



Relying on God

BY JAN LEMBURG

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast (Ephesians 2:8-9). The next sentence, verse 10, states: *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

As an LWML group president in the midst of the COVID pandemic, I was concerned that we could not meet to share fellowship and work on the ministries we held dear. I went to God in prayer, laying this dilemma at Christ's feet. I asked Him to guide us to help one another. In a moment's time, an answer came. I recalled a six-week program I'd seen during my tenure as zone president, but hadn't used – yet. I just had to find that program!



Six Weeks of Love*

WEEK 1: The Hand of Love

Each day write a letter or note to a friend or neighbor, perhaps someone who might be feeling lonely or afraid. Express your appreciation to them.

WEEK 2: The Voice of Love

Call two or three people every day, just to let them know how much you care or to mend a quarrel. How about one of those people you have been intending to call for days, weeks, or months, but have not yet called?

WEEK 3: The Deed of Love

This week give two or three friends — someone you care a lot about but to whom you rarely express it — a small token of your love, be it something special you have made or something you bought — a loaf of bread, flowers, or a book.

WEEK 4: The Heart of Love

Pray. List at least 10 people for whom you will pray each day. Do not forget enemies as well as friends. Forgive them if they have wronged you, and repent of your own sins against them.

WEEK 5: The Mind of Love

Pray again — for yourself. Take a good inward look at you. Read the book of John. Come to church early and meditate. Seek God's grace.

WEEK 6: The Victory of Love

Celebrate! Revel in the love God has for us — as revealed everywhere. Go outside, breathe the good air. Have friends over for dinner and fellowship. Let your joy abound in the abundant life in the Father, full of faith, hope, and love.

As we shared these activities, my fellow LWML sisters in Christ became close and felt less loneliness and fear of the COVID pandemic.

As we shared these activities, my fellow LWML sisters in Christ became close and felt less loneliness and fear of the COVID pandemic.

After the first six weeks, I again asked for God to guide us. The following program was devised to help us continue to stay connected to one other.

Blooms of Friendship

The Women in Mission at Trinity formed five groups of four to five women; each group was given the name of a flower such as Crocus, Daffodil, Pansy, Snowdrop, or Tulip. We suggested several activities for the groups: meet for coffee, tea, or lunch; craft together; join in Bible study; work on a local mission project such as reaching out to shut-ins; or send cards, texts, or emails with poems, prayers, and blessings of encouragement to each other or others not in a flower group. Some chose to call each other on the phone. After four months, we divided into new groups. We have completed three rounds of this program and are preparing for a fourth!

If success is measured by numbers, God has given us success! We have not lost members, but gained. In 2020, our group had 28 members; in 2021, we increased to 34; and in 2022, we increased again to 37. In fact, at our June 2022 LWML CA-NV-HI District Convention, our small church had the largest LWML group in our district.

We praise and thank God for leading us and guiding us. Through the Holy Spirit, faith is worked in us to do the good works that God has prepared for us to do.

To God Be the Glory! Q

*The original "Six Weeks of Love" program was developed by the late Dr. James C. Pippin from Oklahoma City and was adapted by the Lutheran Women in Mission in Gardnerville, Nevada.

Jan Lemburg is the President of Trinity Lutheran Women in Mission at Trinity Lutheran Church in Gardnerville, Nevada.

