

Every Apron Has a Story

By Carol Sokofski

Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, people will praise God (2 Corinthians 9:13).

A 50-year-old apron, decorated with woodcut paintings, was a surprise gift from a neighbor that had moved away to Connecticut. Louise explained that her mother — who was among the first women to join the LWML in 1942 — ran a deli in Queens, New York. This deli was well known for its homemade bread, and each week her mother would faithfully send a loaf of her “much-missed bread” to that former neighbor. To show his appreciation, he sent Louise’s mother that handmade apron.

An apron embroidered with lovely crewel flowers told a different story. Juanita shared that her widowed sister-in-law in Namibia had made the beautiful apron in memory of her husband and then sent it to Juanita.

Ever read an interesting program idea, carefully stash the clipping away in a “safe place” — only to have it go missing when you needed it? The only solution then is to try to piece together everything from scratch and hope for the best. That’s how our “Aprons: Symbols of Service” gathering had its start.

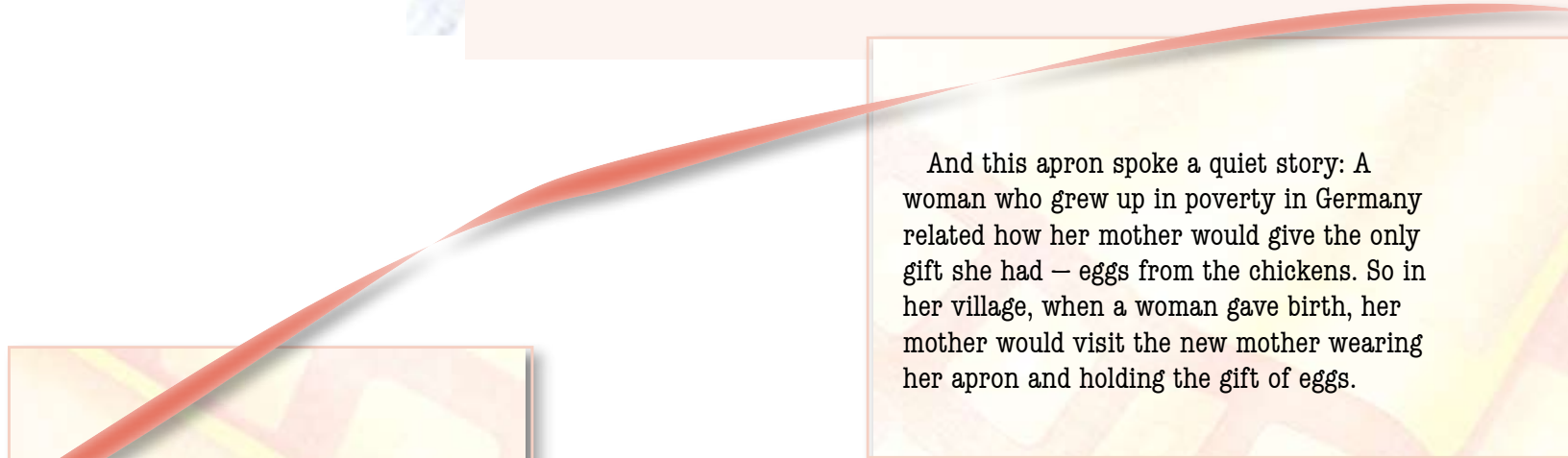
It was simple request: each woman was invited to wear an apron and to share the story behind the apron at our spring gathering.

The outcome: a day filled with laughter and tears, cherished memories, and heartfelt thanks for years of joyfully serving our Lord with gladness.

Let’s let the aprons tell their stories:

One apron had never stepped inside a kitchen. The woman who wore her mother’s apron explained that the apron was used not in the kitchen but in her mother’s hair salon! The apron held her combs, scissors, and other equipment while she worked as a hairdresser, first in a salon and then in a state hospital.

Carol Sokofski, a member of Zion Lutheran Church in Bridgeport, Connecticut, serves as Editor of the New England District Beacon, giving her an opportunity to glean (with gratitude) ideas from her sister editors.



And this apron spoke a quiet story: A woman who grew up in poverty in Germany related how her mother would give the only gift she had — eggs from the chickens. So in her village, when a woman gave birth, her mother would visit the new mother wearing her apron and holding the gift of eggs.

Someone wore an apron — purchased 20 years ago — with the message: “I’m pushing 50, and that’s exercise enough.” She explained that she was allowed to wear it for that one year only, and then she had to pass it to the next one in the family nearing 49. The apron has been passed from sister to sister to nieces — and even to a nephew! — when each approached their 49th birthday.

One woman’s apron bore the logo of a business she had started, and another apron had the distinction of being featured in family photos for the last 30 years. (Come to think of it, the only time I saw my grandmother not wearing her apron was when she went to church!)

As the sharing about aprons continued, it was clear that the aprons spoke of giving, serving, and encouraging others.

We remarked that few wear aprons today, noting that women dress more casually in the kitchen than did their mothers and grandmothers, who made sure their good clothes were protected from stains while cooking. We thought about how Jesus is like OUR apron, taking the stains of our sins upon Himself, as we read in Galatians 3:27: *for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.*

Our time together concluded with the LWML Bible study *Free to Serve* and the LWML devotion *What Shape Are You?*, and we learned that the Holy Spirit shapes us for service in Christ’s Name.

So as I go about my day today — whether I don an actual apron of cotton or simply wear a heart attitude of service — may Christ be glorified through my service.

[See related news story on page 25.]