

For the

LIFE of the WORLD

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Living the Christian Life in Our Vocations - p.4

Joy in Service! - p.7

Leading a Christian Life - p.10

What Does This Mean - p.13



CONTENTS

page 4



page 10



page 7



page 15



page 25



For the **LIFE** of the **WORLD**

PRESIDENT
Rev. Dr. Dean O. Wenthe

PUBLISHER
Rev. Scott Klemsz

EDITOR
Rev. John T. Pless

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
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Trudy Behning

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FEATURES

4 Living the Christian Life in Our Vocations

By Dr. Gene Edward Veith, Director of the Cranach Institute at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Luther said that vocations are “masks of God.” He is hidden in the people who build our houses, fix our cars, teach us how to do things, and create beauty for us to enjoy. Vocation is part of how God governs the universe.

7 Joy in Service!

By Mrs. Beverly A. England, Director of Public Relations for the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League, Tulsa, Oklahoma

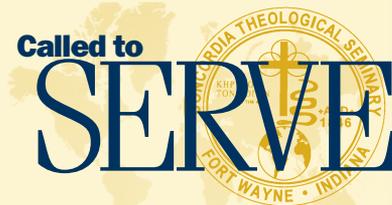
What a joy it has been! Serving the Lord in His church and being in a leadership position in an organization that has 250,000 members and does mission work by serving the needs of people near and far are so very fulfilling. Joy beyond words, yes!

10 Leading a Christian Life

By Dr. and Mrs. Dennis Ross, Wichita, Kansas

When asked to write an article on living a Christ-centered life, Dennis and Ann Ross were first honored and then perplexed. To them there seemed little that should make their life an example to others, for they know it is only through the Holy Spirit’s power that we are able to submit to God’s will for our lives.

13 What Does This Mean?



Continuing a Family Tradition p. 14

Growth in the Heartland p. 16

Continuing Education Benefits You and Your Congregation p. 19

Dr. Wenthe Reappointed as President of CTS p. 20

Dr. David Scaer’s Discourses in Matthew Receives Recognition p. 22

Student Families Appreciate Donation Day p. 25

JOY in Service!

By Mrs. Beverly A. England

When I think back to that very first time I said yes to my pastor's wife, who asked me to become a member of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML), and what has happened since that time, I realize I have had some truly remarkable experiences! Doors have opened before me, roads have been traveled, and mountains have been climbed, well not really mountains but big hills!

What occurs in life that brings us into God's service? So many things influence us along the way. Some things we remember immediately, but others we have to retrieve from the memory bank to make an accurate assessment as to what propels us toward serving! The Holy Spirit moves us to listen, to look, to desire something more than mundane living.

First, there are the things in which we have done nothing, like Holy Baptism.

God's grace to me in Holy Baptism as an infant set the course for my life. Now I can see how God worked in me as a child and then during my teen years as well. He was always directing and nudging me according to His will and by His grace, without me really knowing who was doing the directing or nudging. Then confirmation as an adult and the informed faith that Jesus came personally to me and all the faithful in the celebration of Holy

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Communion. Yes, this was very precious to me, but I was still unaware that God had plans for me and that the Holy Spirit had begun working in my heart actively urging me to serve in His church and work in His kingdom here on earth.

Then in looking back at my life, I think of people who have influenced me in different and beguiling ways. There was Pearl, a woman of peace, always lovely and calm, warm and friendly. I remember desiring the glow that beamed from her face. I wanted what she had! There was Pastor Al, a man of God who preached about life in abundance through Christ. I remember wondering, what is he talking about? Whatever it is, I want to find it! Then there was Joan who lost something precious to her, but telling me that it was okay because God had loaned it to her for a while and she enjoyed it for the time she had it. I remember thinking what a wonderful attitude she had and I wanted to think like her. Then, while attending an LWML convention, a pastor used Micah 6:8 as his sermon text, *And what does the Lord require of you? To love mercy, seek justice, and walk humbly with your God.* This text stuck with me and spoke to me. If I am to love mercy, then I must embrace others that need; if I am to seek justice, then I must beg for truth; if I am to walk humbly with my God, then I must serve Him in any way He asks, for I am His servant. There were countless people like this along the way pointing me toward something. What was it?

Even obscure things, like a stewardship program through our church, brought further understanding of God's Word to me. The theme was centered on *being good stewards in God's world* and revealed we should not only give our treasure, but our time and talents too. Simple to some, but it was thought provoking to me at the time. It was a growth spurt in Christian living and Christian giving. I realized this was not my world but His world, and whatever gifts I had were from Him and I needed to share them. But how? Feeling compelled to

serve the Lord, I began to seek His purpose for me. I joined an LWML Bible study group at our church and was a regular for over 30 years—studying with them and searching for direction and purpose in the Scriptures. What joy I found with these women as we searched and delved into God's Word together.

After I retired from my position as vice president in a large city bank, I relocated with my husband to another state. Once again I found an LWML group and a women's Bible study group. I joined the adult Sunday Bible class taught by our very knowledgeable pastor, gleaning from the Scriptures again how Christ so faithfully served here on earth and continues to work in our lives every minute of every day. Again, I felt God's nudging me. (What is it you desire from me, Lord? I would ask in my daily devotions.) The answers came and came quickly!

Being elected President of my local LWML; being asked to serve on the LWML district board; then being elected Vice President to that board was way beyond anything I had ever anticipated. What joy and change this brought about in my life! Serving God in this special way was more than I ever dreamed I would do. But God had more opportunities for me to serve. Soon I was on to being trained in St. Louis as a Mission-Ministry Vision Consultant for the LWML. This opened up countless doors such as leading Visioning Workshops for women's groups and congregations. But there was more as I received a phone call from our national LWML President asking me to serve on a national committee, and in the next biennium another call to serve as chairman of a committee. After this was finished I was nominated as LWML District President and was prepared to do this if God so desired, but the phone rang again and it was our new national LWML President asking me to serve on the Executive Committee as national Director of Public Relations.

This was so unbelievable to imagine God would want me to serve in this position and do this kind of work! I felt



My question to the Lord was “Is this what you want me to do?” After three days of soul searching, prayer and conferences with my family, I said yes. What a joy it has been! Serving the Lord in His church and being in a leadership position in an organization that has 250,000 members and does mission work by serving the needs of people near and far are so very fulfilling. Joy beyond words, yes!

unqualified and unequipped, but of course God encouraged and strengthened me in the next few days as my husband and I prayed and contemplated my answer. As I prayed I thought about what I had done in my banking career and how I might use those skills, and I thought about the President's words in her phone call: "If you say yes to this position, I believe your spiritual life will be enriched and you will meet people you might never have met. You will be immersed in the mission work of the church; you will do things beyond your comfort zone and go places you have never been before." So my question to the Lord was, "Is this what you want me to do?" After three days of soul searching, prayer, and conferences with my family I said yes. What a joy it has been! Serving the Lord in His church and being in a leadership position in an organization that has 250,000 members and does mission work by serving the needs of people near and far are so very fulfilling. Joy beyond words, yes!

So, what happens in us as the road opens before us? What makes our hearts rise up to meet the road? Something traumatic or a huge divine intervention as in the life of St. Paul? Or is it more subtle; moving slowly in and out, weaving the tapestry that makes up life? Life can be hectic and chaotic as we serve and has some bumps along the way, but it doesn't compare to the up side of being enriched, fulfilled, and inspired to embrace every day. It is serving Christ that brings us abundant living, of this I have no doubt.

So yes, I am enjoying life in abundance, just like that pastor preached about so many years ago. The joy has been immeasurable, abounding, and delightful! Are there more opportunities to serve ahead? I have no doubt, for I have found God opening more doors every day and find that every door I go through promises gifts beyond measure and always the opportunity to share the love of His Son, Jesus Christ, with others. Now that IS joy!

Mrs. Beverly A. England, who lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma, serves as the Director of Public Relations for the LWML.

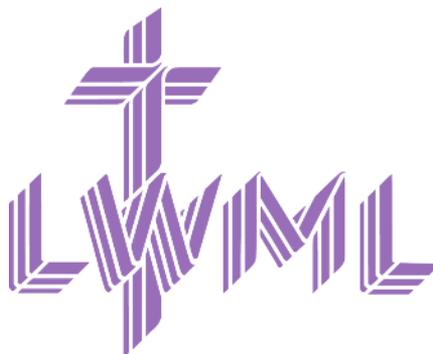
These photos were taken during the Fourth Year LWML Reception at CTS on October 8, 2005. The faculty, staff, and student body are extremely grateful to the LWML for the continued support they show for the students and families at our seminary.



Mrs. Linda Reiser, President LWML, and Dr. Dean Wenthe, President CTS



Seminarians Jason Braaten, Manuel Soto, and David Redhage proudly wear their LWML aprons.



Mrs. Beverly England, Public Relations Director for the LWML, presents gifts to seminary wives Mrs. Jodi Weinkauff and Mrs. Lauren Braaten.



Mrs. Joyce Weber, Corresponding Secretary for the CTS Student Wives Association, Mrs. Beverly England, Mrs. Linda Reiser, and Mrs. Marge Gruber, President of the Indiana District LWML

Photos courtesy Linda Wenthe