

As Lutheran Women in Mission we have been gathering and saving cancelled or collected postage stamps as a Michigan District project for several years now. This project is to benefit Becky Grossmann, a Lutheran Bible Translators consultant for translation projects among several different language groups in Liberia, West Africa. Becky is a member of LWML in Battle Creek Zone.

The most valuable stamps, according to our stamp appraiser in Fort Wayne, IN, are any foreign stamps; commemorative (displaying recognition of a particular person, a place, or a thing (i.e., invention of light bulb); or very old (older than 1935) stamps; or postcards. Other stamps may be included if someone already trimmed them, but designated (common, frequently seen) stamps have negligible value to collectors.

Trim the stamps at 1/8th inch margin around the stamp. Do not trim postcards; leave whole. If a stamp has been torn, discard it. If a group of stamps are close together, leave as is; don't try to cut them apart. If someone had removed stamps (steamed) from envelopes, you may save them if of more valuable description, but this is not the desired way that the appraiser wants to receive them. An efficient method to do the sorting is to arrange labeled plates onto which to toss the stamps as you trim them, according to the category to which they belong – foreign, commemorative, old, or designated.

Someone's old partially completed stamp collection is desirable; also desirable are envelopes or sheets of first-day issue stamps, or otherwise collectible stamps. Do not disturb these collections; just gather them as they are. The appraiser will calculate their collectability. This project has developed as a kind of collaboration between Caring Ministries and Mission Outreach. When you have gathered your trimmed, sorted stamps into labeled zip baggies, you may send them along with a friend who is attending a LWML Michigan District board meeting. They will eventually be transported to Fort Wayne. Do not mail your stamps, as the shipping would use resources that might as well have been directly applied to LBT or to any mission.

Most important rule: Trim according to directions. If you cut into the stamp at all, its value becomes negligible. So get a group together, each with scissors, and chat while you trim stamps! Or place your phone on "speaker" and trim stamps while you visit with a friend. You'll be helping support Bible Translation work, so more people of differing language groups will be able to enjoy the satisfaction of reading God's Word in their own "heart language!" Thank you!