

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Beverly England, PR Director
8350 E. 14th Street
Tulsa, OK 74112-7918
(918) 835-6196
prlwml@aol.com

LWML Office
P.O. Box 411993
St. Louis, MO 63141-1993
(800) 252-5965
www.lwml.org

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Lutheran women adopt record \$1.7 million mission goal

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. -- Delegates to the 32nd Biennial Convention of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) adopted a record \$1.7 million mission goal for the 2007-09 biennium. It is the largest in the organization's 65-year history.

More than 5,000 people attended the convention, held here June 21-24 under the theme "Rest On Christ the King," or "ROCK," from Psalm 31:1-3. The LWML is the women's auxiliary of the St. Louis-based Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the second-largest Lutheran denomination in North America.

The record mite goal is \$75,000 more than the LWML's previous goal for 2005-07. The funds raised by the organization's 250,000 members nationwide over the next two years will be used to support 18 mission grants to:

- * train deaf-ministry leaders (\$50,000).
- * provide portable medical clinics in Sudan, East Africa (\$70,000).
- * build 10 Lutheran churches in India (\$100,000).
- * support a female missionary to Muslim people in Guinea, Africa (\$100,000).
- * help Lutheran Bible Translators, Aurora, Ill., provide transportation for missionaries (\$60,000).
- * open eight new Lutheran Blind Mission Outreach Centers nationwide (\$40,000).
- * provide education to Muslims in Bangladesh (\$75,000).
- * support a "circuit rider" pastor in rural northwest South Dakota (\$65,000).
- * support an inner-city children's ministry in Minneapolis-St. Paul (\$50,000).
- * send a female human-care missionary to Africa (\$100,000).
- * support a Christian family counseling center in St. Petersburg, Russia (\$36,000).
- * expand mission work in Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Sudan, and Ethiopia, Africa (\$104,500).
- * begin a Lutheran campus ministry at Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kan. (\$95,000).
- * expand internet streaming capabilities at KFJO-AM radio in St. Louis (\$50,000).
- * support Concordia University, Austin, Texas, students preparing for child-welfare careers (\$80,000).
- * assist Lutheran City Ministries in its outreach to homeless and addicted people in Detroit (\$49,000).
- * support a soup kitchen at St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Chicago (\$33,000).
- * support a cross-cultural urban ministry in Ohio (\$32,500).

The 600-plus delegates also elected a new president to lead the organization over the next four years, Janice Wendorf of Grafton, Wis. Wendorf, the 16th president of the LWML, asked for "prayers for the support of our organization and the support of all the individual officers that you have elected."

Also elected to four-year terms were:

- Sylvia Johnson of New Berlin, Wis., Vice President of Human Care.
- Eloise Kuhlmann of Amarillo, Texas, Vice President of Servant Resources..
- Helen Miller of Lake in the Hills, Ill., Treasurer.
- Rev. Michael J. Mattil of Sherman, Texas, Senior Pastoral Counselor.

Newly elected members of the Nominating Committee are Linda Arnold of Woodridge, Ill., who will serve as chairman; Martha Burke of Clemmons, N.C.; Claire Carlson of Hamburg, N.Y.; Judy Lessmann of Scottsboro, Ala.; and Marilyn McClure of Tucson, Ariz.

In her "president's report," outgoing LWML President Linda Reiser of Grand Island, Neb., applauded the "Christ-focused service" of LWML members, who have successfully met mission goals and showed an "unending willingness to help others" not because they seek glory for themselves but "simply and faithfully because there is a need." The LWML has been successful, she said, only "because of God's great faithfulness to us." She encouraged attendees to return home and make a difference by faithfully sharing "what Jesus has put in our hearts."

In his sermon during the convention's opening worship service, Rev. Dr. Dean Nadasdy reminded worshippers of their "safe place" in the "strong and tender" hands of Christ. Nadasdy cautioned them not to "play it safe" with their faith, but to become "dangerous" in their service to God.

In her keynote, Terry Kieschnick, wife of Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod President Gerald Kieschnick, invited convention attendees to "realize how important you are to this church." Kieschnick compared women to diamonds, which share imperfections, unique cuts and colors. She called the women "God's diamonds" and encouraged them to use their gifts in mission and "leave a legacy."

Besides exceeding their last mission grant goal by more than \$55,000 and adopting the LWML's most ambitious mission goal ever, convention-goers gave daily offerings:

- \$52,381.81, contributed during Thursday's opening worship service, will go toward the 2007-09 mission goal.
- \$57,268.50 given on Friday will be divided between the LWML endowment fund and LCMS World Mission for educating missionary children. Added to that figure will be offerings attendees brought to the convention from their districts of \$24,906.91, for a total of \$82,175.41.
- .75* A third offering brought in \$47,831.54 to support seminary-student education.

A fourth offering, not yet counted as this release went to press, will be used to continue funding for the LWML's "Heart to Heart" program, which serves women of different ethnic groups.

Also during business sessions, delegates chose Des Moines, Iowa, as the site of the 2015 LWML convention. Other upcoming conventions are planned for Portland, Ore., in 2009; Peoria, Ill., in 2011; and Pittsburgh in 2013.

The convention featured daily Bible studies led by author and speaker Dr. Mary Manz Simon; processions with banners from all 40 LWML districts and the flags of 38 of the 50 countries that have received LWML mission grants; activities for children and members of the LWML group for teens; a "Mission Pledge Walk"; a talent show; a performance by jazz singer Erin Bode; and presentations by Lutheran missionaries.

Rev. Dr. Robert Roegner, executive director of LCMS World Mission, described several LWML grants the mission board has received since the 1940s and thanked the women's auxiliary for its partnership.

"The Lutheran Women's Missionary League, Lutheran Women in Mission, has been crucial to the expansion of mission work and has made it possible for us to move in new directions in mission during every decade -- including the one we're in -- since your founding in 1942," Roegner said. "I can't thank you enough for all you have done as women in mission to spread the Gospel, expand the kingdom of God and see more people in heaven."

The Lutheran Women's Missionary League, also known as "Lutheran Women in Mission," focuses on affirming each woman in her relationship with Christ, to enable her to be in ministry among people of the world. The organization encourages and equips women to live out their Christian lives in active mission ministries and to support global mission work.

For more information about the convention or the LWML, visit the Web site www.lwml.org.

To interview a local convention participant, contact _____ (YOUR NAME) at _____ (YOUR PHONE NUMBER).