† LWML Eastern District † NEWS RELEASE June 14, 2026

On Friday, June 12, 2024, President Dee Grzyb opened the 41st Biennial Convention of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) Eastern District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS). One hundred nineteen (119) delegates and guests participated in the convention June 12-14, 2026, held at the DoubleTree Resort by Hilton in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The theme for this convention was "The Word of the Lord Remains Forever" based on the Bible verse, *for "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever* (1 Peter 1:24-25).

Delegates voted to approve a 2026-2028 Mission Goal of $123,402, Mite Goal of $60,000, and Grant Goal of $30,000. Mission project grants for a total of $33,980.63 (including the 2024-2026 overage of $3,980.63) will be funded over the next two years. Projects to be funded in the following order include:

Grant K	Funds requested to support Miss Julie's House of Beauty purchase backpacks, hygiene supplies and devotional materials for survivors of sex trafficking and those at risk. $4500 Requested by LWML Member Kathy Ippolito, Genesee Zone.
Grant G	Funds requested to ensure long term sustainment of Revive Campus Ministry at Penn State. $4,500 requested by LWML Member Susan Bell, Philadelphia Zone.
Grant H	Funds requested to repair and renovate the kitchen at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Philadelphia, PA. $ 5000 Requested by LWML Member Evelyn Spann, Philadelphia Zone.
Grant I	Funds requested for playground equipment and other camp supplies for a new Mission Outreach camp, Camp-in-Daigua at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepard, Canandaigua, NY. $5000 Requested by LWML Member Catherine Geske, Genesee Zone
Grant J	Funds requested for the Blessing Basket Ministry, Zion Lutheran Church, Bridgeville, PA to build and distribute Blessing Baskets that contain items for caring for physical needs of their preschool families with new babies. $2000 Requested by LWML Member Tracey Harris, Pittsburgh Zone
Grant F	Funds requested to expand Climbing for Christ, Inc. education programs in the mountains of Haiti. $5,000 requested by LWML Member Rebecca Bessell, Genesee Zone.
Grant B	Funds requested to create an Eden Garden at Camp JOY (Jesus Others You) Summer Day Camp. $5,000 requested by LWML Member Carol Obot, Buffalo Zone.
Grant D	Funds requested to replenish the Lutheran Bible Translators Bible Printing and Distribution. $2,980.63 requested by LWML Member Susan Bell, Philadelphia Zone

Delegates elected the following officers to four-year terms:

President: Susan Morris, Philadelphia Zone
Treasurer: Cindy Cwynar, Pittsburgh Zone
Vice-President (VP) of Christian Life/Special Focus: Diane Olmstead, Pittsburgh Zone
VP of Gospel Outreach/Organizational Resources: Terry Hoffman, Niagara Zone
Pastoral Counselor: Rev. Brett Witmer, Pittsburgh Zone

The newly elected officers will serve with previously elected officers of the Executive Committee: VP of Communication Susan Morris, Recording Secretary Terry Hoffman, Financial Secretary Beth Scholl, and Pastoral Counselor Rev. Michael Dobler. NOTE: A new VP of Communication and Recording Secretary will be appointed to fill the terms vacated by the newly elected Susan Morris and Terry Hoffman.

On Friday evening, June 12, President Dee Grzyb opened the convention followed by a Worship Service with Holy Communion led by LWML Eastern District Pastoral Counselors Rev. Carl Emberger and Rev. Michael Dobler with the Proclaimer, LCMS Eastern District President Rev. John Pingel. Following the opening ceremonies the Mission Grants Committee provided a presentation of the mission grants.

Saturday morning, June 13, Rev. Emberger led a Bible study based on The Living and Abiding Word from 1 Peter 1:22-25. The Bible study was followed by an exciting and busy morning session. Sharla Fritz delivered the keynote address emphasizing the Word of Lord meets us in our loneliness (Hagar), our failures (Rahab), our pain (suffering woman), and meets us where we are! Megan Migyanko and Alexa Wolf provided a Mission Moment of their experience as Young Women Representatives (YWRs) to the 2025 national convention in Omaha followed by introductions of the YWRs for this convention. The Mission Goal of $123,402 was adopted followed by balloting for mission grants and officers. Bylaw amendments were also approved.

Saturday afternoon LWML VP of Communication Linda Guteres brought greetings from the Lutheran Women in Mission Board of Directors and presented the LWML report to the districts. President Dee Grzyb presented her report to the district. Concordia Lutheran Ministries brought greetings followed by a Mission Moment presented by Rev. Emberger and Beth Quinn on a mission trip to Liberia. Rebecca Bessell presented an overview of our Endowment Fund, "Legacy of Love." There were Interest Sessions led by Sharla Fritz, Linda Guteres, Bev Wicher, and a Pastors Event led by Rev. Michael Dobler. The afternoon ended with a Mite Walk that raised funds to support the 2026-2028 Mite Goal. Saturday evening activities included a banquet and entertainment by Glorify Performing Arts.

On Sunday, June 16, Pastoral Counselor Rev. Michael Dobler led a second Bible study based on the theme from Psalm 22 followed by a Mission Moment from Rachel Potts from Lutheran Braille Workers. The Sending Service was led by Rev. Emberger followed by installation of the new officers. Newly elected President Susan Morris closed the 41st Biennial LWML Eastern District Convention.

Convention offerings supported the LWML Eastern District Treasury, Deaf Outreach East, and the LWML Eastern District Deaf Interpreter Fund.

The 42nd Biennial LWML Eastern District Convention will be held in June 2028 and hosted by the Buffalo Zone.

The next national Lutheran Women in Mission Convention will be held July 8-11, 2027, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The theme is "Transformed in Christ" based on the Bible verse, *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect* (Romans 12:2).

To God be all the Glory,
Kathy Pavelock
LWML Eastern District Public Relations Director

Tell us about your experiences with the LWML Eastern District 41st Biennial Convention. An online survey will be active from June 12, 2026 through July 17, 2026 at http://www.east-dist-lwml.org/Convention2026.html.