At this newly formed church in Whittier, I was always one of the youngest members of the LWML (though I'm not anymore!!), and I later met and married my husband through this special congregation. 2 children, 2 granddaughters and 1 great-grandson later, I am still passionate about the LWML. My church family, especially the LWML,

always helped me through the rough times. It is my joy to give back to this special group of ladies who give so much to so many.

I have had the pleasure of serving in every office in both my local chapter and my zone. After spending many years serving in my local and zone LWMLs, I felt called to "move up to the next level" by former president of Zone 20 Marjorie Paulsen, a dear friend who is now with Jesus. I am currently LWML President of Ascension in Apple Valley, and VP of Christian Life of Sage and Sand Zone 20, in addition to my role on the district level.

It is my pleasure to serve you all as Recording Secretary, and I am so thankful that the Lord continues to find ways to use me for His Glory. God's Blessings to you in this Season of Joy.



Silent Auction



Southpoint Hotel  
Las Vegas, NV

Cindy Steinbeck  
Guest Speaker

JUNE 8-10, 2018

Mission Walk

LWML's Got Talent  
Talent Show

Registration Forms  
Available Online  
December 15, 2017





# WOMEN OF THE WORD

## Treasures From Treasurer Nila



My name is Nila Rodriguez and I am the District Treasurer. This means that I keep the books for the Pacific Southwest District, record the deposits made by the District Financial Secretary, write the checks for the mite grants we voted on, submit the 25% portion of our mites to LWML in St. Louis, as well as make all the payments/reimbursements for the various events such as the District Convention, Retreat and Board of Directors meetings. I've been in this position for about 3 ½ years and truly enjoy Serving the Lord with Gladness in this way.

My mom was very active in LWML at my home church in Wisconsin, but when I joined First Lutheran in Burbank, CA, I didn't get involved right away. You see, First Lutheran had the LWML group and we also had the Women of Influence (WOI) group, which I was part of. WOI had a weekly Bible study, held an annual retreat and held social and fundraising events. Basically, we were an extension of LWML without realizing it! Eventually, we merged the two groups together and I held the offices of Secretary and President of our Society.

Our former First Lutheran organist was involved at the District level and became the Committee Chairman of the Retreat which was announced at the first District convention I attended in Tempe, AZ. In catching up with her at the convention, she asked me to help create the booklet for the upcoming Retreat. In doing so, I met other Retreat Committee members. One of these members, Karen Duprey, later asked me to be the Assistant to the President after she was voted the District President.

And after that, our Zone Secretary position became vacant, so another First Lutheran member asked if I would be interested in that, so I've also become involved at the Zone level.

See what asking your friends can turn into? In looking back at my own history in LWML, I realize I should keep asking people - you never know when the time is going to be right, even for those who may have originally said no.

What I want to share with you at this time of year is my favorite Christmas gift idea. And yes, as the Treasurer and CPA in me, it is also a charitable tax deduction - at least for 2017! With the discussions of potential tax reform bills currently happening in our federal legislature who knows about next year. **So make use of it now!!**

Did you know that the LCMS and Lutheran World Relief (LWR) have gift-giving catalogs online?? My husband Manny and I gift this way to our daughters and our grandchildren to help instill in them a giving spirit - and to our parents who don't need or want anything anyway. Instead of a traditional wrapped present, we give, in our loved ones' names, a couple of chickens or a goat to a family in need of eggs or milk, or some farming tools or plant seedlings to help someone make a living - or a portion of a community well. There are also listings of Missionaries, Mission Projects and Ministries to give to on behalf of someone you love. These are the types of gifts that keep on giving - both to your family because they feel they have helped others by receiving the gift - and to the recipients of the goat or chickens because now they can feed their family or add some income to their household with this gift. God's blessings to you this Christmas season! LCMS website to give to Missionaries, Projects or Ministries: [www.lcms.org/givenow](http://www.lcms.org/givenow)

LWR gift catalogs: [www.lwr.org/giving-category/gifts](http://www.lwr.org/giving-category/gifts)



*Nila Rodriguez*



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## Happenings from Human Care



"Everything I Needed to Know I Learned in LWML" Well, maybe that is not 100% true; I did attend elementary school, high school, and college. However, I have learned many Biblical truths at LWML conventions and retreats that have helped fill me up so I can continue to serve Him with gladness. I want to share a few of them with you. In Ames, Iowa, at my first national convention in 1985, I remember hearing about how our service to others sets a good example for those around us in our family and community - good news for someone who left her family at home to attend the convention. In San Jose, the Bible study leader assured me that God has a plan for me and that He will use whatever happens to me to fulfill that plan, even events that resulted from my poor decisions or outside circumstances. Maybe that's when I learned to love Jeremiah

29:11, which says, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future." How reassuring that is when my life is in turmoil. At a retreat, I learned another perspective from the story of Jonah. (The simple story I remember from my Sunday School leaflet is so complex!) When Jonah arrived at the lake front, a ship was there to take him to the opposite place from God's direction; how convenient that was, but just how wrong! A new thought for me - maybe not all the 'easy and convenient' solutions to my problems come from God! I pray for His discernment as I decide things. At our last retreat, speaker Cindy Steinbeck pointed out that a baby is loved from birth, just because he/she IS, not because of anything he/she has done. That's how God loves me, just because I am, and He continues to love and forgive me every day because of Jesus' death and resurrection, pure and simple. I want to close with these words from a favorite choir anthem by Ross King. "And when the story ends, we know Jesus wins, for His power cannot be stopped. Nothing ever can, nothing ever will overcome the Lord, our God." What a powerful statement to carry with me every day - *nothing* will overcome our God!

**Please Note: Undie Sunday, February 2018.** We are working with Orphan Grain Train to collect packages of new underwear and socks for men, women, and children. Please bring them to the March Board of Directors meeting. Societies in Arizona or Nevada can contact Steve Rice with Orphan Grain Train directly for a collection, as he makes regular trips to those areas.

*JoAnne Sloan*





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## Details from District Planner, Char



Hi! I'm Char Peapenburg, and I'm your LWML District Planner! As Planner, it is my role to familiarize the District with our LWML vision and focus the District throughout the planning process.

This is a new role for me, but let's start with familiarizing you all with our vision. Our vision for this biennium is based on John 15:7-8: "If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and to prove to be my disciples".

Where did it all begin for me? I went with my Mother to Mission Meetings (the forerunner of LWML), participated in Mission projects in High School through Walther League, and then it was on to college, where Gamma Delta was the focus.

After college, I moved many times as an Air Force wife, and then I followed the sales career across the country! I landed in El Paso, Texas, (Rocky Mountain District), which was a very active society, and then it was on to Phoenix, AZ, in our very own Pacific Southwest District (then called the Southern California). The first event that fall was a Zone Rally hosted by our new congregation, which was another very active group! You didn't hide...you PARTICIPATED!

Going forward, I wondered what the Lord had in mind next. He had plans! I was elected to positions at every LWML level: Society, Zone, District, National, and International.

My favorite bible passage is Psalm 100, a passage about shouting for joy to the Lord! This was my high school baccalaureate verse, and it is still my favorite! As we move forward, my goal is to Serve the Lord with Gladness wherever He sends me.

Merry Christmas to you, God's blessings as we enter a new year and prepare for what our Lord has in mind for our wonderful district, as we abide in Him!

*Char Peapenburg*

**Zone 26  
(Saguaro)**

### *Apostles Lutheran Church Peoria, AZ*

Blessed to be a Blessing! What does that look like? How about making 150 quilts to send out to people who need warmth, comfort and protection? Very proud of our Tuesday morning quilters and the difference they make. Pictured are: Standing: Rosetta, Martina, Linda, Shirley, Mary, Pat, Judy, Martha Sitting: Carol Kneeling: Tsege and Calloway (Mary's grandson)





## Congratulations, Pastor Adam!

At the last Board of Director's meeting, Pastor Tim brought up the idea of having a drawing at the Pacific Southwest District Pastor's Conference to send one pastor and his wife to the 2018 LWML Convention in Las Vegas, NV to be held June 8-10, 2017. He also brought up the idea of giving treats to all the pastors each day of meetings to help them remember who we are!! These ideas were overwhelmingly approved and many churches helped make it possible! Pastor Tim and his wife, Cheri spent many hours packing up candy in packages to hand out (see pictures below).

The candy was well-received and the drawing had over 80 entries. The winner of this drawing is Pastor Adam Stetson, pastor at Christ Lutheran in Bullhead City, NV. Pastor Adam and his family (along with their second daughter, due the 1st week of Lent) are looking forward to the District Convention as their church works on new values, vision, and mission. The convention will give them a change of pace and they look to be refreshed and strengthened as they serve their new congregation.



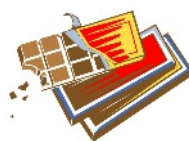
Pastor Adam Stetson and Family



Pastor Adam Stetson and Family



Pastors Tim & Brad handing out candy



LWML Booth at the Pastor's Conference



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## Zone 25

Zone 25 had a busy Fall Celebration at Zion Lutheran Church in Blythe, CA. Thirty-nine participants were in attendance. A devotion was given by Pastoral Counselor, Rev. Michael Kessler.

The devotion was on Colossians 3:17. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."



The ladies showed their appreciation to Pastor Kessler with a thank you gift for his service to the LWML Zone. The

women made 60 "Hope for the Holidays" Christmas cards for Lutheran Immigration Relief Services in Eloy, AZ. There was a gathering for the Zion Lutheran Food Pantry. Business included officer reports, a skit on the District Convention, a sign up for the District Blast, an update on the Gifts of Love by Cheryl Keithly and elections were held. They had a delicious taco salad lunch. Special guest speakers were Dick and Lynn Gast from the Lutheran Hour Float Committee. It was exciting to hear about this

wonderful gospel outreach ministry. A special offering was taken for LHFC for a total of \$448. Each society shared their upcoming activities. There were numerous door prizes given away. Everyone was thrilled by the day's event.



## Zone 3

**"PURPLE FEET" FOR MITES** Trinity Lutheran LWML in Simi Valley, California, has a unique way to gather mites from their congregational members. They brought out the "Purple Feet" on LWML Sunday. They use the feet as a competition between the men and women of the congregation to see who puts the most quarters into the clear poles holding the feet. All the monies go to LWML mites. At the end of 2017, the winner will have to beat the previously set \$222.50 record with the most coins. One of the groups will then be eligible for the prize (a homemade cookie, candy or the like). In addition, all other loose change put in the offering plate every Sunday throughout the year will also go to mites.



**STITCHIN' FOR MISSIONS** -- Trinity Lutheran Church in Simi Valley, California meets with two other churches -- First Lutheran Church, Burbank, and Faith Lutheran Church, Tujunga. They also make and send their quilts to share their love and concern for those in need. The following photos were taken at a Quilt Dedication and Year-end Potluck held at First Lutheran, Burbank.



## Zone 31/32 Lamb of God Lutheran, Las Vegas

Here are some pictures of the Hope for the Holidays workshop. 73 cards were made for Lutheran Refugee Immigration

