LWML English District April, 2020

Beloved Women of the LWML,

As of March 31, 2020, LWML has paid $1,086,773.61 in grants. The goal for the 2019-2021 biennial is $2,100,000. Also, as of the above date, 11 grants have been paid. The last grant paid went to #12 – Women’s Witness and Mercy in Asia. A thank you letter has been received.

As you are aware, the 39th English District convention where much work is done, decisions are made, and voting takes place has been cancelled. The executive committee members along with the board of directors have been working diligently to come up with solutions to expedite the necessary agenda and accomplish our goals. Further information will be forthcoming. Please look at our website: http://englishdistrictlwml.weebly.com – for information on the Mission Grants, bylaw Amendments and Officers nominations.

**OUR MISSIIONARIES**

**THE FERRY FAMILY – ALL OVER ASIA**

Pastor Ferry writes: “The current struggles with the Novel Coronavirus are not so novel to us…Asia has been dealing with this since late 2019, when it originated just across the Taiwan Strait from where we live. But because it’s gotten so much more universal lately, things have certainly taken on a whole different flavor in the last few weeks……Of course, we who live deployed are no strangers to working from home. Remote meetings over Skype, Zoom, or the like are commonplace for us, and are sometimes the only connection we have with our LCMS colleagues. Our temperatures are constantly being screened in airports and public places, and people wearing surgical masks are commonplace: it’s simply considered polite if you have a cough or cold. After all, people in this part of the world learned some difficult lessons from the SARS epidemic some years ago.”

“Our LCMS leadership has placed a temporary moratorium on international travel. So the trips I had planned to visit our LCMS Asia team and partners are on hold indefinitely. The Ferry Family had been planning a trip back to the USA this summer to visit our congregational partners and supporters. But due to this current situation that trip is also on indefinite hold.”

“Thankfully, the Ferry Family and all our LCMS Asia colleagues are healthy and well. A few have returned to the US until things settle down, but most are sheltering in place. We await eagerly the day when things have abated, and we can resume life with a new version of “normal”.

\*As writer of this letter, I find it amazing that the Ferry children are learning English, Chinese, Indonesian and some German!

**THE APPLE OF HIS EYE MISSION SOCIETY - WORDS** **FROM PASTOR BOB ROEGNER – BIBLE TEACHER TO ISRAEL**

**TELL ME IT’S NOT SO!** “ I couldn’t believe it but heard it with my own ears. An Israeli Jewish principal, with a group of school children in grades 3-6, on a field trip from a public school, came to Immanuel Church Lutheran in Tel Aviv-Yafo earlier this month. The children are studying World Religions. This group of Jewish, Muslim, and Christian children were very engaged and asked a lot of different questions.

Questions were asked about the Paul Ott organ with 1200 pipes, the beautiful stained-glass windows around the church, the meaning of John 3-16, in Hebrew, which is behind the altar on the wall, and if I wear any pastor’s clothes when I lead services at the church? For the Jewish children, the Rabbi’s wear a prayer shawl in the synagogues, for the Muslin children, the Imam’s wear a special robe when leading prayers in the mosques, but what do I wear when leading prayers in the church? I showed the children my clergy Alb and Stole. All the children were like, “wow, that’s really cool!” Even the Christian children in the group were interested because most of the Christian here in Israel, both Jews and Gentiles come from evangelical, non-sacramental Christian backgrounds and clergy vestment are not traditionally worm.

Here is where it gets really interesting….the principal described herself to me as a non-religious, non practicing Jew. During her visit with s, she was given a Hebrew language, New Testament. She was ery excited to have this “book” and expressed a large amount of gratitude. She explained that getting a copy of this “book” would allow her to read it to her students as part of their study of World Religions. I couldn’t believe it but heard it with my own ears. Reading the New Testament Bible (even as literature) in a public school setting here in Israel.

So, reading the Bible (even as literature) in a public school setting here in Israel is fine but in the United States reading the Bible (even as literature) in a public school setting is forbidden. Go Figure! **Tell Me It’s Not So!**

**Paul says in Romans 10:17, Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ (NIV).** Pray for these students who will hear and for this principal and her reading of god’s Word (even as literature).

In His service….and yours, Bob Roegner

**PASTOR JONATHAN AND DEACONESS CHERYL – DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

Words from Pastor Jonathan and Deaconess Cheryl: We want to begin this March letter with a message of thanks and gratitude to you for your prayers for us and gifts to keep us working here in God’s mission. Thank you! We are both well and remain’ sheltered in place’, as directed by the government. Flights from this island to the United States were stopped on March 18. The Office of International Missions carefully considered evacuating all of its missionaries at high risk (including us, since Pastor Jonathan had a heart attack in 2018) but came to the conclusion that at that point (March 17) it would be safer for us to remain here than to travel. We concurred with that guidance and are happy we were able to remain at our posts.

YES – We are still working! Every day, Pastor Jonathan, in his capacity as Chaplain for all the LCMS Missionaries in the Latin America Caribbean countries, video records and distributes a 15 minute devotion; as well as Lenten service and Sunday morning services. He also shares these videos with individuals to whom we have witnessed in this country over the last three years. Seminary meetings and classes also continue through online technology. Cheryl leads a weekly Bible study and prayer tine online for deaconesses who are in the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and Argentina; and this week started another online Bible study on the Gospel of John for women in our region. She spends time on the phone with Dominican friends to encourage them. At the same time, she continues to make progress on the VDMA translation project that provides good Spanish Bible materials to all of our missionaries and partner Lutheran churches in this region.

**REV. TED AND BECCA KREY – LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

Words from Rev. Ted – “The last two weeks have been rather eventful. With the advent of the COVID-19 virus we find ourselves shifting our focus. Our motto in the Latin America Caribbean region is Share the Gospel, plant Lutheran Churches and show Mercy. The church, as long as she has breath, is one who receives from her Lord Jesus, and of what we receive, we give. Mercy upon mercy is still ours as we have the privilege through social media to serve our Lutheran missions and give of what we have received in the spreading of the Gospel to an ever-wider circle of people.”

“At the time of the fall of Jerusalem, the Lord Jesus moved his Christians in a diaspora to many different metropolises throughout the Roman Empire, and consequently the Gospel seed were sown throughout. So too now, it is of great rejoicing to see how our Lord has moved hundreds if not thousands of faithful pastors throughout the LCMS to serve their households of faith, and also, perhaps purposefully and perhaps not so, making the Good News of our Lord Jesus available to thousands of more people. A diaspora of sorts is happening as the Gospel seed is being sown “virtually” to many different parts of our region! As missionaries, we have joined that effort and give thanks that even as we find ourselves isolated, we still have the privilege of telling our neighbor that Jesus has promised “lo, I am with you always even to the end of the age.” What a blessing is ours!

Words from Becca – “Since January, Ted has been teaching an Evangelist III class to 13 seminarians. The class is on church planting and how to make the telling of Jesus purposely known to new communities. It is wonderful to see how engaged each of these men are, as during their evenings and weekends they are out in their respective fieldwork missions, alongside their missionary professors. Now with the strict quarantine conditions in place, our Concordia Seminar, under the capable directorship of Rev. Joel Fritsche, has shifted all classes on-line for our students in residence. Thank God we can continue to teach in this way, in addition to the many studying already online from countries such as Guatemala, Chile, Venezuela, Mexico, Spain, and others. Lord willing, these young men, as they graduate and are called to serve in their respective countries, will be church planters in years to come. What a privilege to see the Lord word in teaching others to tell the Good News of Jesus to those who have not yet heard! “

“The past two weeks have been dedicated to caring for our missionaries during this pandemic. Our human care circle has met daily and has helped our missionaries in 10 countries shelter in place……. Through weekly zoom check-ins, we have met with all our missionaries together to check in and share with each other how we are doing. We are grateful for our chaplain who is daily sending out devotions to all our missionaries. Bible studies are being held online for women and youth. Our two nurses have also done a stand-up job in helping our missionaries in their various health challenges and by creating health plans in these trying times.”

“REGIONAL HIGHIGHTS - Two new missionaries, Tirzah Krey and Ashley Lehr, arrived in the Dominican Republic in February for language learning and missionary training; FOROs held in Panama, Honduras, Dominican Republic, Peru; Expansion of a Lutheran high school in Uruguay that allows for hundreds more students and Lord-willing a university next year; Missionaries across the region are using Facebook, YouTube and various other media platforms to reach people in their countries; We rejoice in the strong Dominican FORO partnership response to the ministry and our 7 missions.”

**GOD BLESS AND PROTECT OUR MISSIONARIES!**

At the end of April my term as VP of Christian Life/Human care will expire. This will be my last letter. I am humbled to be a part of the LWML District board. It has been my privilege to serve along with women of faith, in our desire to spread the saving grace of our Lord. God bless all of you and God bless the LWML.

Yours in Christ,

Ruth Crowl

VP Christian Life/Human Care