

CONNECTING

tips during

COVID-19

A Time for Everything — Ecclesiastes 3:1–8

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

*a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.*

Do these verses from Ecclesiastes describe the year 2020? With a COVID-19 pandemic, civil unrest, economic fluctuations, job uncertainty or upheaval in working conditions, changes in education, and disruption of church and religious activities, the world is indeed in tumultuous times!

What are we — Lutheran Women in Mission — to **do**? **How** do we stay connected to each other in fellowship, remain connected to His Word, and continue to connect to others through service?

We carry on!

How do we accomplish that when there are national, state, or local restrictions on gathering?

We get creative!

Following are ideas to assist you and your LWML groups to not only survive, but to **thrive**, in these challenging times.

THE BASICS — MEETINGS/GATHERINGS MAY LOOK DIFFERENT

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near (Hebrews 10:24–25).

- Adapt when meeting in person. Consider these options:
 - Shorten the time of the meeting.
 - Use more tables and spread out in your space to follow your local recommended guidelines.
 - Wear masks as local guidelines indicate and at the comfort level of the attendees.
 - Skip the roll call.
 - Email or mail the minutes and the treasurer's report prior to the meeting.
 - Allow officers to make business decisions so more time is spent in connecting to each other and His Word.
 - Meet in the church parking lot or on the lawn while enjoying God's creation.
 - Meet at a park and bring your own chair or blanket.
 - Make other changes based on your local practices.
 - Respect the comfort level of those who choose to not meet in person.
- Meet electronically rather than in person. There are many online video/audio options available. If you are unfamiliar with these, ask your pastor or someone in your congregation how to set them up. Chances are good that they have held worship services or met electronically in recent months and can answer your questions. Do not be intimidated to try this! You may be surprised at how easy it is! Consider using:
 - [Google Hangouts](#)
 - [Google Meet](#)
 - [Lifesize](#)
 - [Skype](#)
 - [Zoom](#)
 - Many more options are available, based on your needs and technology skills.
- Use **both** options as the technology is available. For example, those who are able to do so may meet in person, and others may attend the meeting electronically.
- Continue sharing the *Lutheran Woman's Quarterly* and meeting items. This may need to be done by mail. Encourage members to subscribe to the [eQuarterly](#) if they wish.

HELD BY GOD'S WORD: KEEP FAITH FIRST

But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:41–42).

- Continue group Bible study and/or begin a new study. Consider these options:
 - Meet electronically through any of the options mentioned above.
 - Use a closed Facebook group, which participants may join by invitation: ([Instructions](#))
 - Maintains privacy of discussion comments;
 - Secures names and circumstances of individuals being prayed for; and
 - Can be accessed at any time by anyone in the group.
 - Download and access the same LWML resource(s) so that all can listen to or read the same resource for discussion.
 - [Bible Studies](#)
 - [Lutheran Woman's Quarterly](#)
- Continue group devotions. Consider these options:
 - Download and access the same LWML resource(s) so that all can listen to or read the same resource for discussion.
 - [Devotions](#)
 - [LWML On The Go](#) podcasts
 - [Mustard Seed Devotions on the LWML App](#)

- [Mission Grant Devotions](#)
- Continue praying as a group. Consider these options:
 - Download and access the same LWML resource(s) so that all can listen to or read the same resource for discussion.
 - [Prayers on the LWML App](#)
 - [Mission Grant Prayers](#)
 - [LWML Prayer Service](#)
 - Include members who may not have access through technology via a phone call.

INSPIRED TO SHARE HIS GOSPEL: CONTINUE TO COLLECT MITE OFFERINGS

And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15).

- Share [mission grant information](#) in bulletins, church social media, newsletters and so on, so your congregation can learn more about the grants the mite offerings are funding. Have [individual Mite Boxes](#) available for those in your congregation to take home and fill. Set the [medium Mite Box](#) in a visible location at church so individuals may drop off their mite offerings.
- With permission from your congregation, place the LWML Mite Box near where Sunday offerings are collected.
- Drive-thru: Set a window of time for individuals to drive to church to drop off their mite offerings. They never need to leave their car, as someone will be there ready to take the mite offerings through the car window.
- Curbside or Porch Pickup: For homebound individuals or in the months you do not meet in person, offer to drive to your group members' homes to pick up their mite offerings.
- Sunday School Challenge: Incentivize the Sunday School in collecting mite offerings by providing [children's Mite Boxes](#) and recognize the class that collects the most. Motivate the children through discussing the mission grants – especially those related to children – and how people are reached with the Gospel message.
- Silly Challenge: Set a mite offering goal and, if it is reached, announce that something silly will happen, like your women's group will wear funny hats to church, your pastor will shave his head, the LWML group will bake a dozen cookies for each church family, or your youth director will dye his/her hair purple.
- Mission Walk: Set a time to walk individually or with your group. Give a Mite Box offering to support your walk.
 - Walk the streets of your neighborhood or church, praying for each person and home.
 - Pray for specific needs if you know them, or just pray for God's truth and blessings for each person.
 - You do not need to carry a Bible, pray out loud, or tell everyone what you are doing. Just quietly pray as you walk.
- Promote collecting mite offerings through use of the [Mite Challenge Calendar](#).
- Bites for Mites: Take orders for items cooked/baked/canned by your group (buckets of chili, frozen casseroles, cinnamon rolls, cookies, pies, jams/jellies, etc.), and use proceeds for mite offerings. Offer curbside pickup at church for the orders. Add a [Mustard Seed Devotion](#) to each order.

- Bazaar or Craft Sale: Have an online auction of handmade items that you would typically sell at a church bazaar or craft sale. Items may be delivered or picked up curbside at your church. Tuck a [Mustard Seed Devotion](#) in with the order.

SURROUNDED BY HIS GRACE: FOCUS ON MISSION SERVICE

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others (Matthew 5:14–16a).

As you look at service projects, be sure to check the donation needs and guidelines of the receiving organization and how things need to be packaged. Consider outside funding/grants to supplement your project.

- Kits: Mission service can still happen during times when social distancing is in place. Items for your service project can be collected and put into kits so individuals can work on them at home and return the completed projects to church or offer a drive-thru collection time.
 - [LWML Mission Service Activities](#)
 - [Orphan Grain Train Projects and Kits](#)
 - [Lutheran World Relief Quilts and Kits](#)
- Use your creativity at home to bless others through coloring pages, notecards, and bookmarks. When completed, these can be mailed to nursing homes, to homebound members, or to missionaries around the world.
 - [LWML Crafts](#)
 - [Scripture in Color](#)
- Drive-thru baby shower: Set a time and date to collect diapers and wipes for a local organization.
- Work with a neighboring group or zone on a service challenge. (Examples: Hold a contest to see who collects the most canned goods for the local food bank, who assembles the most kits, who makes the most cards of encouragement to send to others, etc.)
- Christmas in July (or any month): Contact a local residential care facility about needs that residents may have. Collect the items and deliver to the facility for them to distribute to those in need.
- Care packages for college students: Show love for your college-age members with care packages. Consider giving them:
 - Gum, candy, snacks;
 - Money for laundry;
 - Gas, restaurant, or coffee gift cards, etc.;
 - Office supplies (pens, tape, sticky notes);
 - [Mustard Seed Devotions](#), [Text Messages from God](#) or other devotions; and/or
 - Hand written [notes of encouragement](#).
- Pastor/church worker appreciation: Show appreciation for all the extra work they have done to adapt ministry during these times of social distancing.
 - [Notes of encouragement](#)
 - Gifts or gift cards

OTHER WAYS TO CONNECT

For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them (Matthew 18:20).

- Hold an outdoor game night. Consider making it an intergenerational event.
- Host an event while practicing social distancing where everyone brings their favorite beverage to enjoy while writing cards and notes of encouragement. Be creative in naming the event such as:
 - Thirsty & Thankful
 - Sipping & Serving
 - Coffee (or Cola) & Crafting
- Start a *Christian book* club. Connect via any of the ways listed on the previous pages.
- Gather around a campfire or a fire pit for evening devotions/vespers. This works well while social distancing. Encourage and pray for those in the group and those unable to participate.
- Connect with LWML sisters while baking together using Zoom or other social media. The host chooses a recipe and sends everyone the ingredients list in advance. On the day of the bake, the host will organize the Zoom meeting and demonstrate the method for making the recipe, while the group bakes and chats.
- Connect in God's Creation: Check out local Lutheran or Christian camps for outdoor group meetings, social gatherings, *retreats*, and recreation.

We know you and your groups are creative, so please share what you have been doing.

Watch for further updates and more information in LWML *eNews*.

Please contact us at depor@lwml.org.

*And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship,
to the breaking of bread and the prayers (Acts 2:42).*