



ELDA

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Evangelical Lutheran Deaf Association
a ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)



Linda Fairbanks
ELDA President

GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Linda Fairbanks

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this (shall be) a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. –Luke 2:10-12, King James Bible

Christmas will soon be upon us and it is an important time to reflect on the true meaning of the season. It is indeed a joyous time to be decorating your home with a Christmas tree and beautiful decorations, shopping for gifts, baking goodies and being with family and friends. We all love to do that, yet it is also important to take time to sit back and reflect on the true meaning of Christmas. It should be a time of giving back to others less fortunate, and helping to proclaim the birth of Jesus, He who came into this world in such humble beginnings.

Since the last issue of the ELDA newsletter, I have kept busy with our Board meetings, making contact with our Hands of Christ friends, and getting articles ready for the next issues of our newsletters. I also made a trip to Sioux Falls, SD for the Deaf Awareness events at Peace Lutheran Church in October. I had a very nice time there, meeting up with 5 past and present members of the ELDA Board. It was good to see so many of us in the same church. Dorothy Sparks did a wonderful job, doing her ASL song and dance routines. Mark Koterwski read the Bible verses and we all helped with passing out the bread and wine during the Lord's Supper. The Bible study was led by Dorothy Sparks and we had a potluck lunch, provided by HEM. Thanks to HEM for a great weekend!

I am thankful for our ELDA youth and in this issue, you can read about Kayla Koterwski. She is a CODA (Child of Deaf Parents) and she has attended ELDA conferences over the years with her parents, Mark and Angela and her friends, Jason and Tyler Panek, sons of Jeff and Belinda. To watch them grow into such wonderful and caring adults is such a pleasure. Kayla and Tyler went to Haiti on one of the youth mission trips and they found two deaf children, whom they befriended. They also worked several summers on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Thank you for your faithful service.

If you already subscribe to the Lutheran Magazine, watch for an article on a new Deaf Ministry in Palestine, (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jerusalem and the Holy

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER (CONT.)

Land), which was written by a freelance reporter, Anne Basye. It was supposed to come out in this month's issue and instead the article will come out in the February 2015 issue of the Lutheran Magazine.

Merry Christmas to all! As we look forward to a new year, let me end with "Let Peace Begin With Me" by Jill Jackson and Sy Miller. This song is appropriate with what is happening now in America and in different countries.

Let there be peace on Earth, and let it begin with me. Let there be peace on Earth, the peace that was meant to be. With God as our Father, brothers all are we. Let me walk with my brother, in perfect harmony. Let peace begin with me; let this be the moment now. With every step I take, let this be my solemn vow, to take each moment, and live each moment in peace, eternally. Let there be peace on Earth, and let it begin with me.

Let there be peace on Earth and let it begin with **you and me!**

Happy New Year! -Linda

FROM THE TREASURER

Dear Friends in Christ,

Thank you to those churches who sent in your 2014 church membership dues. Thanks also for the donations to the Thanksgiving Appeal.

If any of you have not sent in your Thanksgiving Appeal donations, you can still donate until the end of December. Donations in any amount are welcome. My contact information is listed below and be sure that your check is made out to ELDA.

If you are a Thrivent member, please consider ELDA as your Thrivent Choice. I just signed ELDA up to be a Thrivent choice dollar recipient. I hope to have more information on that in the next newsletter.

Last of all, on behalf of the Board, we would like to thank our ELDA Conference 2014 interpreters as they truly gave of their time to make sure the conference went smoothly.

In Christ,
Jeff Panek
ELDA Treasurer
625 S. Mary Drive
Tea, South Dakota 57064

ELDA MEMBER FRED ZERBE REMEMBERED

Trinity Deaf Senior Center celebrated Fred's 94th birthday on Thursday Oct. 9th. Over 45 Deaf and Hard of Hearing family and friends gathered to celebrate with Fred who now lives in an assistive living home. Fred has been a member of Trinity for over 80 years and a member of ELDA since its beginning. Everyone had a wonderful time playing Dingo, talking with old friends and visiting with Fred. Fred passed on Nov. 12th in the nursing home. He was buried on Tuesday November 18. Trinity has lost a great saint. He was a very special person.



FRED ZERBE'S 94th BIRTHDAY
CELEBRATION

ST. MATTHEW'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

By Donald Rosekjar

St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in North Hollywood, CA continue supporting Sharing Hands, a Deaf ministry arm of the church. Long-time pastor of the church, Sue Devol, resigned and an interim pastor, Stephanie Jaeger was appointed. Stephanie has demonstrated a great ambition to make sure that the Deaf are truly a part of greater congregation by using sign language during parts of the liturgy, made regular visits to our "Deaf Table" after the worship services, asked Deaf Minister, Donald Rosenkjar to teach certain prayers, such as Lord's Prayer in ASL to the congregation. On November 30, Donald Rosenkjar preached to the hearing congregation -- for the first time. Also, for the first time Khai Nguyen will serve as Assistant Minister and Harry Hansell as the Lector. The community has started calling Donald Rosenkjar as "pastor" and "Rev.". These new changes are designed to make the Deaf a more integral part of whole church, more inclusive. This has resulted a new sense of belonging, a new sense of family for us Deaf folks, a new sense of joy.



ST. MATTHEW'S HAS SOME POSITIVE CHANGES IN CALIFORNIA

ECUMENICAL TASK FORCE

By Donald Rosenkjar

During our ELDA conference last summer, we witnessed a historical happening: both United Methodist Congress of the Deaf (UMCD) and Episcopal Conference of the Deaf (ECD) had their conferences concurrently with ours. During that time, it was agreed a task force be formed with three representatives from each denomination, a group of nine individuals. This task force is charged with finding ways and resources how we can work together, how we can celebrate Christ together, how we can thrive together. We have completed a joint statement which it outlined how the task force came to being. It was agreed that we, the nine of us, will meet in Dallas during the month of July, and brainstorm on ways how we may achieve our dreams. Fruits of our discussions from the Dallas meeting will be shared with all of you.

ELDA VISITS ELCA GLOBAL MISSIONS UNIT

Explores Possible Mission Opportunities for the Deaf

In July, at our annual Conference in Chicago, IL, ELDA was joined by representatives from the Global Missions Unit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), Erin Westerman and Kristina Diaz. Diaz and Westerman became aware of the ELDA through working with ELDA member, Marquita Jones through the 99 Collective, a group of young adults working toward missional

accompaniment. Jones, who is Deaf, spoke to Diaz, Westerman, and Sunitha Mortha, Director of Missions Formation in Global Missions passionately about Deaf Ministry in the ELCA and the need to engage ELDA in doing more mission work in the Deaf Community both at home and globally.

After the Conference, ELDA was invited to the Churchwide Office to meet with Global Missions representatives in October. Four ELDA delegates were in attendance: Rev. Beth Lockard, Mark Koterwski, Jeff Panek, and Marquita Jones. It was truly a meeting of the minds and Holy-spirited filled conversation.

such as the Young Adults in Global Mission.

The meeting also included a surprise visit from Presiding Bishop of the ELCA, Elizabeth Eaton. ELDA delegates has the opportunity to share ELDA's work with Bishop Eaton and how we can engage Deaf Lutherans in the ELCA more broadly. The meeting concluded with an agreement to work together to identify avenues to begin ELDA and ELCA's Global Missions collaborative efforts. Pastor Beth, Mark, Jeff, and



BISHOP EATON JOINS THE CONVERSATION ABOUT ELDA'S WORK IN THE MEETINGS AT THE ELCA HEADQUARTERS IN CHICAGO (ABOVE). THE ELDA TEAM (PICTURED BELOW) ARE JEFF PANEK (SD), MARQUITA JONES (DC), MARK KOTERWSKI (SD), PR. BETH LOCKARD (PA)

Marquita will be working together on this partnership. Stay tuned for more developments as the details of the collaboration are still being developed!

Note: ELDA heartedly



At the meetings, ELDA and ELCA Global Missions representatives discussed possible collaboration for mission through various Global Missions programs

thanks ELCA Global Missions for their hospitality and interest in working with us! We are excited for what the Holy Spirit brings next!

INTERVIEW WITH KAYLA KOTERWSKI

1. Tell us about yourself. Include a brief summary on who you are and what has helped you be the person that you are today.

I am currently a freshmen at Augustana College in Sioux Falls, SD. I began my experiences with the ELCA by accident rely, my parents Mark and Angela had been asked to serve as delegates to the SD Synod assembly which at the time was being hosted 7 hours from our congregation- therefore it was fitting that I attend as the youth delegate from our congregation. That was in 2009 and was a life changing experience; since then I have attended 5 synod assemblies- 2 as a delegate and 3 as a SD Synod council member. I have been blessed with multiple opportunities to see and be a part of the exciting work God is doing in and through our church as the ELCA in every expression! These experiences have molded who I am as a person and helped me understand and utilize my voice and passions.

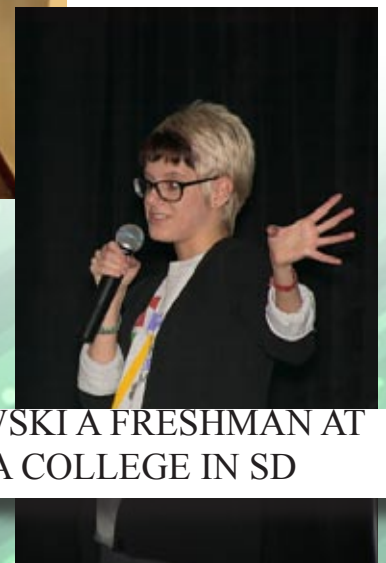
2. Tell us about being a delegate for the Churchwide Assembly and your new role working with the ELCA in Chicago.

In November of 2012 I attended a youth summit called "The Event" and met some youth who were involved in the Churchwide expression, I remember being so excited and thinking "they are doing exciting things in the leadership of this church... I bet I could do that too!" So I contacted multiple sources and asked many questions, and with the help and guidance of so many incredibly supportive people, nominated and elected as one of two Youth Voting Members (the first to have voice AND vote) of the Churchwide Council in August of 2013 at the Churchwide Assembly in Pittsburgh, PA. As the second highest governing body of the ELCA, next to the Churchwide Assembly which convenes in a triennial cycle, the Churchwide Council acts as

the board of directors for the ELCA Churchwide Organization. We meet twice a year- April and November- to hear reports and vote on various projects and actions of the ELCA in between assembly years. Most Council terms are six year terms, terms for youth voting members however are three years.

3. How did you decide on the college that you're attending? What would you like to major in?

I really decided to attend Augustana because of the incredible welcome I felt here. Augustana made it very clear during my time of consideration and application for colleges that I would be strongly valued as an individual with specific passions and interests! That was very important to me! I am currently a religion major with a minor in gender studies!



KAYLA KOTERWSKI A FRESHMAN AT
AUGUSTANA COLLEGE IN SD

Evangelical Lutheran Deaf Association Conference

July 21 – 24, 2016

(For pastors – July 17-24, 2016)

at *St. Catherine University*
in *St. Paul, Minnesota*



St. Paul and Minnesota Capitol



St. Catherine University

(More information will follow!)

SPIRITUAL SIDE



“In God’s Eyes”

By Dorothy Sparks, Associate In Ministry

In the Bible times, many people thought that the shepherds were filthy, smelly and low class. They did not want them to be around in their town. Most of the time, shepherds were guarding their sheep on the hills. They may think that they were unimportant. The night was ordinary. The stars sparkled. Then an angel came to them and the brightness flashed around them. The shepherds listened to the angels’ message about the birth of Jesus Christ. They were excited. They hurried to Bethlehem and found Baby Jesus in the manger. God informed them the Good News instead of informing a king, a pastor or Pharisees. The shepherds knew that God did not forget them. They were VIP (Very Important Persons) in God’s eyes. They were delighted that they were not the least in His eyes.

In Australia, Mother Teresa met a poor old man. Everyone ignored him. His house was disorganized and dirty. She said, “Let me clean your house, wash your clothes and make your bed.” The old man said, “Leave it as it is.” She said, “You will feel better if you let me do it.” He finally let her clean his house and wash his clothes. She discovered a beautiful lamp. It was covered with dust. She asked him, “Why don’t you use it.” He answered, “No one come and visit me. I don’t need to turn the light on?” She said, “Will you turn the light on every day if the nuns come?” The man said, “Of course” From that day, nuns committed to visit him. They turned the light on every night. After two years. Mother Teresa forgot about the lamp. She got the message from him. He said, “Tell her that the light is still shining.” She thought that it was a small thing but it impacted him. The old man knew that God did not forget him and loved him. He was VIP in God’s eyes. He is delighted that he was not the least.

During Christmas season, instead of focusing on commercials, let’s focus on the least. In our eyes, who do we see as the least? Families with kids in trouble with the law, the homeless, garbage collectors and abusive people? The list could go on and on but in God’s eyes they are NOT the least. Everyone is valuable to God. Let’s think more about them and bring God’s love and grace to them. They NEED to know that they are not forgotten and the least. They are VIP in God’s eyes.

FROM THE DIRECTOR



Dear ELDA Friends:

Warm holy-day greetings to each of you! This is the month many people focus on GIFTS and how they can show their love to family and friends. Some people spend a lot of money but others are very creative with making, baking, building, and

offering volunteer service to show their love. One of my sons will be helping me with my computer skills and another will wash and detail my car. My god daughter made a lovely meal for our family. I enjoy these gifts of time and talent because people give a part of themselves.

Word of Life Deaf Lutheran (Lancaster) raised \$2000 for Valley View, a local nursing home for the aged Deaf and Deaf-blind to help them buy new furniture. Christ the King Deaf Church (West Chester) put together about 70 frozen turkey dinners for needy Deaf individuals and has been gathering needed clothing and household items for Deaf refugee families in the area.. Bread of Life Deaf Lutheran (Minneapolis) has already started to collect twin sheets and children's shoes for the next Jamaica mission trip in September 2015. These GIFTS of love and service are deeply appreciated by those who receive them and are fun to do as a group of God's faithful people.

Your ELDA Board has also been considering a money GIFT to be sent to the Lutheran bishop in Liberia, the Rev. Jensen Seyenkulo. Bishop Jensen was previously the Director of Disability Ministry at churchwide offices and many of you met him at our 2010 ELDA Conference in Pennsylvania. He reports Liberian churches being closed and many

people suffering from the Ebola Epidemic. Before this happened, Liberia had a civil war for 15 years and much of the country still has no electricity or running water. Your gifts to ELDA HOPE Fund will help us make a GIFT to our Lutheran brothers and sisters in Liberia.

Around our country, Deaf Missioner Don Rosenkjar (St. Matthew's Lutheran, North Hollywood) reports a pastoral vacancy. Don has been asked to help lead and preach while the hearing church is preparing to call a new pastor. In St. Paul, Minneapolis, I understand John Telyea will be graduating from the Lutheran Seminary this month. In Washington, DC, Marquita Jones (Luther Place Memorial Church) reports that grant money has run out for Deaf Ministry and she is relocating to Pennsylvania to explore other jobs and a possible entry into one of their Lutheran seminaries in a year or two. Joyce Atchison (Christ Through Hands Ministry, Faribault, MN) reports the temporary closing of their ministry at two state schools for the deaf and blind while the Board restructures. Joyce is relocating to St. Paul, MN. St. Philip's Lutheran Church of the Deaf (Philadelphia) is preparing to merge with Christ the King Deaf Church (West Chester) while keeping their worship site and hosting classes for Deaf immigrants & refugees. We thank God for the diverse GIFTS of each individual and ministry that cover many years of service and a wide area of geography!

As we rejoice in these GIFTS, let us thank God for His GIFT to us of His Son, Jesus Christ, whose birth we celebrate this month. This is the reason for the season. This is the GIFT that comes to us daily and carries us into eternity. May you be blessed by God's gift of Himself to you and may you be inspired to share it with others.

Joy,
Pastor Beth Lockard+
ELCA Deaf Ministries

BRIEF HISTORY OF HEARTLAND EPHPHATHA



1959

Sterling Simonson came to Sioux Falls for the Deaf, Blind and Deaf-blind. Services were held at East Side Lutheran in Sioux Falls for local deaf people. There were also monthly services that would rotate between Slayton, Windom, Dawson and other Southwest Minnesota communities.

1977

Pastor Eugene B. Tjarks came and was chaplain at East Side Lutheran. Pastor Tjarks worked on a half-time basis with Sterling while Sterling's health was failing.

1980

Sterling Simonson retired. Lawrence Bunde became the director of Ephphatha who had been pastor of Bread of Life in Minneapolis. Ephphatha was headquartered in Minneapolis at that point. When the ELCA was formed the National office was moved to Chicago and Bunby didn't want to move to Chicago and resigned in 1987.

1987

Dennis Bussey a lay leader became a liaison for Ephphatha. Ephphatha consisted of Minneapolis, Faribault, Sioux Falls, Arizona, Columbus GA and Pennsylvania.

Pastor Tjarks needed to find a local agency to financially support his work because the ELCA was

being formed out of a merger of Lutheran Churches. That's when Lutheran Social Services took over. Heartland Ephphatha was housed in a house adjacent to East Side Lutheran Church. That is when it became known as Heartland Ephphatha to differentiate it from the larger Ephphatha.

1995

Pastor Eugene Tjarks retired but continued to work under contract until a replacement was found.

1997

Pastor Melanie Lichtenburg was a full-time call to replace Pastor Tjarks who was a part-time call. Pastor Dave Johnson at Peace Lutheran had served on an advisory for Ephphatha under Lutheran Social Services. Pastor Dave created a position at Peace Lutheran for a third-time call because East Side couldn't offer a part-time call in addition to the Heartland Ephphatha call. Her office was at Peace but worked also at East Side with Heartland Ephphatha. She preached once per month at Peace and would sign while she preached in the hearing church. The other weeks she preached at East Side and signed for herself.

2000

Pastor Ann Schlossnagle took over the third-time call for

Heartland Ephphatha. Pastor Ann worked 2/3 of the time as a Peace pastor. Since Ann didn't have the same sign skills, Peace Lutheran said they'd offer an interpreter every Sunday at Peace. The deaf people started coming to Peace every week. After Ann had been at Peace for a year no one showed up at East Side for the chapel interpreted services. So the deaf kept coming to Peace and stopped services at East Side.

2003

Pastor Ann resigned to pursue rural ministry. The search for a signing pastor to replace Pastor Ann begins. The board decided to hire lay leaders to become directors of the ministry rather than finding a signing pastor.

2004

Jason and Sarah Andera took over as part-time co-directors of Heartland Ephphatha. Both are lay leaders which was a change for HEM.

2004

Heartland Ephphatha hosts the ELDA 2004 National conference at Augustana College in Sioux Falls, SD

2012

Heartland Ephphatha hosts the ELDA 2012 National conference at Good Samaritan Campus in Sioux Falls, SD

HEARTLAND EPHPHATHA FACTS

Location: Sioux Falls, SD

Mission: to bring Christ to those in South Dakota and Southwest Minnesota the Gospel in their first language, American Sign Language.

Worship: We worship weekly at Peace Lutheran Church which is a large Lutheran Church. We use interpreted worship with many skilled ASL interpreters.

Ministry: We have service projects, worship, fund raisers, and learning opportunities just like any other church with the leadership of co-directors Jason and Sarah Andera and an all-deaf board.

Things we have done:

- Produced a Christmas Bible Video.
- Produced several “Sign Choir” videos.
- Annual Deaf Awareness Sunday at Peace Lutheran in Sioux Falls, SD.
- Have had a member on the ELDA board since 2004.
- Have had a deaf member on the Peace Lutheran Church Council since 2006.
- Awarded ELDA “City on a Hill” in 2010



Deaf Faith
BIBLE STORIES IN ASL



ELDA ONLINE

Remember our website is www.ELDADeaf.org
our facebook page is:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ELDADeaf/>

NEWS

Please help our newsletter! Send me your pictures and stories about your ministry. We'd love to put it in our next newsletter.

The first newsletter since the new Board was sworn into office was sent out last September. Have you seen the newsletter yet? Please, do check it out on the ELDA website. The website address is www.eldadeaf.org/information.html. Be sure to sign up to receive your newsletter by email. For those without email, please print out the newsletter and post it in your churches. Thanks! The ELDA Newsletter will be sent out quarterly, which follow the seasons of the year. The months are listed below:

September, December, March and June

Read through this issue and let us know what you think. This is your newsletter; we want to know what topics and articles that you want to see in the newsletters. If there is a person, a church or something of interest that you want us to spotlight on, let us know! Feel free to send your feedback to President Linda Fairbanks, lindafairbanks22@gmail.com and I will share with our Newsletter Editor. Thanks!