



WMF Helping Hand

NEWSLETTER



Go Bless!!

By Lavonne West, National WMF President

Go Bless America. What a perfect typo. I loved it. We sang God Bless America that day, but I thought long and hard about the GO.

It's at the heart of our WMF mission statement. I often used our former heart shaped logo to illustrate and emphasize this as our heart's desire.

We love Jesus. We love to gather women together. We pray, study God's word, and see opportunities to contribute our light and scatter some seeds.

We are so grateful for those pioneer women in our early days as an AFLC who established a Federation. There were letters and phone calls instead of email and texting. The harvest was as plentiful then as it is now.

Is the Lord calling you? Perhaps you need a jumpstart. The CPR course includes the use of the AED machine. This will analyze the patient's heart and if necessary, deliver an electrical shock or defibrillation to help the heart establish an effective rhythm.

One "jumpstart" could be our WMF day. Perhaps your heart is calling you home to Medicine Lake this June. Another could be your district rally or women's retreat. Perhaps you could create a local women's event.

Thank you all for your heartfelt prayers. Continue to pray for our students and staff, those working in Parish Ed., as well as all of our missionaries at home and abroad.

Thank you for your heart felt giving. Rejoice with us as you read this edition of our Helping Hand. It's a privilege to give to these projects with you and one way I can Go Bless America.

Thank you for calling me to serve as your president and be praying for those called upon by our nominating committee.

"Jesus therefore said to them again, Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." John 20:21 ASV



Determine your focus as a WMF.

The number one focus should be Christ and the relationship of your ladies to Him. Bible study is the way to begin. The other programs, projects will grow from that. If you do nothing else in your church begin with Bible study and prayer. As the ladies grow in their relationship with the Lord encourage unity with the group by involving them all in various programs and opportunities.

Anyone interested in ministry to women could be involved in planning activities. Ladies with special talents could be asked to do demonstrations on the things they do. Gatherings can be planned that would encourage the ladies in various ways.

What ideas could you come up with that would minister to your ladies? You can always ask the ladies what they are interested in.

President
Lavonne West
288 Brunner Road
Columbia Falls MT 59912
low2667@gmail.com
406-892-2667

1st Vice President
Anne Presteng
6838 147th Ave NE
Grafton ND 58237
annepresteng@gmail.com
701-520-3138

Executive Secretary
Dawn Johnson
2991 30th Ave
Wilson WI 54027
ctk@wwt.net
715-505-4454

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Devotions 2
WMF 3
Christian Ed..... 4
WMF Day information 4
Home Missions 6
World Missions..... 7
Information.....8

“That I may know Him . . .”

by Angie Lombardo



Did any of you make any New Year’s resolutions on January 1?

Someone joked: My New Year’s resolution:

- 1) Get my finances in order.
- 2) Get finances.

Another person commented: I always have no trouble keeping my New Year’s resolutions. This year I am totally resolved to eat more chocolate than last year.

Paul didn’t have a New Year’s resolution. Rather he had a determined resolve. He wrote in Philippians 3:10a “. . . that I may know Him . . .” What Paul was getting at was his desire to know God personally, and intimately. That was his goal.

Think of your family. You know your mother and father. If you have siblings, you know them, too. But do you know your mom the way your dad knows her? They likely have an intimate relationship one with the other. But ask a married couple, married five years, if they really know one another and they probably will say yes, of course they do. But ask them that question 50 years later, and they will attest to the fact that they now know each other much more than before. Their love for one another has grown exponentially.

One day The Husband and I were deep in conversation. (“The Husband” is one of the many names I call him—all good I might add.) I started to ask him a question, but he interrupted me and answered my unspoken question correctly. He knows me very well. Too well, I think! Regardless, one cannot truly know another person deeply until there is mutual full disclosure.

What thrills me is that the reality that God who is infinitely higher than sinful human beings, allows Himself to be known. How does He do that? He reveals Himself through His Holy Word. By His Word, God is personally speaking to you, to me. Just as Paul wanted to know God more, the unfathomable mystery is we are first known by God because of His grace. God took the initiative to permit me to know Him and because He knows me first, His grace is revealed.

It’s like a child playing hide and seek with her mother. The mother hides as the child counts down from fifty—three, two, one, here I come, ready or not. The child looks and looks unsuccessfully until the mother purposely sticks her toe out from behind the curtain. I found you, the child squeals. But the mother knows better. She let herself be found.

What a gracious God we have. And as Paul contemplates what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for him, he can hardly contain himself! Paul longs to really know Christ! He did not say he wants to know more *about* Him (although that leads one to come to know Him more). He wants to know *Him* and have a deeper, more intimate experience of Him. And God allows Himself to be known.

It is my prayer that in this New Year, our resolve is to know Christ better and better. To really know Him as Paul states in Philippians 3:8, “Yet indeed I also count all things as loss for the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus . . .” It is far more than intellectual knowledge of the facts about Him. It’s a life-long process of sanctification. In other words, the desired end is to know Him experientially by personal involvement thereby having a deeper and deeper knowledge of and experience with Jesus.

Then when disappointment, heartaches and pain come—all of these earthly things don’t matter so much because I can say with Paul “I count all things as loss . . .”

As J. I. Packer writes in his incomparable book, Knowing God, p. 23, “. . . when a man knows God, losses and ‘crosses’ cease to matter to him; what he has gained simply banishes these things from his mind.”

God give us the grace to echo Paul’s fervent desire, “. . . that I may know Him . . .”



Women’s Retreat

at the ARC

Osceola WI

April 26-28, 2024

Speakers: Mary Schock, Theresa Boe & Sarah Daas

Worship Leader: Steven Quanbeck

To register go to: www.arc-aflc.org/womens-retreat

The General Fund is ...“The Wheels on the Bus”



By Karen Floan

Perhaps you have heard or even sung the nursery song, “*The Wheels on the bus go round and round*”? The words of this song remind me of what our Women’s Missionary Federation General Fund is all about.

*The wheels on the bus go round and round, round round....all day long;
The wipers on the bus go swish, swish swish....all day long;
The horn on the bus goes beep, beep, all day long.*

Our focus for giving as a WMF is on four main projects:

- 1) World Missions
- 2) Christian Education
- 3) Home Missions
- 4) WMF General Fund (GF)

Even though the GF project work may not be as noticeable as some of the other projects it is much like the ‘*wheel on the bus*’ that keeps things going ‘*all day long*’. It’s ‘*wipers and horn*’ also picture other parts of the General Fund bus that are needed and effective in it’s work.

You may ask, well what exactly does the General Fund do for the WMF?

Glad you asked!

Supporting the General Fund enables women to meet together nationally for conventions, provide Bible Studies (*written by AFLC women*), supply other resources & printed materials, office equipment, promotion expenses, board expenses, Executive Secretary salary, and more. When contributions exceed costs for the GF they may be given to other ministries that have not reached their projected goals. Without the establishment and support of the General Fund it would be hard to convey the needs for our other project areas.

Sometimes you may not see exactly what the work of the General Fund is doing but it truly is the **working wheel** that makes our WMF body able to share the needs of missions more effectively with it’s members.

For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Romans 12:4-6



2023 Treasurers Report		
1/1/2023—12/31/2023	Income	Expense
World Missions	\$37,671.30	\$37,671.30
Home Missions	\$24,932.61	\$24,932.61
Christian Education		
Parish Ed	\$7,659.78	\$7,659.78
FLBC	\$11,031.04	\$11,031.04
FLS	\$8,399.88	\$8,399.88
WMF General Fund	\$85,227.72	\$63,487.10
Non Project Income	<u>\$2,573.00</u>	<u>\$2,573.00</u>
	\$177,495.33	\$155,754.71



If your WMF has had members pass away in this past year, please email the funeral bulletin, her name, city, state and church or funeral home connection to the Executive Secretary and they will be included in the memorial service at WMF Day 2024.

Memorials

- Lavonne Ward
- Debbie Iverson
- Jeanette Swanson
- Laverne Pearson
- Chet Wolla
- James Prather
- Donna Skistad
- Elocile K Uran
- Ann Tucker
- Gerald Copes
- Maynard Iverson
- Lila Lalim
- Neil Ribstein
- Leroy Nelson
- Rolland Anderson
- Arlane Goodfellow
- Betty Christopherson
- Dennis Rorwig
- Gretchen Noon



SENDING OUT THE LIGHT OF JESUS

By Gwen Berge

O send out Thy light and Thy truth... Psalm 43:3

It was dark. It was early morning. The quiet had been broken by a child's cry. I reached into the crib, scooped my granddaughter up and we crept to the couch--careful not to wake anyone in the house. We turned on the light, cuddled, and opened *Jesus A-Z* ...

"A" *I am the Alpha and the Omega,...*
Rev. 33:13

"L" *I am the light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness,...* John 8:12

JESUS. Our Savior. Our Protector and our Light in this dark world. At times like my quiet morning on the couch, God's goodness and peace bring *exceeding joy*--even in the midst of a dark world. But for those who don't know Jesus, what penetrates the darkness...Is darkness all **that** some know?

O send out Thy light and Thy truth, let them lead me; Psalm 43:3

God has led and used the *Women's Missionary Federation* to penetrate the darkness with His light and His truth. I have seen the faithful ministry of the national WMF and local WMFs. I have been the recipient of Christlike love, I have heard faithful prayers for missionaries which span years, and I have seen the WMF steadfastly support AFLC ministries.

As a new member on the *AFLC Board of Parish Education*, I am learning how important the WMF's support and encouragement is to *Ambassador Publications*. Generous gifts from WMF helped cover printing costs for *Jesus A-Z*. Generous gifts from WMF are enabling the reprinting of AFLC Sunday School Curriculum, [*Journey Through the Old Testament*](#) with accompanying supplemental resources such as teaching posters and maps.

Dear women, be encouraged. The work of the Women's Missionary Federation is *sending out the light* of Jesus, the only Redeemer from the bondage of sin. The board of AFLC Parish Edu-

cation is so grateful for the partnership and the work of the WMF. For many years, your financial and prayer commitment have supported the development and distribution of materials which send out God's light-JESUS.



PROMISES

By Steven Snipstead



I'm new this year to the board of Trustees of our Schools. I've really enjoyed learning so much more about our schools and our students. I've loved hearing about the future plans and I'm glad I can help move that vision forward. When you join the Board of Trustees there's a fairly steep learning curve and the time commitment is significant, but the ministry of our schools makes it worthwhile.

I've had the good fortune of being on several boards in my ministry. I've learned that the most important thing an executive board member does is keep the organization true to its purpose and mission. Lots of people write and teach about this and I've seen many different techniques used to keep organizations on track. In recent years, an exercise to help to think about what's most important for an organization is to ask "What promise does your organization make to the people you serve?"

My church thought about the promise we make to our people and expressed it like this. "We promise that our church will be a place where you can encounter God and give you the opportunity to grow in your Faith." I'm also on the board of a local shelter and they expressed our promise to the community like this. "We promise to provide a warm safe shelter to those who have no other option and a path out of homelessness for those who are willing and able to take it."

I was glad to see that FLBC and FLS also thought about the promises they make to their students. Here they are:

Our Promise to Our Students

We promise that at Free Lutheran Bible College you will learn from great teachers to love Scripture and the Author of it. They will care for you, walk with you, and introduce you to the truth of the Bible. Here you will find a warm, encouraging community of people like you who want to know and follow Jesus more deeply. You will learn in great facilities on a beautiful campus that provides

places to study, think, pray, and reflect. Here you will find a sure foundation for your life and be prepared for a lifetime of service in your congregation and calling.

What a wonderful promise to teach people to love the Bible and love Jesus, to find lifelong friends and spiritual companions to share the future. The promise also talks about being good stewards of our campus. Thank you WMF for helping in so many ways with that.

Our Promise to Our Students

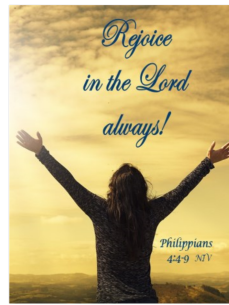
We promise that at Free Lutheran Seminary you will be mentored by professors who will care for you and prepare you to shepherd God's people and preach the Word in the congregation with impact. Here you will be immersed in the Word of God and historic Lutheran doctrine and find fellowship with peers in a community that will pray for you, care for you, walk with you, and encourage you. You will leave here with ministry opportunities, little to no seminary student debt, and the confidence to fulfill God's calling on your life and vocation.

What a beautiful thought to prepare students to be pastor by going deep into the Bible. The seminary also promises to connect our graduates with ministry and give them a good start by keeping their debt for education low. That could be a big distraction to the work God has called them to. For this too we owe a major debt to the WMF and the support of the people and congregations of the AFLC.

We don't have an official promise statement written to the people of the AFLC who support the schools like we do for students, that may come, but if we did I think it would be something like this.

We promise to stay true to the mission and vision the founders of our schools gave us, to stay true to biblical teaching and principles of the Free Lutheran Movement. We promise to train future leaders who will take their place in ministries and congregations. (I'm grateful for this as many of the leaders at my church, most of our staff, and many of our active volunteer are graduates of our schools). We promise to be good stewards of the faith and trust you have shown us by your support of FLBC and FLS.

Thank you WMF for the gifts, and prayers you give for our schools.



WMF Day 2024 Wednesday, June 12th

in the Student Life Center
on the campus of the
Free Lutheran Bible College
and Seminary
in Plymouth MN

Make plans to join us! Our day will begin at 9 am with registration from 8:15-8:50 am. Please be there early to register and be in the room by 9 for the opening.

Please register on our website and pay close attention to the instructions. www.aflc.org/women/wmf-day/ or contact Margie at PO Box 118, Beulah ND 58523, or email at margieleend@gmail.com or by phone or text at 701-870-2259.

Speakers for the day:

Devotions:: Angie Lombardo

Memorial Service: Mia Presteng

Workshop speakers:

Rev. Jerry Moan, Emily Raan and Shiney Dasari Ramnarain

MISSION FESTIVAL SERVICE

Service Leader: Rev. Earl Korhonen

Speaker: Rev. Jeff Swanson

Music by the Ambassadors

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Philippians 4:4-9 NIV

How can we be a blessings? What is God leading you to do so that you might bless someone else today?

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing. 1 Thessalonians 5:11 NIV



COMING ALONGSIDE

Andy Coyle
AFLC Home Mission Director

AFLC Home Mission exists to come alongside our congregations and people to help establish and strengthen Free, Living, and Lutheran congregations that reach and form believers in Christ. We are a resource arm to provide training, assessment, coaching, support, and care for our people. We believe that the Congregation is God's Mission plan and therefore, mission divorced from the congregation often produces fruit divorced from the congregation. Our deep desire is for all of our AFLC congregations to joyfully embrace their identity and purpose given to them in Christ.

What are some areas we are working on?

1. We are presently working with four potential new congregations and various stages of development. We continue to develop specific training, care, and support systems for our planters.
2. We are passionate about growing a culture of church planting and mission in our congregations. Our podcast "The Lutheran Church Planter" is designed to be available to everyone in our AFLC and beyond. Some of its content is plant specific while most of it is designed for all of our congregations. Our hope is for congregational leaders to think and access their ministry. Our Blog is also designed to give quick helps and training tools for our people.
3. New Hire: Congregational Coordinator. The Home Mission board is in the final stages of hiring a quarter-time congregational coordinator that will oversee a team of field representatives. This team will primarily travel to congregations sharing about Home Mission fields and Missions in general. I am very excited about the impact this team can have in our congregations.

Re-missioning resources. On the heels of leading a "Shaping the future AFLC" event held in January, we will be writing and producing materials to help congregations pursue health, vitality, and mission in their ministry. This has been an area that we put on hold in order to develop planting and culture resources. With the changing world we live in, we hope to come alongside our congregations and help them in their mission to their community.

Women of the AFLC, thank you so much for your faithful partnership to AFLC Home Missions for decades. Your support has been invaluable in helping our congregations reach people for Christ. Please continue to pray for our board, our planters, and our congregations. Pray that the Lord would continue to raise

laborers to work in congregational ministry. Please pray for me as I seek to faithfully lead this ministry. Pray also for my family as I travel. Pray ultimately that the Lord would use our Association to faithfully proclaim and administer God's ordained means to accomplish His mission, His Word and Sacraments.



Alaska Mission

Pastor Jon Langness
Secretary, Home Mission Board of Directors



The Alaska Mission has experienced a lot of changes and challenges lately. A call committee has been at work for years seeking the Lord's guidance to a missionary pastor who would be willing to serve the rural communities in and around Naknek. The ministry opportunities are seemingly endless. Pastor Jeff Swanson had served well in that role, and while his absence has certainly been felt, the work continues. This past fall, another long-standing family of the Alaska team was led to relocate to another mission ministry in Washington, the Crowell family. That leaves Bob and Margaret Lee, Josh Fish, and Heather Hansen as the boots on the ground to continue the ministry. Bob experienced a bout of complications from covid that continue to linger yet serves on. And yet, the Lord's work continues. Pray for the ministry in Alaska and for the Lord to raise up more servants for this work.

Presently, the Alaska Mission is in need of a missionary pastor-shepherd, a certified airplane mechanic (Josh Fish is close to certification but not quite there yet), and another radio person to work alongside Bob. The Bay Broadcasting Committee has recently interviewed a new college graduate for a potential radio assistant position who will soon travel to Alaska for an exploratory trip to help discern whether the Lord is calling her to that position. Continue to pray for wisdom and provision for the Alaska Ministry to be fully staffed. Another answer to prayer is a current seminarian who will be using his summer break to serve the ministry in Alaska. Pray for him and his family as they relocate for the summer.

During the Home Missions Board meeting preceding the Annual Conference, representatives from the Alaska Mission were brought with the intention of providing better support for the Alaska Mission. The Lord is doing a good work in Alaska that Home Missions desires to see supported and continued. We learned of the expansion of the radio to Iguigig which previously had not happened. New people were brought on to the Alaska Call Committee to seek the Lord's leading and provision for a missionary pastor. FLAPS informed us of willing individuals to occasionally help with maintaining the aircraft. MATA will continue their relationship with the ministry in Naknek for routine maintenance. One FLAPS board member proposed the idea of a group to focus on the cooperation of all the ministries of the Alaska Mission (FLAPS, KAKN, BBC, preaching points).

(Continued on page 8)

A Bubbling Spring

By Jonni Sliver



I am, in general, a chipper sort of person, I have, what I consider to be, a wonderful sense of humor (many pun challenged friends would contest that point), and Phil. 4:4-9 has long been a favorite text. HOWEVER, it is easy to confuse Paul’s injunction to Rejoice, with the idea of being happy, and they are not the same thing!

Happiness is an emotion that surges and ebbs. My chipper personality can turn testy far more quickly than I like! All it takes is the temperature passing 90 degrees or Baby Shark being played for the 20th time today. And when difficulties arise the emotion of happiness fades into the distance.

But rejoicing, according to the dictionary, is to be filled with great joy – and joy remains! Joy makes me think of a bubbling spring – it may not look as impressive as the gushing fountain, but when the fountain is turned off the spring continues to flow.

That is a wonderful reminder for me, working in the Miriam Home, because we have many moments of happiness. Seeing one of our littlest ones take their first steps and say their first words thrills my heart. The explosion of excitement when the kids jump in the camp’s swimming pool makes me happy. Seeing the children learn to pray and respond to the Word goes beyond happiness!

But there are other moments that are more difficult – especially when the children we care for leave the Miriam Home and we are not very confident that they are going to a good situation. They may be going back to a parent that still has problems with chemical dependency, or they may be going to a new family that doesn’t have an apparent relationship with God. And following up with some of our older children, who left the Miriam Home having learned that God has wonderful plans for their lives, but a year later to learn they are walking in their old ways. In those moments “happy” is not the emotion that comes to mind!

But under the questions, and concerns is the bubbling spring of joy, that reminds me that God is in control. That we can continue to care for our kiddos, praying for them and their parents and trusting in God to gather them in His arms. We can’t see all of God’s plans, but we know they are there and we can rejoice even in what we don’t see YET! And we have something to do with every care, concern and “what if” that weighs us down – bring them to the Father, who will trade our weights for His peace.



Mission House



World Missions has recently sent us this request:

Recently, as the mission house has been without missionaries for a couple of months, we have taken the opportunity to have some necessary updates completed. These larger projects are beyond what is budgeted for the ongoing monthly care of the house.

\$1,873.50	New kitchen/entry flooring, wainscot, and trim
<u>\$1,873.50</u>	New deck boards, posts, and handrail on the back deck
\$3,747.00	Total

In the coming years, the mission house will need some drywall repair, painting, and new carpeting in a few areas.

Please consider how you may be able to help bless our missionaries through helping with these projects. We want them to have a nice place to stay when they are home on furlough. Please designate your contributions for the Mission House. Be sure that the gift is up and above the other gifts given to World Missions as those funds are needed to support the missionaries out on the mission field.

Women's Missionary Federation
3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd
Minneapolis MN 55441-3008



IDEA TO
CONSIDER

Planning an event. Spend time in prayer asking for guidance as you plan. Our Creator God made us to be creative. We have the Holy Spirit to inspire us from God's Word, so BE CREATIVE!!! STRETCH your mind!! Choose a Bible verse. Focus on what key words in the verse could be used as a concept to expand into the items that will help organize a women's event. Select a setting and an activity: from your theme verse, and what is the spiritual goal for your event.

Pastor Jeff Swanson continues to stay busy communicating the ministry in Alaska in his coordinator role. Another former worker for the Alaska Mission suggested establishing a separate subcommittee to focus more on Alaska, the group agreed. The Home Missions Board passed a motion to create a subcommittee including one member from the BBC, one of FLAPS, two Home Missions Corporation members, one of the Home Missions Board to serve with the Alaska Coordinator, Pastor Jeff Swanson to help support the Alaska Mission. We look forward to the Lord leading this committee.

Continue to keep the Alaska Mission in prayer. There is much work to do in this pioneer mission field, pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out more workers who will proclaim the wonderful truth that Christ came into the world to save sinners and that God would continue adding precious souls in Alaska to His Church.



Bible studies and Cradle Roll Packets

Bible studies are available.
Check our Bible study web page for those
in stock.

www.aflc.org/women/resources/bible-studies/

Cradle Roll packets are
available for \$23..



Place Bible study
and Cradle roll
orders with Executive Secretary, Dawn Johnson.