

Monthly Newsletter

RIO GRANDE VALLEY ZONE
WOMEN IN MISSION

✦ July 2026

Finding

YOUR PLACE IN GOD'S PUZZLE



How do you start when assembling a jigsaw puzzle? Do you dump all 5,000 pieces on the table and hope that the first two pieces you pick up will be a match? After all, you **DO** have the freedom to do that!

Most "puzzlers," however, usually choose a more planned approach. They separate the corner pieces and the flat-sided tiles and use those pieces to construct a frame. All the other pieces will fit inside, forming a complete picture.

Why start that way? Because each unique piece has been designed by the puzzle maker to fit best into one particular spot!

I like to think that is how God designed us, too: He blesses each of us with particular gifts and talents that will fit into His plan, enabling us to be His servants here on earth for His good purposes. He may gift the puzzle piece of construction abilities to one person. A second person's piece has the gift of administrative talents, and a third person receives the gift of healing and empathy. God has just designed a three-piece puzzle through which He will construct a new care facility, where empathetic caregivers are organized administratively to work for the good of their residents. Each person is a "piece of the puzzle!"

We, through God's help, can recognize the gifts He gave us, to be used at all stages of our lives. Jesus tells us in **John 15:16**, **"You did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you."**

Our gifts are God-given! I remember in elementary school being the last one picked when teams were formed for softball games, but I was the first one chosen for the spelling bee match. At that young age, I, and my classmates, recognized that I was **not** a gifted athlete, but that God **had** given me the gift of spelling!



As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.

1 Peter 4:10



A Jigsaw Puzzle! written by
Carolyn Blum,
Hartford, Wisconsin
Copyright © 2025 Lutheran
Women's Mission



Although God gives us the freedom to choose how to react to the gifts/talents He has given us, He does say in Ephesians 2:10, *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.* We can learn to recognize His gifts and decide to use them productively, making life here on earth better. God wants us to use our gifts in His service!

Another choice we have is to ignore our gifts. As children, we opened the package of new socks under the Christmas tree, tossed them aside and concentrated on the toys we received. Our parents probably said, "Thank Grandma for the socks!" I wonder, does God feel like Grandma did, when we ignore the gifts He gives us?

All of the gifts God gives us are valuable in His kingdom! If we choose to consider our gifts as "lesser" than others' gifts, we may jealously envy what we consider to be the "better" gifts that we see in those around us. We might do this as a child, pouting about how "your birthday gift is better than mine." As adults, we put away childish ideas and learn to be grateful for whatever gifts are given to us.

✦ Lord, please help me to recognize the gifts that You have given to me, gifts that I can use to further Your work on earth. Let me be content and not envy the gifts You have given to others. Give me the insight to identify talents in others and the courage to share my observations, suggesting where they might be of service to You. Thank You for making us all unique pieces of Your puzzle and for placing us in the time and place to use them to Your glory. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

And what about the gifts we see in those around us? As we get to know people at our churches, workplaces, children's schools, or the gym, we can learn of others' interests and of the talents they have. We may see a woman in our congregation who reaches out to little children, engaging them in conversation, asking where they go to school or what they're planning to do on summer vacation. Might that person be gifted in working with children, someone that you could encourage to teach Sunday school or VBS? Think of all the puzzle pieces needed to maintain a God-pleasing Sunday school!

You are uniquely
designed by God
to make a difference.



Or, how about that young man who speaks up in Bible study, asking the pastor questions to further his understanding of the lesson. You may recognize that he has a gift from God; could you reach out to him and plant the seed to become a seminary student?

Might he be the "puzzle piece" who was designed by God to fit into His plan for spreading the Gospel? Your encouragement could make a difference.

God has a plan for each of our lives. He knows where each piece of the puzzle will fit the best, and where and how He wants us to serve. He provides ways that we can recognize the gifts He gave to us, as well as those He gave to others. We have the freedom to act on those gifts in any way we choose. By reading His Word, praying, and being observant of ourselves and of those whom God has planted in our lives, we can rejoice at our place in the puzzle and how God fits it all together for His good and His glory!

Each
piece
Matters.



Together,
we build
His Kingdom.





Lutheran Women in Mission Convention 2026

TEXAS DISTRICT



REPRESENTING THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY ZONE

CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS



The Texas District LWML Convention was held June 11–13, 2026, in Austin, Texas, bringing together women from across the state to celebrate, learn, and grow in faith. Centered on the theme, “Celebrate the Goodness of God” (Romans 12:12), attendees were encouraged to “rejoice in hope, be patient in affliction, and be constant in prayer.”

Throughout the convention, participants were blessed by inspiring keynote speakers, uplifting worship led by talented sisters in Christ, and enriching Bible studies that strengthened faith and deepened their walk with the Lord.

Mission Grants were highlighted as attendees learned how God is working through LWML to share the Gospel and serve those in need both throughout Texas and around the world.

Meaningful fellowship with fellow sisters in Christ provided encouragement, connection, and a joyful reminder that we are stronger together as we serve the Lord and support His mission.

"We returned home encouraged, inspired, and grateful for the opportunity to celebrate God's goodness alongside our LWML sisters from across Texas."

What Was Your Favorite Part?

“

Thursday evening's worship service was awesome. To have so many voices lifting up praise to our Lord and Savior filled my heart to overflowing. The Bible Studies, especially the second one, were so thought provoking and inspiring.

—❤️ Joni Gillis

“

I really enjoyed the heartfelt passion of the women at the conference! It was evident that the Holy Spirit was on the move among these women! What a blessing to witness all that they accomplish! Noemi Guerra was a great speaker! The music and worship were phenomenal!

—❤️ Sandra Morfitt

We encourage all women of the RGV Zone to consider joining us for future LWML events and conventions!

*Until we
meet again...*

Next Texas District
Convention June 2028



Teen Mission Servant Event
200 necklaces to Forged by Fire



Receiving greetings from
Texas District LCMS President,
Rev. Dr. Braunersreuther



Meet Barbara Vance! She is 92
years old and this is her 23rd
Texas LWML Convention



'Be Encouraged — God's Got This!'
With LWML President Eden Keefe



Bravo! Excellent job with the
humorous skits



Madam President (Sally Krueger)
This is a most prestigious pose!
Someone got a great shot



Hearts and Voices United in Christ



Keynote Speaker
Noemi Vega-Ayala de Guerra

2026-2028 MISSION GRANT RECIPIENT



#Shine San Benito Mission —

The Table Lutheran Church, San Benito \$15,500

The Table Church is actively involved in mission outreach programs designed to serve the San Benito community.

Through a variety of initiatives, the church seeks to make a meaningful impact on residents. The church organizes community service projects, providing meals, and classes.

The Table Church hosts a vacation Bible school program, creating opportunities for community members, especially children, to learn and grow in a positive environment.

With the gifting of a permanent facility, The Table Church needs to purchase supplies and equipment to fund its growing programs and support advertising efforts.

The goal of The Table Church's outreach is to connect community members with Jesus, as well as to the Word and Sacraments. This mission grant will provide furnishings, equipment, marketing, signage, outdoor tools, and cleaning supplies



*Congratulations to
The Table Church*



UPCOMING Events

Saturday, November 7

300 Pecan Blvd. McAllen



Fall Rally

11:00 am

Our Fall Rally will be held at St. Paul Lutheran Church, McAllen and hosted by El Buen Pastor. Registration will begin at **10:30 a.m.** Elections for President and Secretary will be held during the business portion of the Rally.

Summer Brunch and Bible



Ladies, you're invited! Join the ladies of St Paul McAllen for their monthly Summer Brunch and Bible, a time of delicious food, meaningful conversation, and encouragement from God's Word. Come connect and be refreshed, and grow in faith together. For more details, please contact Joy Madero at joy_madero4756@yahoo.com

January 29-30, 2027

602 Morgan Blvd., Harlingen

Save *the* date | Women's Retreat

Our annual Women's Retreat is in the planning stages. If you would like to participate in the planning of this event please join us for our next Zone Executive Meeting to be held on **September 12th** at 11:00 am at St. Paul Lutheran Church, 602 Morgan Blvd. Everyone is welcome!!!





JULY

Mite Prayer Calendar

PRAYING FOR MISSIONS AROUND THE WORLD



“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.” — Colossians 4:2

This is a monthly prayer guide for your daily use. Each day as you pray, please feed your Mite Box in support of district and LWML Mission Grants. As you lift up the countries and mission grants listed, pray that the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ would be heard by those who live there or are served by our mite offerings. Each country listed has been a recipient of a mission grant from LWML.

1. For LWML Mission Grant #16.
2. For God to bless our national LWML and LCMS leaders.
3. For the country of Lebanon.
4. For the opportunity to serve angels in disguise (**Hebrews 13:2**).
5. For the willingness to ***Serve the Lord with gladness!*** (**Psalm 100:1–2**).
6. For the Lutheran Women in Mission Public Relations Director.
7. For Mexico, one of the 83 countries supported by an LWML grant.
8. For the LWML Pacific Southwest and California-Hawaii-Nevada Districts.
9. For neighbors. Ask God to bless them through you.
10. For those who need healing.
11. For the country of Liberia.
12. For wisdom to see those who are lonely and need God.
13. For mentors.
14. For our leaders to be given wisdom and discernment.
15. For Lutheran Indian Ministries.
16. For the LWML Oregon and Washington-Alaska Districts.
17. For your family, extended family, and church family.
18. For the community where you live.
19. For the country of Malaysia.
20. For friends and acquaintances who are far from God.

WHY WE *Pray & Give*



Each day as you pray,
place a mite in your
Mite Box to support
district and LWML
Mission Grants.



Together our
prayers and offerings
help share Christ's
love around
the world.



Thank you for your
faithfulness in
prayer and mission!



Mite Prayer Calendar

21. For LWML Mission Grant #17.
22. For your coworkers in mission.
23. For the country of Lithuania.
24. For the persecuted around the world.
25. For your ability to extend forgiveness.
26. For the country of North Korea.

27. For the missions of your church and your support of them.
28. For those who work in service jobs.
29. For those living with pain.
30. For those struggling with relationship challenges.
31. For those experiencing loss.



2025–2027 MISSION GRANT NO. 13



Trinity HOPE: A Haitian feeding program that brings hope to the children of Haiti, one bowl of beans and rice at a time.



Each school day the children in this community will receive a nutritious meal. They will hear about the love God has for them.



Before each noon meal, the children and staff pray to thank God for the provision of food, and the walls of these Lutheran schools are filled with songs of praise.

Showing Love to Haitian Children

Fear is a constant for the children of Haiti. Fear for their safety and fear wondering where their next meal will come from. Trinity HOPE is helping children in Haiti by providing nourishment for the body and soul. Students receive a lunch while in school, while hearing the life changing message of Jesus Christ.

This grant will be used to reach around 425 students at a rural school in Paul et Isabel, Haiti. Prayers of thanks are said over the food and hymns of praise can be heard throughout the school day. Providing a lunch has allowed students to stay engaged in school and retain what they are learning. Trinity HOPE has seen regular attendance, students' national test scores, and grade level advancement all increase significantly when schools are a part of their program. Students' basic needs are being met while hearing about God's love for them.

Trinity HOPE partners with Lutheran schools throughout the country by supporting Lutheran pastors and teachers and by making sure these schools have what they need to share the Gospel and ensure each child receives a hot meal while at school. They also provide opportunities for over 400 native Haitians to be gainfully employed. With 36 program directors employed by the ministry, over 350 cooks employed by the schools, and food purchased from local vendors throughout the country, Trinity HOPE's feeding program contributes to the Haitian economy and helps break through cycles of generational poverty.

REACHING GOD'S CHILDREN IN HAITI

TRINITY HOPE,
HAITI | \$61,782

*For I was hungry
and you gave me
food, I was thirsty
and you gave
me drink, I was a
stranger and you
welcomed me
(Matthew 25:35).*

Finance/ Mite Reports

MISSION GRANTS FOR THE 2024–2026 BIENNIUM

Seminarian Scholarships for Texas Students \$60,000.00 Fully Funded	New Life Children's Center Spiritual Care Program, Canyon Lake \$20,000.00 Fully Funded	Disaster Response Team, Trinity Lutheran Church, Tyler \$15,000.00 Fully Funded	Orphan Grain Train Shipping Supplies, Houston \$15,000.00 Fully Funded	Proclaiming Christ to People Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired (LBW) \$20,000.00 Fully Funded	Let It Shine Academy, Bethany, Austin, Lutheran Special Education Ministries \$10,000.00 Fully Funded
Adventure Woods Day Camp Outreach, Camp Lone Star, Tomball \$20,000.00 Fully Funded	Shepherd's Canyon Retreat Ministry Scholarships \$15,000.00 Fully Funded	Hereford Hispanic Outreach Program, Hereford \$25,000.00 Fully Funded	Offering Women Hope: Blue Blossom Pregnancy Centers and Maternal Assistance Program, Houston \$8,000.00 Fully Funded	Disciple and Mobilize Youth for Gospel Outreach, Glocal Mission, Houston \$12,000.00 Fully Funded	Little Lambs Parents' Day Out Ministry Playground Equipment, Sulphur Springs \$10,000.00 Fully Funded
		Christian Education Scholarships K-12, Central Texas \$25,000.00 Fully Funded	Ysleta Lutheran Mission Human Care Warehouse Repairs, El Paso (partial funding) \$17,314.00 Fully Funded		



A heartfelt thank you to the women of the Rio Grande Valley Zone for your faithful support of LWML Mite offerings throughout the 2024–2026 biennium. Through your generous gifts, prayers, and dedication to God's mission, you played an important role in helping fully fund all Texas District LWML Mission Grants for this biennium.

Your mites may seem small, but God has used them in mighty ways to share the Gospel, support ministries, and bring Christ's love to people both near and far. Thank you for your commitment to serving the Lord with gladness and for being faithful stewards of the blessings He has entrusted to you.

Zone Treasurer Report

Beginning Balance June 2026 - \$3565.97

Income - 75.81

Expenses - 1,693.41

Ending Balance June 2026 - \$1948.37

Convention Expenses Zone
President, YWR Rep. and
Pastoral Counselor



National 2025-2027 Mission Goal Report

Amounts as of January 31, 2026

Mission Grant Goal for 2025–2027 Biennium: \$2,622,270.00

Amount Received in January : \$152,877.79

Total Mite Offerings Still Needed for Mission Grants Budget: \$2,094,778.65

Women's Retreat 2027 Planning Survey

Peace, Love, & Sisterhood January 29–30, 2027

As we begin planning our Women's Retreat, we'd love your input! Our goal is to create a retreat that encourages connection, fellowship, spiritual growth, and meaningful sisterhood in Christ. Please take a few minutes to share your thoughts.

1. What are you most hoping to gain from this retreat?

- ☐ Time with other Christian women
- ☐ Spiritual encouragement
- ☐ Bible study and learning
- ☐ Fellowship and fun
- ☐ Rest and renewal
- ☐ Prayer and reflection
- ☐ Other: _____

2. Which activities sound most appealing to you? (Select all that apply.)

- ☐ Creative activity (writing encouragements, prayers, and Scriptures for one another)
- ☐ Table Discussion Groups
- ☐ Testimonies from women attending retreat
- ☐ Creative Reflection Stations
- ☐ Prayer Partners throughout the retreat
- ☐ Scripture Journaling
- ☐ Guided Prayer Walk
- ☐ Hymn Sing
- ☐ Fellowship Time
- ☐ Service Project for others (if so please list ideas)
- ☐ Other: _____

3. Which fellowship activities would you enjoy most?

- ☐ Icebreakers and get-to-know-you activities
- ☐ Team games
- ☐ Conversation cards at meals
- ☐ Craft activities (*Please share some ideas*)
- ☐ Sharing life stories and testimonies
- ☐ Small group discussions
- ☐ Other: _____

4. If we offered a simple make-and-take craft, which would interest you most?

- ☐ Scripture journal
- ☐ Encouragement cards
- ☐ Floral bookmark
- ☐ Prayer card holder
- ☐ Small devotional keepsake
- ☐ Not interested in crafts
- ☐ Other: _____

5. Which refreshments would you most enjoy during the retreat?

- ☐ Coffee
- ☐ Hot Tea
- ☐ Hot Cocoa
- ☐ Peach Tea
- ☐ Lemonade
- ☐ Sweet Treats _____
- ☐ Savory Snacks _____
- ☐ Other: _____

6. What types of take-home gifts would you appreciate most?

- ☐ Devotional or book _____
- ☐ Journal
- ☐ Bookmark
- ☐ Scripture cards
- ☐ Tea or coffee-themed gift
- ☐ Seed packet ("Bloom Where God Has Planted You")
- ☐ Small household item with Scripture
- ☐ Special Tote bag
- ☐ Other: _____

7. What is your favorite part of women's retreats?

8. What is something you've experienced at another retreat that you'd love to see included?

9. Is there a topic, activity, or discussion you'd like us to consider?

10. The theme of our retreat is Peace, Love, & Sisterhood. What does "Christian sisterhood" mean to you.

11. Would you be interested in helping with any part of the retreat?

- ☐ Decorations
- ☐ Hospitality
- ☐ Prayer Team
- ☐ Registration
- ☐ Activity Planning
- ☐ Set Up / Clean Up
- ☐ Other: _____

Additional Comments:

"Would you be willing to share a brief testimony of how God has worked in your life?"

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Maybe
- ☐ No

Your input is important to us! We are gathering ideas to help shape a retreat that encourages women in their faith and strengthens our bonds of Christian sisterhood. While every suggestion may not be used, please know that each response will be thoughtfully reviewed and appreciated as we plan this special weekend together.

Please mail surveys to address below or email to church@splch.com:

LWML Rio Grande Valley
602 Morgan Blvd.
Harlingen, TX 78550

[Download Fillable PDF form here:](#)

