

WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

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Greetings from WMCLB! Much has happened since we last met together for our Biennial Convention in 2018, both in the world at large and in Women's Ministries of the CLB.

With much sadness, we said goodbye to our friend and Co-Director Jean Wilsdon, who passed away suddenly this past fall. We began to pray about how to go forward, and Karen Stenberg, who had been the secretary on the team for the previous year or so, offered to help fill the hole that had been created. She then came on officially as Co-Director in January.

The big project we started to tackle has been to create and communicate our Vision and Values statements. In talking to women in our churches, there seems to be a lack of understanding about what we do as Women's Ministries and what we hope to accomplish. This is an important issue, especially as we've come out of this pandemic and are able to start meeting together again and thinking about the future.

Vision
Women Together

Values
Together in the Word
Together in Life
Together in Mission



Podcast: Limited Series
Learn more: wmclb.org

We feel that it is important to communicate and disciple our women on what it means to be *Together in the Word*, whether it is in our personal quiet time, a mentor relationship, or group Bible study. God's Word is the answer to the struggles and hurts we deal with every day. It is the foundation on which we stand and the hope to which we cling. We are excited to teach and encourage our women in this.

Making a priority of being *Together in Life* is important for building each other up in Christ, encouraging cross-generational relationships, allowing others into our everyday messy lives, and helping each other in our needs. With more intentional relationships in our churches and communities, we start to see how we can better help and support each other. These intentional relationships give us the opportunity and a safe space to share how Christ is working in our lives.

When we think about being *Together in Mission* we often first think about our missionaries and how we can support them. But we want to go deeper with this concept and consider how we are also part of mission in our own communities. Mission can be scary, but God has equipped every one of us as His children to give the good news of Christ to our



Photos: House of Hope playground table and benches.

neighbors. God can use our gifts, different seasons in life, and our unique settings to bring the gospel to people in our everyday lives. Together in Mission communicates that we want to be a part of the mission wherever we are, to support our church planters in NAM, and to support our missionaries overseas.

We are working on how to communicate these Values to our women. We have just launched a WMCLB podcast, *Beautifully Woven*. It will be a limited series podcast, where each series can have a different focus. The first series introduces our Vision and Values. In the next series, we will talk about leading a Bible study and exploring questions like: how do I start one; am I equipped; what tools should I use to study; what are the benefits; and things to troubleshoot when leading a Bible study.

At our women's event for BC22, we are introducing our Vision and Values statements and sharing what they look like practically, hoping to get women excited for ministry in their churches and communities. It will be wonderful to get together in person after so long. We also hope to make this a livestream event so that women who are not able to attend in person might be able to gather with other

women in their homes or at their church to watch together and talk about the content.

We are continuing to put together the training videos for *Leading a Bible Study*. We got bogged down a bit with producing the videos, but we thank Daniel Stenberg for volunteering to help WM with their media and that project is now moving forward.

There is a WM prayer group that began in August 2020 to specifically pray for the building of the airstrip in Chad. It continues to meet online via Zoom on Wednesday mornings and has expanded its focus to include the needs of all those who are involved in our CLB mission. We have now launched a second group that is meeting on Monday evenings. It's been great to have some of the missionary wives and church planter wives join us for these meetings when they are able. All women are welcome to join us. Email wmclbcontact@gmail.com for more information.

Our Focus project this year was the **House of Hope playground table and benches** in Japan (*see above photos*). The Bengtsons wrote, "Having a little park right next door makes it easier to meet new moms who bring their little ones to play; for the kids to get to know us (as people

rather than just foreigners); and for House of Hope to reach out and be known among new families in the neighborhood." Pray with us that God will bless those who gather there.

As we move forward in the areas where we feel God is leading, at times it has felt overwhelming. But we are encouraged that God is the one who goes before us. He is the one who brings the growth and unites us in Christ. "May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 15:5-6).

Karen Stenberg & Barbara Heggland serve as Co-Directors of Women's Ministries of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren.