

Monthly Newsletter

RIO GRANDE VALLEY ZONE
WOMEN IN MISSION

September 2026



God's Timing Is Perfect



"God's timing is perfect." This is a phrase that Evangelist Bertha Sánchez has often repeated as she shares how the Lord has guided her and blessed her throughout her life.

Nearly a year ago, Bertha retired after 24 years of work. Since then, the Lord has provided even more opportunities for her to serve her neighbors and share the Good News of Jesus Christ. Those who know her gentle spirit, deep compassion for others, and sincere love that reflects the love Christ first showed to her.

Rio Grande Valley
SOUTH TEXAS



When Moses reminded the people of Israel who they were, he didn't point to their accomplishments. He didn't tell them they were God's people because they had earned His favor or proven themselves faithful. In fact, they hadn't. Instead, God simply declared, *"You are a people holy to the Lord your God... His treasured possession."* He loved them because He chose to love them.

Whether at the grocery store, walking down the street, visiting with neighbors, or spending time with family, Bertha is always ready to listen, encourage, embrace, and pray with those whom God places in her path. She is also well known for her hospitality. Members of her congregation, *Trinity—El Calvario in Brownsville*, can testify to her generosity and to the gifts God has given her to serve others, especially through cooking.



**Exists to equip everyday
Christians to share the Gospel and
launch new faith communities in
everyday places and spaces.**

**CONTACT GLADYS FRANCO
FOR MORE INFO AT
GFRANCO@SPLCH.COM**



THE EVANGELIST

Training Series



As a volunteer at a nursing home, Bertha brings not only food for the body but also spiritual nourishment through God's Word. There she shares the message of hope and salvation found in Jesus Christ with the residents, caring for them with kindness, attention, and small gifts that brighten their days. Her desire is that others may know the comfort, forgiveness, and new life that Christ offers through His death and resurrection.

Recently, Bertha was sent as an evangelist along with eight other women from her congregation. In addition to her vocations as a wife and mother, her service in the church, and her work at the nursing home, she now also leads a Bible study with neighbors she has known for more than forty years.

As we look at Bertha's life, we see how God continues to work through His Word and through those He calls to serve. Everything unfolds according to His perfect timing and gracious will. The Lord, who began this good work in her, continues to use her to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and share His love with many people in Brownsville, Texas, and beyond.



*To God alone be
the glory.*



CONGRATULATIONS Pastor Chad Bresson

ON YOUR
5th Anniversary
ORDINATION & INSTALLATION - SEPT. 4, 2021



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.

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!!!





September

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 #21.
2. For men who heed God’s call to serve his people as pastors.
3. For Papua New Guinea, one of the 83 countries supported by an LWML grant.
4. For our will to follow God’s will, as we grow in relationship with him.
5. For ways to serve your neighbors with acts of kindness.
6. For the LWML Recording Secretary.
7. For the countries of Panama and Peru.
8. For the LWML Montana and New Jersey Districts.
9. Pray this 10-second prayer. “Lord, I pray for my friend, _____
You love her and I love her. Be with her today. Amen.”
10. For your family. Pray that they draw near to Jesus.
11. For the country of the Philippines.
12. For gratitude of the Savior’s gift of salvation.
13. For the Lord to heal our world and for His return to put the world right.
14. For our countenance to show the love and grace of the Savior, Jesus Christ.
15. For the country of Myanmar (Burma).
16. For the LWML Nebraska North and Southern Illinois Districts.
17. For the opportunity to show kindness to enemies.
18. For the many around the world who do not yet know You, Lord.
19. For the country of Paraguay.

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

20. For an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our lives, our churches, and Christian work throughout the world.
21. For LWML Mission Grant #22.
22. For the sick and those without shelter.
23. For those hungry and in prison.
24. For those around the world who suffer persecution because of their faith.
25. For the ability to love like Jesus.
26. For LWML Nebraska South District.
27. For the new and future LWML Mission Grants.
28. For an increase in zeal for the Gospel.
29. For random acts of kindness as a way to show the love of God.
30. Pray the Lord's Prayer.
31. For the LWML Louisiana-Mississippi District.



September 2026

Pray for the daily mission focus, then place the suggested change in your Mite Box. On prayer-only days, pause and lift the need before the Lord.

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances." 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 For Mission Grant #21 GIVE 2.00	2 For men who heed God's call GIVE 50¢	3 For Papua New Guinea GIVE 50¢	4 To follow God's will GIVE 10¢	5 For ways to serve our neighbors GIVE 25¢
6 For the women in LWML PRAYER	7 For the countries of Panama and Peru GIVE 60¢	8 For the Montana and New Jersey Districts GIVE 25¢	9 Pray for a friend PRAYER	10 Pray for your family GIVE 25¢	11 For the country of the Philippines GIVE 50¢	12 For our Savior's gift of salvation GIVE 25¢
13 For the Lord to heal our world PRAYER	14 To show our love in Christ GIVE 10¢	15 For the country of Myanmar (Burma) GIVE 50¢	16 For the Nebraska N. and S. Illinois District GIVE 25¢	17 Show kindness to our enemies PRAYER	18 Pray for those who don't know Jesus GIVE 25¢	19 For the country of Paraguay GIVE 50¢
20 Outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our lives PRAYER	21 For Mission Grant #22 GIVE 2.00	22 For those without shelter PRAYER	23 For those who are hungry PRAYER	24 For those who are persecuted PRAYER	25 Love Like Jesus GIVE 25¢	26 For the Nebraska South District GIVE 25¢
27 For future grants GIVE 25¢	28 For an increase in zeal for the Gospel GIVE 25¢	29 For random acts of kindness GIVE 10¢	30 Pray the Lord's Prayer PRAYER			
						

Every prayer and every mite helps share the Gospel through LWML mission grants.

ARCH BOOKS FOR IMMIGRANT CHILDREN IN THE USA

CONCORDIA PUBLISHING HOUSE — CONCORDIA GOSPEL
OUTREACH, U.S. | \$125,000



Reaching Immigrant Children Using Arch Books in their Native Language

In 1869, Concordia Publishing House (CPH) was founded as a small St. Louis printer with the mission of providing doctrinally sound materials for churches and individuals. Today, they offer more than 10,000 products and services that are faithful to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.

CPH publishes Arch Books which have been used for generations by families, educators, and pastors to teach important truths of the Bible. Each book takes a portion of Scripture and sets its story in rhyme, capturing the imagination of children and bringing the stories of God's Word to life.

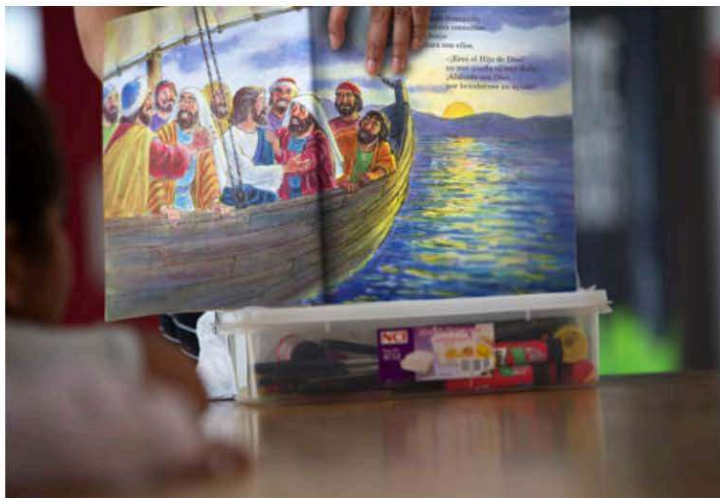
If you remember the first time you learned about the story of creation, it was likely at Sunday school or reading a book at home in your parents' laps. For many immigrant and refugee children in the United States, access to books in their native language, especially books that share the love of Christ, is not guaranteed.

The United States is home to nearly one-fifth of the world's international immigrants, many of whom face challenges in accessing materials in their native languages. Recognized Service Organizations (RSOs) of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, congregations, and other ministry programs across the United States that routinely care for these populations also struggle to find Bible-based materials in the languages of those they serve. This grant will provide funding for the Arch Books to be created and made available in Spanish, Chinese, Telugu, Arabic, and Farsi. The five books will include *The Story of Creation*, *Noah's 2-by-2 Adventure*, *Baby Jesus is Born*, *The Week that Led to Easter*, and *Jesus Blesses the Children*.

This mission grant aims to equip LCMS entities serving immigrant and refugee populations with Arch Books, free of charge, in the heart language of children and families they serve.

*And how from
childhood you have
been acquainted
with the sacred
writings, which are
able to make you
wise for salvation
through faith in
Christ Jesus
(2 Timothy 3:15).*

More Mission Grant Photos



"The printing press," according to Martin Luther, "is God's highest grace by which the Gospel is driven forward." We agree that books make wonderful missionaries, able to share the Gospel not just with one child, but with entire families and beyond as the books are read together. Through this project we will provide thousands of children access to the Word of God, but we know it is the living and active Word of God that does the rest.



According to the Pew Research Institute, Arabic is the "seventh-most common non-English language spoken at home. Arabic speakers represent several nationalities and include both immigrants and those born in the U.S." This project will make Arch Books available to LCMS organizations serving and sharing the Good News to Arabic speaking persons in the United States.



Arch Books have been used for generations by families, educators, and pastors to teach important truths of the Bible. Each book takes a portion of Scripture and sets its story in rhyme, capturing the imagination of children and bringing the stories of God's Word to life. Through Concordia Publishing House/Concordia Gospel Outreach, Arch Books have been used to share the Good News with thousands of children across the United States and around the world.



For many years, Spanish Arch Books, or Libros Arco, have been used by mission teams and outreach programs serving in the US and around the world to teach children Bible stories. Following a mission trip where 250 Spanish Arch Books were shared with children and their families, DCE Zech Teasdale recalled "They will have books in their own language that are all about Jesus. They truly have been positively impacted for life in the name of Christ!"

Finance/ Mite Reports

MISSION GRANTS FOR THE 2026–2028 BIENNIUM

Each mission grant button links to more information on the mission grant, view the recipient's individual segment of the mission grant video, a prayer, and pictures. Explore by clicking on the mission grant, then share the information with your local LWML and congregation.

Seminarian Scholarships for Texas Students \$50,000.00	ASL Jesus Signs Workshops — Texas \$15,000.00	Sharing Our Savior, One Meal at a Time — Forged by Fire Services, Mandeville, Louisiana \$7,500.00	Spiritual Care — Upbring, Canyon Lake, Texas \$10,000.00	Generating Power of Christ — Camp Blessing Texas, Brenham, Texas \$8,000.00	Bridge to Belonging — Camp Lone Star, La Grange, Texas \$20,000.00
Mobile Ministry Van — University Lutheran Chapel, Bryan-College Station, Texas \$20,000.00	Tailgate Outreach — Lutheran Student Center, Lubbock, Texas \$15,000.00	Learning Center Flooring — Trinity Lutheran, Riesel, Texas \$20,000.00	Deploying Lutherans Doing Life Together — Baylor University, Waco, Texas \$20,000.00	Together We Go, Together We Grow — Expansion Mission Network, Rockwall, Texas \$24,000.00	#ShineSanBenito Mission — The Table Lutheran Church, San Benito, Texas \$15,500.00
		Spanish Resources — Lutheran Heritage Foundation, Macomb, Michigan \$12,500.00	Interactive Classroom Displays — St. Paul Lutheran, Vernon, Texas \$10,309.00	Christian Family Discipleship — Concordia Center for the Family, Ann Arbor, Michigan \$4,123.00	

Mission grant goal for 2026–2028 is \$225,000 (additional mission abundance of \$26,932 from 2024–2026 to apply to mission grant payments).

Mite Report through June 2026

2026–2028 Mission Goal	\$419,406.00
Mites Received	\$38,673.58
Total Still Needed	\$380,732.42
25% paid to LWML Mission	\$9,322.86
Mission Grant Goal	\$225,000.00

Zone Treasurer Report

Beginning Balance August - \$1948.37

Income - 0

Expenses - 0

Ending Balance August 2026 - \$1948.37

National 2025-2027 Mission Goal Report

Amounts as of March 31, 2026

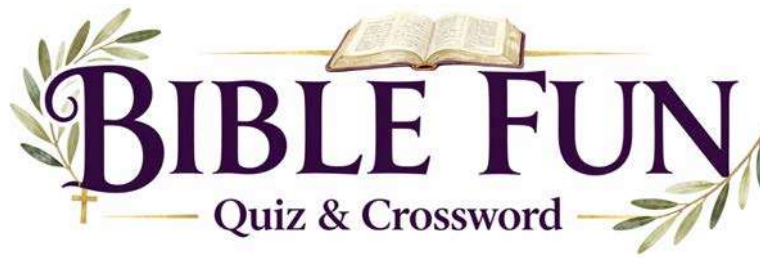
Mission Grant Goal for 2025–2027

Biennium: \$2,622,270.00

Amount Received in March : \$107,696.68

Total Mite Offerings Still Needed for Mission Grants Budget: \$1,922,552.06





Adapted from Broadcaster Magazine - a magazine of Worship Anew

Reprinted from Our Daily Bread "Bible Word Search & Activity Book" with permission.

NAME THAT BOOK

Select the book of the Bible that's related to these questions.

1. The book of the Bible that tells the story of Paul's shipwreck.

- a. Luke
- b. Philippians
- c. Acts
- d. 2 Corinthians

2. The two books of the Old Testament that do not mention God.

- a. Exodus
- b. Ruth
- c. Esther
- d. Song of Songs

3. The book of the Bible that tells about the Israelites finally getting to cross the Jordan River and enter the Promised land to live there.

- a. Exodus
- b. 1 Chronicles
- c. 2 Chronicles
- d. Joshua

4. The book of the Bible that tells about the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem.

- a. Nehemiah
- b. Ezra
- c. Malachi
- d. Jeremiah

5. This Gospel is not like the others in stories and content, so it is not considered a "synoptic Gospel".

- a. Matthew
- b. Mark
- c. Luke
- d. John

6. These books of the Bible were written by Jesus' brothers.

- a. Colossians
- b. Jude
- c. Acts
- d. James

7. This book of the Bible contains the following quote, "Meaningless, meaningless...everything is meaningless."

- a. Song of Songs
- b. Ecclesiastes
- c. Proverbs
- d. Psalms

8. The book of the Bible that is noted for providing the people of that time a long list of laws and regulations plus instructions for worshipping God.

- a. Deuteronomy
- b. 2 Chronicles
- c. Leviticus
- d. Ecclesiastes

9. The book of the Bible that mentions the constellations the Bear, Pleiades, and Orion.

- a. Genesis
- b. Revelation
- c. Job
- d. Amos

10. The book of the Old Testament that Jesus quotes from most often.

- a. Psalms
- b. Deuteronomy
- c. Isaiah
- d. Exodus

10. A (12 times)
Pleiades and Orion.
9. C (Also Amos mentions
8. C
7. B
6. B & D

5. D
4. B
3. D
2. C & D
1. C

ANSWER KEY

FILL-IN, or CRISS-CROSS, else KRISS-KROSS, CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Fill in the blanks with the words provided.

5 letter words

ARROW

EASEL

6 letter words

ASSUME

BAILEE

COCOON

FUSION

GLIDER

MORASS

NEWBIE

NOTICE

RESCUE

SPIRIT

TRITON

UNLINK

8 letter words

LOCATION

SALESMAN

9 letter words

BEEKEEPER

INVERNESS

JELLYFISH

LOWERCASE

MINIATURE

OBVIOUSLY

SOVEREIGN

SPACESHIP

STAGE NAME

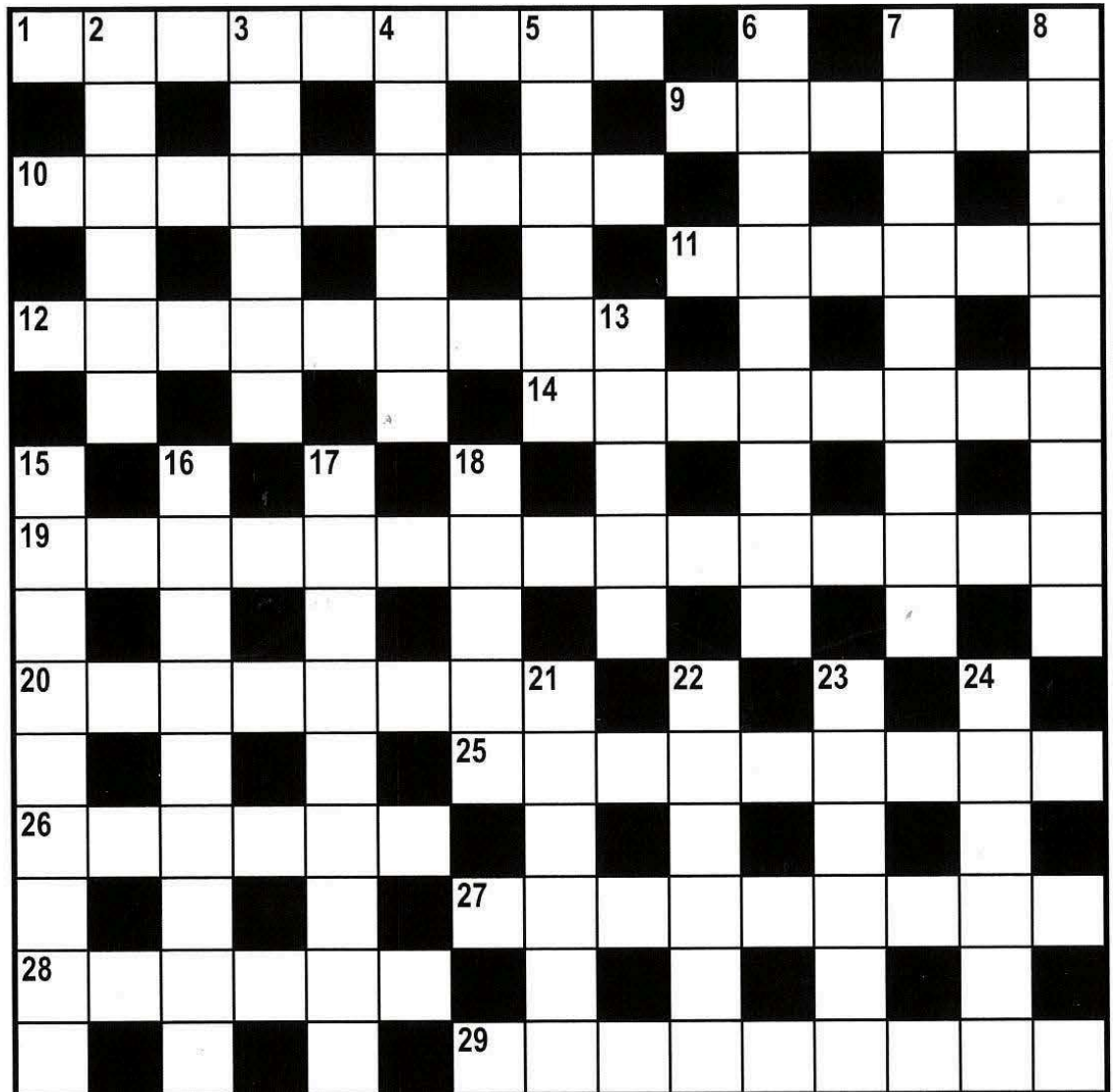
TRATTORIA

VOICEMAIL

WEDNESDAY

15 letter word

EMPEROR PENGUINS



ANSWERS:

Across: 1 STAGE NAME, 9 COCOON, 10 MINIATURE, 11 RESCUE, 12 LOWERCASE, 14 SALESMAN, 19 EMPEROR PENGUINS, 20 LOCATION, 25 WEDNESDAY, 26 FUSION, 27 OBVIOUSLY, 28 SPIRIT, 29 BEEKEEPER.
Down: 2 TRITON, 3 GLIDER, 4 NOTICE, 5 MORASS, 6 SOVEREIGN, 7 VOICEMAIL, 8 INVERNESS, 13 EASEL, 15 JELLYFISH, 16 SPACESHIP, 17 TRATTORIA, 18 ARROW, 21 NEWBIE, 22 UNLINK, 23 ASSUME, 24 BAILEE.

CIRCLE A WORD PUZZLE

Chosen Ones

You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellences of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

1 Peter 2:9 nusb

On occasion, you may need a little nudge for all the pieces of your disposition to fall into alignment with God's. Today's nudge is a grand reminder of your identity in the body of Christ. You are a holy priest serving the living God! He is risen, and you are his. Because of this, you walk in his light, and you shepherd others into the light as well.

Sometimes, it is difficult to get rid of the grumpy feelings of the day. It seems okay to have a lower opinion of yourself or your circumstances (and maybe even other people). But the truth is that God's opinion should be your opinion, and you can shout that in everything you do. Priests carry a message to the people. What message are you carrying today?

God, thank you for choosing me to be a priest for you. Help show me how to share the good news of your Son with everyone I interact with.

R	S	D	S	P	D	I	N	C	O	R	N	R	L	Z
D	I	O	E	X	C	W	V	R	I	A	O	I	S	D
V	A	P	C	S	A	H	H	R	L	L	I	S	E	E
C	C	I	N	S	U	N	N	E	H	I	O	K	L	U
V	S	N	A	E	Z	R	O	D	O	G	P	R	I	E
Y	H	I	T	R	R	J	I	N	L	N	R	D	G	R
W	E	O	S	V	R	R	T	I	Y	M	I	E	H	E
G	P	N	M	I	H	Y	I	M	R	E	E	G	T	G
P	H	T	U	N	T	T	S	E	S	N	S	A	H	D
C	E	U	C	G	U	I	O	R	Z	T	T	S	B	U
I	R	O	R	D	R	T	P	A	I	H	Z	S	B	N
C	D	H	I	D	T	N	S	E	B	Y	M	E	B	S
F	U	S	C	O	F	E	I	F	G	K	K	M	E	P
Q	T	G	A	K	V	D	D	Z	R	K	Z	P	N	T
A	V	A	A	V	Z	I	E	F	A	V	V	E	H	Q

ALIGNMENT
CIRCUMSTANCES
DISPOSITION
HOLY
IDENTITY

LIGHT
MESSAGE
NUDGE
OPINION
PRIEST

REMINDER
SERVING
SHEPHERD
SHOUT
TRUTH

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
- ☐ Craft activities
- ☐ Guided Prayer Walk
- ☐ Hymn Sing
- ☐ Fellowship Time
- ☐ Service Project for others (if so please list ideas)
- ☐ Other: _____

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

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

4. 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?"

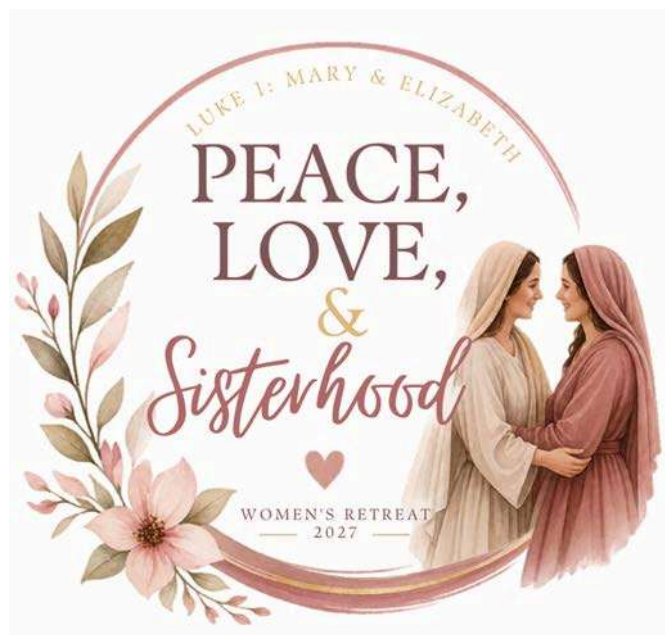
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Maybe
- ☐ No

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:](#)



Peace, Love & SISTERHOOD

LUKE 1: MARY & ELIZABETH

REAL WOMEN • REAL STORIES • A FAITHFUL GOD

WOMEN'S RETREAT
BIBLE QUIZ

*You don't
have to carry
this alone.*

BIBLE QUIZ

Test your knowledge of Luke 1 and be encouraged by the example of Mary and Elizabeth. Choose the best answer.

1

Gabriel gave Mary information about Elizabeth's pregnancy immediately before making which statement?

- A. Nothing will be impossible with God.
- B. Do not be afraid, Mary.
- C. You will call His name Jesus.
- D. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever.



Go a Little Deeper

God's power is at work even in the unexpected. What seems impossible to us is not impossible with God.

2

Which detail in Luke 1 most directly shows that Elizabeth recognized something spiritually significant about Mary's unborn child?

- A. She called Mary the mother of her Lord.
- B. She welcomed Mary into her home.
- C. She was Mary's relative.
- D. She was six months pregnant.



Sisterhood Connection

A woman who sees what God is doing will speak words that lift and encourage.

3

Which sequence best matches the events surrounding Mary's arrival at Elizabeth's home in Luke 1?

- A. Mary greets Elizabeth → the baby leaps → Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit → Elizabeth blesses Mary.
- B. Elizabeth blesses Mary → Mary greets her → the baby leaps → Elizabeth blesses Mary → Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit.
- C. The baby leaps → Mary greets Elizabeth → Elizabeth blesses Mary → Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit.
- D. Mary greets Elizabeth → Elizabeth blesses Mary → the baby leaps → Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit.



Go a Little Deeper

One faithful step — a simple greeting — can be the beginning of something life-giving in another woman's life.

4

Elizabeth's words in Luke 1:45 especially commend which aspect of Mary's response to God?

- A. Her belief that the Lord would fulfill His word.
- B. Her complete understanding of God's plan.
- C. Her willingness to leave Nazareth permanently.
- D. Her confidence that life would now be easier.



Sisterhood Connection

True encouragement reminds us to look at what God has said and to trust His faithfulness.

5

In Mary's Magnificat, which reversal does she specifically describe?

- A. The mighty are brought down and the humble are exalted.
- B. The elderly become young and the young become old.
- C. The barren become rulers and rulers become servants.
- D. The priests become kings and kings become priests.



Go a Little Deeper

God's kingdom often looks different from the world's — He lifts up the humble and fills the lowly with good things.

FAITH • FRIENDSHIP • ENCOURAGEMENT • A LIFETIME OF IMPACT

Answer Key

Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 Q5