



Our women's retreat for 2017 was celebrated at Peace Lutheran Church on Friday evening and at Redeemer Lutheran on Saturday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. We all came together as women in Christ. The churches that attended were Redeemer Lutheran (Fresno), Peace Lutheran (Fresno), Emmanuel Lutheran (Clovis), First Lutheran (Hanford), Grace Lutheran (Visalia), and Coarsegold Lutheran along with friends and family. This was the first time that we have tried to get all the churches in the Valley together. The women that attended enjoyed the retreat and were pleased to be invited. Our idea was to bring the women together with other LCMS churches to get to know each other better. A total of 80 women attended between the two days. We feel it was well worth the effort for a first-time event. We look forward to having a retreat or event each year, inviting other LCMS churches with friends and family. Our intentions for the future is to draw unchurched members from different parts of the Valley.

The grant helped to provide 5 scholarships to women who otherwise would not have been able to attend the retreat. To our knowledge, we had one unchurched woman who received a scholarship to attend. She was very pleased and felt the Lord was calling her to this event. In her own words, "this is just what I needed." We had a few younger women in their twenties attend with a scholarship, and the availability of childcare. The childcare was affordable at \$5.00 a child for Friday and dinner and \$10.00 per child on Saturday including lunch. Saturday was the biggest draw for women to come.

Cindy Steinbeck, a well-known LCMS member and speaker from Paso Robles, spoke on 1 Peter 2:4-5. Cindy has written 3 Bible studies and has spoken all over the United States. She has been a speaker for LCMS meetings, for Pastor's wives, and conferences. It seems she is always very well received and speaks clearly and from her heart. All at our retreat received her well and look forward to seeing her again in the future.

The mini-grant supplied food, speaker, financial assistance and childcare. Volunteers from Emmanuel Lutheran provided a dinner on Friday evening, and on Saturday, our team provided a continental breakfast and lunch. The 3 teams from Emmanuel, Redeemer and Peace are all looking forward to the next event and being a part of it. We will be giving more emphasis to outreach and unchurched by shortening the time of the event of the retreat to one day. This would allow us to offer a special deal: "If you bring an unchurched friend, there would be no charge for the unchurched person."

The retreat was a blessing to all, workers, attendees, and the unchurched woman that attended. We already have women asking about the next retreat. The women that led the singing thanked us for asking her to be a part of the program and was grateful for what she learned. Glory be to God for all the help and blessings provided. Our team thanks the CNH District for the mini-grant.