

# Impacting the World

By Vicki Strege

Ideas From Churches, October 2023

**Note from Editor Bill Moberly:** *Living Word Lutheran Church (LWLC), Milbank, SD, formed from several surrounding congregations in 2010-2011. Rev. Kent Groethe was the second pastor, serving from 2017-2022. He urged them to expand their capacity for outreach and to embrace Jesus' call to the nations. They are currently between pastors. Their ongoing commitment to global mission continues, evidence that it's now a core value rooted in Scripture, not simply an emphasis of the pastoral staff. I interviewed one of the mission team leaders, and recently was in Milbank to preach and report in person in mid-September. LWLC is an active partner in the ministry of ALWM.*

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## Living Word Lutheran Church

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Grow in Faith  
Impact the World

**Editor:** *How is the importance of the global Great Commission demonstrated in your congregation?*

**Vicki:** I would like to introduce you to Living Word Lutheran Church, an LCMC affiliate in Milbank, South Dakota. We are a congregation of around 200 souls. LWLC is very committed to following the Great Commission as well as the Great Commandment. Our closing refrain at the end of every worship service has been: "Grow in faith and Impact the world." This refrain is a goal that we have been doing our best to live up to. In the past our church has partnered with ALWM (Awakening Lives to World Missions), and have built a church in Vietnam, as well as provided clean water to several churches in the rural Vietnam and a well in Africa.



*Soc Ung Church, Vietnam*



*Vietnam Well Project*

**In 2019, three other church members and I were supported by our church to go to Vietnam with Pastor Bill Moberly and serve on a mission team to help and give aid to churches in the hills of Vietnam. It was a wonderful experience that opened our eyes and our hearts to helping others and showing the love of Christ to them.**



*LWLC team meets Soc Ung Church leaders, 2019*



*LWLC mission team member, Summer 2019*

**In September this year another group went with Pastor Bill to continue to show Christ's love. Our church has been very generous in providing funds to send members into the mission field. We are very blessed to have members who see the need to send people into the world to share the Word of God. These funds are put into the mission board account for disbursement.**



*Part of LWLC mission team, September 2023*

**Editor:** *How do you fund your mission support? Do you set aside a portion of the offerings, for example 10%, to fund local and global outreach? What percentage is local and what is global? Do you also include designated giving toward global mission?*

**Vicki:** Our church has an appointed mission board. It consists of 9-10 people who have a heart for mission work. We meet bi-monthly with our pastor. We keep minutes of the past meeting so we can see what we have done and what needs to be done. Part of our church budget consists of a benevolence fund that quarterly gives a percentage of the quarterly church offering to various missions, both local (such as food pantries and local missionaries) and global mission needs (such as various missionaries in Africa and Thailand, as well as national mission organizations). We are also planning to include a letter with the money sent to the budget line missions to ask them to tell us about how they are planning to use the money we have sent and the difference this monetary gift will make in the lives of the people who receive it. We feel that this is a means of keeping our recipients accountable and is an encouragement to our congregation to give when they hear of the difference that their money has made in the lives of others.

Another vehicle for giving is called “Noisy Change”. Each month a mission need is highlighted, and this offering will be given to that mission. Usually at the beginning of the month a mission board member will present the new mission to the congregation and explain what that mission is doing and why we should support it. Videos are often used in the presentation. At times, we have collected over \$2,000 for a mission need. Some of the missions we have supported include: Pigs for Pastors, The Beacon Center (domestic abuse), The Alpha Center (pregnancy resource center), Mercy Meals, FCA (Fellowship of Christian Athletes), Dynamic Disciples, (an after school program), Operation Christmas, and various missionaries. We review the Noisy Change giving at each meeting to see what current projects are on the hearts and minds of the members and adjust the mission for Noisy Change according to current



needs. We often have sent money to various causes, such as the war in Ukraine via Samaritan's Purse. We have researched this organization headed by Franklin Graham and found it is a highly trustworthy organization to use to deliver money for helping people.

Our mission board has a fund available to us that we can use to help people as the need arises. This fund was developed by donations from the congregation. The money collected from Noisy Change and other mission offerings goes into our account and then is sent to the mission. For missions gifts that are more than \$500, we need to have the approval of the church council. We work with the council as we establish various outreach projects, and often the church council will match up to a certain amount the funds we collect for some projects. This is an incentive for the congregation to give generously.

**Editor:** *What would you say is an important question now for pastors and mission team leaders at this time?*

**Vicki:** Mission work will not exist without the support of the congregation. Recently, we held a Mission Festival Sunday on September 24<sup>th</sup>. Pastor Bill Moberly was our guest pastor for the event. He spoke about his mission work and encouraged our church to continue our outreach to missions as we are called to do. The music for the service was centered on missions and there was a potluck meal following the service. We offered the opportunity to the congregation to donate to Pastor Moberly's mission work. I think it is important for the congregation to meet the various missionaries as much as possible, as it is a factor that influences them to give when they know to whom it is given and how the donation will be used.

We also like to remind the congregation that we aren't asking them to give to every mission opportunity that we share with them, but to give generously to those mission causes that touch their hearts. As we all know, "God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7), and the heart and spirit of the giver is important to God.

Providing for missions by congregations has fallen to the wayside in most churches in the past decades. In our age of technology - when we can reach out to almost all people around the world - yet still our attention to mission work is so low. We need to use this tool to increase our involvement in missions. We believe having budget line giving to mission, the Noisy Change and other opportunities to give presented regularly to the members, having missionaries come and share their goals and needs, matching funds between the church and the congregation, and having videos and displays will serve to encourage people to give to those who are in need as we are called to do by our Heavenly Father.

**For more information, visit [www.livingwordmilbank.com](http://www.livingwordmilbank.com)**

## About the Author



### **Strege, Vicki**

Vicki Strege, a retired Spanish and Family & Consumer Science teacher, serves with her husband on Living Word Lutheran Church's Mission Board. Vicki also serves as coordinator of ALWM's E-Learning Friendship English Conversation program, assisting volunteers using a video platform for nurses in Vietnam to improve their English skills.