

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 21, 2025

Mary Wert named 2025 LEA Distinguished Lutheran Elementary Teacher

Mary Wert was selected to receive Lutheran Education Association's 2025 Distinguished Lutheran Elementary Teacher Award. Ms. Wert, a 36-year veteran of Lutheran education, teaches fourth grade at Immanuel Lutheran School in Batavia, Illinois. Mary has also served in several other positions at Immanuel as well as at other Lutheran schools in Illinois.

Mary earned a B. A. in elementary education from Concordia College, River Forest, Illinois (now Concordia University Chicago).

In initiating Mary's nomination, her administrator provided a comprehensive case for Mary. She said, "Mary is a sister in Christ who seeks a deep relationship with Christ through Bible study, prayer, and worship. She has a heart for children to grow in their faith and thus invests time in previously organizing and currently volunteering for VBS, Sunday school, and outreach events such as a drive-thru Christmas and Easter egg hunt. Mary is also an instructional leader. Mary wants every child in her care to know that they are a beloved child of God. She integrates Christian faith throughout the curriculum and in her daily conversations with students, parents, and staff. She is a seasoned teacher who also enjoys being a student and staying current with effective practices, and she makes learning both fun and meaningful for her students."

Mary's pastor commented, "Mary is a servant at her core, and she lives with the mind and heart of Christ in her calling as teacher. She loves students on their level and seeks individual growth in every child. Mary has the unique ability to handle specific student needs while ensuring the entire class makes progress in learning. Mary relates the Scriptures to her classroom with excellence and care. Mary is a pillar, not only to our teaching faculty, but is a pillar in our congregation."

Among her joys in ministry, Mary said, "My greatest JOYS are receiving letters from students that I had in teaching asking if we still talk about God sightings in class. Another JOY is doing an end of year evaluation with my class and having them list that devotions is their favorite part of the day. Another JOY is seeing an un-churched student bring his mom to an Advent service so that he can tell me that he went to church other than chapel in school on Wednesday. I got to share in his JOY. All of these JOYS give me JOY because I get to experience and see the Holy Spirit at work."

Mary's personal mission statement is, "I want every child to be excited about learning! More importantly, I want them to know that they are God's favorite—His masterpiece—created for His purpose to do important things for Him in His world. Most importantly, I want them to know that He loves them. He sent Jesus to die for their sins. He defeated death and the devil so that they could live with Him forever."

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