



# ELDA

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



## **From the President**

Mark Koterwski

## **Happy Easter Everyone!**

I am sure that all families and friends wonder what we can do during the EASTER Weekend, especially with COVID-19 still around? We could make EASTER as memorable and enjoyable as ever with these ideas:

Mark Koterwski  
ELDA President

- 1) Attend Church with masks and proper social distancing. Or you can watch worship services on zoom, online or on Facebook provided by your church. GOD created everyone to be flexible with our planning!
- 2) Children/parents can read the Bible and discuss why we celebrate EASTER Day at home.
- 3) Ask your Children/Youth ministry coordinator to see if they have any Easter activities to play with at home.
- 4) Kids can have an Easter Egg Hunt outside if the weather permits. If not, find an open place in the house or a community room (if approved by the manager) that allows with masks and social distancing.
- 5) Small families can get together for Easter Dinner at home.
- 6) Children/parents can draw and write several Easter cards to send to their local nursing home, assistive living center, or hospital. The residents may not be allowed to leave their buildings with COVID-19 restrictions.

For all of those purposes, GOD loves and protects us. There is nothing that can stop us as long as we follow the CDC guidelines! We are looking forward to celebrating Easter Day.

God Bless you all!

Mark Koterwski  
ELDA President

## **INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

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more...***

# Haiti News

From Meredith Henderson (From Haiti Deaf Newsletter)

Meredith Henderson serves at the Haiti Deaf Academy (HDA). You can go to this link for a full update on HDA.

[https://mailchi.mp/4bfb8aae4721/2021-good-things-happening-at-hda?e=\[UNIQID\]](https://mailchi.mp/4bfb8aae4721/2021-good-things-happening-at-hda?e=[UNIQID])

Here are some things you can pray for:

## Praises and Prayer Requests

### Thanking the Lord for:

1. Returning safely to Haiti. Keith and I remained in the US in January to see how the political protests played out. Then we both had COVID. After recovering and getting the necessary paperwork to enter Haiti, we flew here on February 15th.
2. The Life Skills Program. The students are learning so much!
3. His good and perfect plans for each HDA student and staff member, as well as HDA as a whole.

### Seeking the Lord for:

1. Funding so HDA can move forward and make 2021 a year of additional gains for HDA.
2. Peace for Haiti.
3. Protection for the students every time they are home.
4. Additional board members to oversee specific areas of need.
5. The last of our COVID cough to clear up.

## ELM MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

*Mission Statement: "In the Presence of Jesus Christ, with mutual love and respect, the Episcopal Conference of the Deaf (ECD), the Evangelical Lutheran Deaf Association (ELDA) and the United Methodist Congress of the Deaf (UMCD) partner together to inspire and transform the lives of Deaf people."*

*Vision Statement: "Together as one, with God's help we strive to build a spectrum of ministries with Deaf people, passionately engaged in creating and supporting diverse ministries, outreach, communication, worship resources, and leadership development that show the love and grace of Jesus Christ to everyone we meet."*

## THE ELDA MISSION STATEMENT

*The Evangelical Lutheran Deaf Association (ELDA) is a national Lutheran organization of Deaf ELCA congregations, interpreted ministries, and their members which supports a core value of ASL and American Deaf Culture. ELDA advocates Deaf spirituality and empowerment, Deaf global missions and youth outreach, interpreter training, and a biennial conference.*

# Spiritual Article

by Donald Rosenkjar

Covid-19 has affected everyone everywhere and it's already passed one long year. Our lives are very different. One big difference is, after years of going to church every Sunday that stopped. Receiving bread and wine on Sundays stopped. After church, we meet with friends in church hall with coffee and refreshments stopped. Going to church is a wonderful way to keep our faith strong. Listening to the pastor's sermons help us to feel closer to God.

To keep our faith strong, I will suggest three things on how you can make your prayer experience more meaningful and effective.

**First**, find a space or place where you can do your prayers in private, a place where you will not be disturbed and that you can use the same space every time you pray.

**Second**, use a symbol, perhaps a cross, a lighted candle, a picture of Jesus. This is important as while praying, our thoughts may be elsewhere — need to buy some milk, I forgot to turn off the lights, etc. With your focus on the symbol, that helps you to keep focused on what you are praying. Symbols also will make your heart feel warm, with love, and comfort.

**Third**, pick a time of the day (or evening), that you will be able to stick to it every single day.

There's one interesting example of how one monk living in a monastery prays. Every noon before lunch, he would walk to the forest, to his favorite tree, a very tall, skinny tree. He would lie down next to it, looking at the tree as it points to God, to heaven and prayed (I hope he did not mind insects from the ground climbing over him!). His space was in the forest, his use of symbol, a tall tree and the time of day was 12 noon. Another example: a mother with seven children. She gets up at 4:00 am, goes to darkened living room. She sits on a comfortable chair and lit a candle and prayed— while all of her children were still asleep.

To See Don's Video click here

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1b6Q-LIQRhbW6Sy\\_NXfQe76dnOyUohm9m/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1b6Q-LIQRhbW6Sy_NXfQe76dnOyUohm9m/view?usp=sharing)

*Matthew 6:6*

“When you pray, go into a room alone and close the door. Pray to your Father in private. He knows what is done in private, and he will reward you”.



# ELCA Deaf Ministries

## Director's Report



Dear ELDA Friends--  
As we journey through these 40 days of Lent, we have reached the one-year anniversary of the pandemic hitting the United States and the time when many of us stopped our in-person worship and began experimenting with different ways to worship

online, outside, or in much smaller safer groups. **We have been learning the many ways to be a church.** It is not the building or the activities but God's people together in prayer and praise, sharing God's Word in creative new ways.

We have experienced virtual Bible studies, book clubs, and classes as well as meetings, socials, and chat groups emerging within our Deaf ministries. I have done pre-marriage counseling on Zoom and funerals at the graveside. Some of these new ways will probably continue long after the pandemic is over as we include people from different parts of the country. **When two or three people gather in God's name, God promises to be with us!**

Some of our ELDA Deaf ministry leaders have been meeting **weekly for a pericope study** of the Scripture readings for the coming Sunday. This is important for us as we share ideas and exegesis, different practices, technology, and even ASL signs we use. Will this continue after the pandemic ends? I hope so!

**"Our" Deaf seminarian, Lori Fuller of Florida,** is nearing the end of her seminary studies in a few months. After graduation from Luther Seminary, she will need to be approved by the Florida Bahamas Synod. We hope her ordination can be a Deaf celebration. Please pray for Lori as she discerns God's will in the shaping of a **new ELCA Deaf Ministry.**

I am really excited about **a new series, called "The Chosen,"** a media project that digs deeper into backstories and context/culture of the people and events of the gospels. We learn more about people like Simon Peter, Nicodemus, Mary Magdalene, Matthew, and especially Jesus. It is captioned but fast-paced. It helps you SEE Jesus in a new exciting way. Season One DVD has nine 45-minute films. You can watch it free on an app (TheChosen.tv.app) or get it free on a streaming device like Chromecast, Amazon Firestick, Apple TV, and Rolo. **Please contact me (Pastor Beth) if you wish to buy the DVD for \$25. Season Two comes out at Easter. Contact Lori Fuller if you would like to be involved in a virtual study of these films (loris195@gmail.com).**

As I mentioned in the last newsletter, the **ELCA has been going through a redesign. Deaf Ministries is now in a "department" called Christian Community and Leadership (CCL).** I am hoping this new structure will support the concept of our need for lay leadership training. The ELDA Board has discussed our need to do this for many years. I would also like to be able to visit with as many ELCA Deaf ministries as possible. This could be done virtually or in person. Please do contact me at VP 484-319-4256 or [beth.lockard@elca.org](mailto:beth.lockard@elca.org).

Let me close with the **GREAT NEWS.** The ELDA Board added to your generous gifts funding a \$10,000 gift to the Deaf Ministry of the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria. We are negotiating the best way to get the gift into Pastor Ruth's hands for a van and gas to help her with her Deaf church and 64 school students. Read more about Pr. Ruth Ulea in this newsletter.

Easter joy!  
Pastor Beth Lockard  
ELCA Deaf Ministries

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# News of DeafCAN!

As many of you know, **Christ the King Deaf Church (Philadelphia & West Chester, PA)** runs a social service program serving the Deaf, hard of hearing, and DeafBlind in SE Pennsylvania called DeafCAN!. During the pandemic, we had to cut down our services to the prison inmates and SSP services to

the DeafBlind. However, our citizenship classes for refugees and immigrants moved online and then jumped into action with the Deaf Bhutanese Community..

One of our new projects has been serving the Deaf Bhutanese Community in Harrisburg and Lancaster, PA. We have identified 70 Deaf moving to that area with their families. We have hired a Deaf Nepali **interpreter** and advocated for the people to get communication with a team of ASL and NSL interpreters. DeafCAN! opened a small office in Good Shepherd Lutheran in Harrisburg and is preparing to open another office in Lancaster.

Because of DeafCAN! work in the area, Lancaster has been chosen to host **the first World Deaf Refugee Day conference June 11--13, 2021**. This conference is being planned by and for the refugees and will include workshops, exhibits, and socials as well as soccer games on June 10. **I am including information if you would like to attend. Your church is invited to be a sponsor as well.** This is an exciting opportunity for all of us!

*Look closely at the Deaf refugees in the picture. What are they signing? The logo was made by a Deaf Bhutanese immigrant in Washington D.C.*

## SAVE THE DATE

### World Deaf Refugee Day



Every **SIGN**, Action & Voice Count

**WHEN: JUNE 11-13, 2021**

**WHERE: THE WARE CENTER  
LANCASTER, PA**

**WEBSITE: WWW.WDRD.ORG**

**COMING SOON**

**EMAIL: REFUGEE TOUCH@GMAIL.COM**

# Pandemic Ash Wednesday

by Linda Fairbanks

On Ash Wednesday, I was reading the Minneapolis Star Tribune newspaper and came across an article that I would like to share. In the article, it stated that the churches were rolling out creative ideas to observe Ash Wednesday to meet the 21st century pandemic. It will be rare to see clergy smudging ashes directly onto foreheads. Instead there are a few different ways and I am going to list a few:

- The Basilica of St Mary in Minneapolis sprinkled ashes atop worshippers' heads.
- Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran, St Paul applied ashes with long cotton swabs to people sitting in their cars.
- An Apple Valley church stuffed ashes into 600 tiny plastic containers that congregants can pick up and administer on their own.
- It is also everything from having a few people come into church at scheduled times to mailing out ashes to people in their homes.
- Many Catholic churches arranged for virtual worship services and efficient, in-person ashes.
- St Thomas the Apostle, Minneapolis offered 3 time slots during the day when parishioners may walk or drive to a door to receive the ashes on their heads.
- They can view online worship anytime throughout the day.
- 2 options were offered where people may attend service in the church, masked and social distanced, and receive the ashes or they can drive over after the service to get ashes from their car.
- Some churches hosted a drive-in worship service in the evening in its parking lots where masked pastors walked from car to car administering ashes.
- Ash substitutes can include soot from a candle or fireplace, flour, chalk, eye shadow, potting soil or baby powder.

How did your church observe Ash Wednesday? Were you able to get ash applied to your foreheads and in what way? How has the COVID-19 pandemic changed the ways for you in church services? Send me an email; [lindafairbanks22@gmail.com](mailto:lindafairbanks22@gmail.com)

For Christians, Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, a six-week period of reflection and repentance before the resurrection of Jesus is celebrated on Easter. The tradition of dispensing ashes, a symbol of mortality is observed by Catholics, Lutherans and other mainline Protestants.

Story by Jean Hoppensperger, Star Tribune



**Linda's sister, Rhonda Berg pictured with Rhonda's daughter Mallory and granddaughter Aliyah received ashes on their foreheads during an Ash Wednesday service at their church.**

# ELDA Lenten Appeal

by Linda Fairbanks

March is here and it is time to reflect on the Lenten season. The season of Lent is already upon us and it is a time for each of us to think and pray about what we can give up for Lent. It is also a time to pray about what we can give for the **ELDA Lenten Appeal**. This appeal money supports our mission efforts through the HOPE Fund and Deaf leadership through our Zechariah Fund. It also helps support the ELDA mission trips. If you can donate any amount towards the Lenten Appeal, it would be greatly appreciated. Thank you! Spring is also the time for membership dues. The membership rates are as follows:

**Churches or Ministries: \$125.00 yearly**

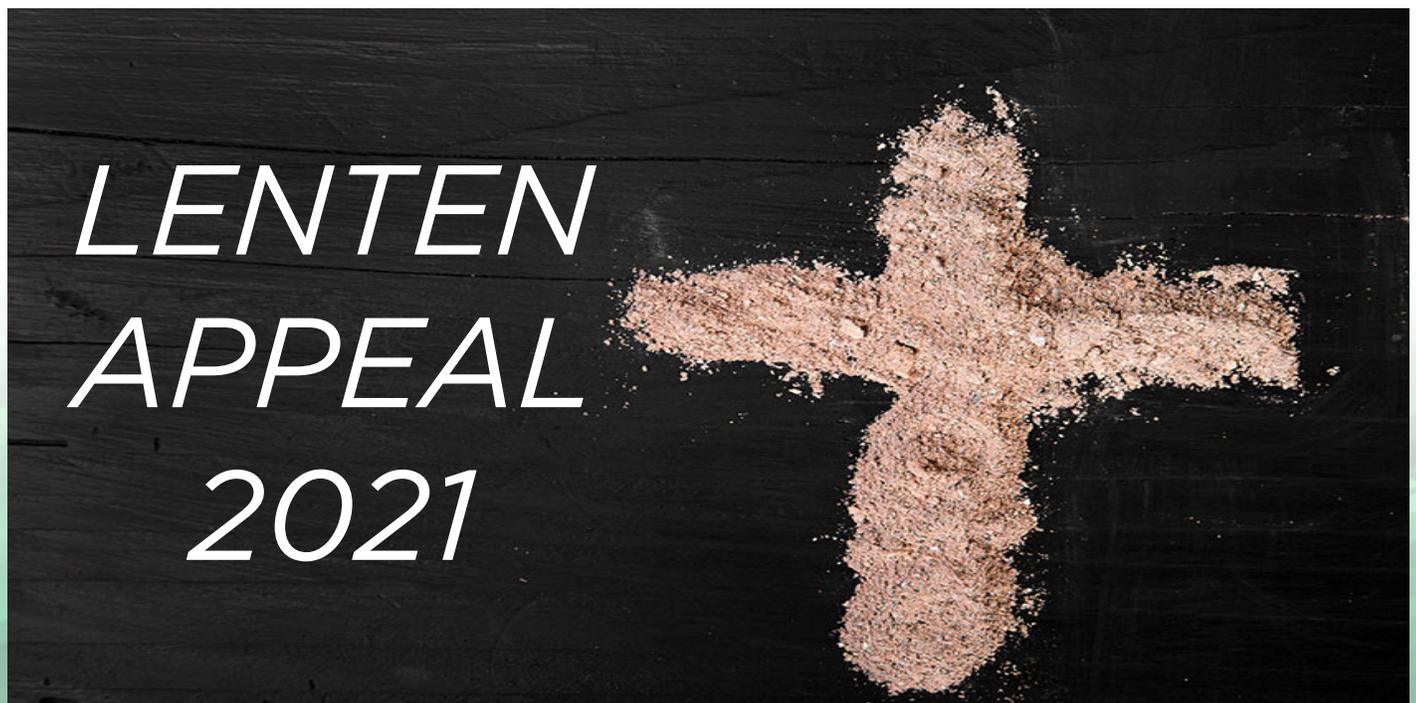
**Families: \$25.00 yearly**

**Individuals: \$15.00 yearly**

If you are a Thrivent member, you can direct your Thrivent dollars towards the **Thrivent Choice**. Be sure to list ELDA as one of your Thrivent Choices. If you are not sure how to do that, contact your area Thrivent representative. Thank you!

Your Lenten Appeal donation and membership fees can be sent to our ELDA Treasurer at:

Jeff Panek  
625 Mary Drive  
Tea, South Dakota 57064



# Ministry News

## Word of Life Deaf

Pennsylvania

It has been a long year at WOLD – it has been a year since we’ve gathered for worship in-person at our chapel! Our members miss being in church SO MUCH!

Missing church is both wonderful and terrible at the same time. It is wonderful because missing church makes us realize how important church is to us. It is terrible because we want to be there, but can’t.

For ultimate safety of our members, WOLD is not having in-person worship until the pandemic lifts and we are safe. Even our host site – St. Peter’s Lutheran Church – has not had in-person worship inside the church since last year. It has been a long year for many.

The number of people attending online worship services has been consistent all the way through. Website stats & analytics show that the worship page is accessed more than just on Sunday, and that is really neat to see!

Some “screenshot” pictures of the online worship service are included with this article. WOLD & CTK members have pitched in to help with worship, while Pr. Russ & Pr. Beth take turns preaching.

Soon (“soon” is a relative term!), we will be back in worship together – where we belong! But, it will not be soon enough (smile).

Even so, we are learning what it means to have patience. Waiting for the day when we are back together in worship compares to waiting for that day when we are all gathered with Jesus in the Kingdom of Heaven, celebrating the eternal feast of victory that He has won. Waiting now to be back in worship can teach us how to wait for heaven that will come later.

May we all wait with patience, faith, and love! In the meantime, let us continue to worship and give thanks to God (you can go to [wordoflifedeaf.org/home-worship](http://wordoflifedeaf.org/home-worship)).

Peace to you,  
Pastor Russ Rockwell  
WOLD - Word of Life Deaf Lutheran Church



## The Benediction



The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord make his face shine on you  
and be gracious to you.  
The Lord look upon you with favor  
and give you peace.  
In the name of the Father,  
and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.

"Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?"



## The Holy Gospel according to *John, chapter 12* C: Glory to You, O Lord

Some Greeks had gone to Jerusalem to worship during Passover. Philip from Bethsaida in Galilee was there too. So they went to him and said, "Sir, we would like to meet Jesus." Philip told Andrew. Then the two of them went to Jesus and told him.

Jesus said: "The time has come for the Son of Man to be given his glory. I tell you for certain that a grain of wheat that falls on the ground will never be more than one grain unless it dies. But if it dies, it will produce lots of wheat.

If you love your life, you will lose it. If you give it up in this world, you will be given eternal life. If you serve me, you must go with me. My servants will be with me wherever I am. If you serve me, my Father will honor you.

Now I am deeply troubled, and I don't know what to say. But I must not ask my Father to keep me from this time of suffering. In fact, I came into the world to suffer. So Father, bring glory to yourself."

A voice from heaven then said, "I have already brought glory to myself, and I will do it again!" When the crowd heard the voice, some of them thought it was thunder. Others thought an angel had spoken to Jesus.

Then Jesus told the crowd, "That voice spoke to help you, not me. This world's people are now being judged, and the ruler of this world is already being thrown out! If I am lifted up above the earth, I will make everyone want to come to me." Jesus was talking about the way he would be put to death.

Here ends the reading of the Holy Gospel

C: Praise to you, O Christ



## Old Testament Lesson: Isaiah 56:1, 6-8

Contemporary English Version



### The LORD said:

*Be honest and fair! Soon I will come to save you; my saving power will be seen everywhere on earth.*

*Foreigners will follow me. They will love me and worship in my name; they will respect the Sabbath and keep our agreement. I will bring them to my holy mountain, where they will celebrate in my house of worship.*

*Their sacrifices and offerings will always be welcome on my altar. Then my house will be known as a house of worship for all nations.*

*I, the LORD, promise to bring together my people who were taken away, and let them join the others.*



# From Pastor Ruth Ulea

## Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria

Greetings to all of you in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

In the words of the Prophet Isaiah, "God will make a way (even) in the wilderness and rivers and in the desert" Isaiah 43:19.

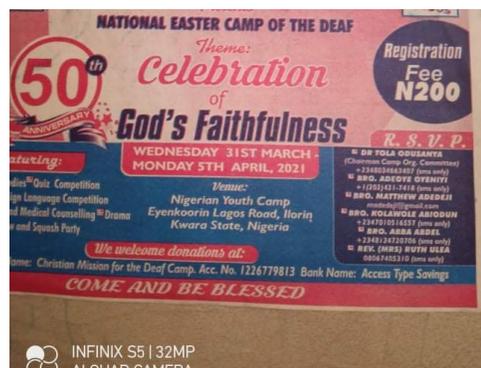
I urge all of us to take the challenge of COVID- 19 as an opportunity to pray, love, and care for those around us. You just need to observe the COVID-19 regulations and stay safe. I am confident that we will all come out safe and strong. I wish us peace for this year!

Thank you and may you remain Blessed.  
With lots of love.

Ruth Ulea.

P.S.

March 14th we will have an installation of a new Bishop. We are also looking forward to our upcoming 50th annual Easter Camp in Ilorin, in the south part of Nigeria. The dates for the camp are March 31 to April 5th, 2021. After this camp, there will be a good report to write about.



One funny thing I have is a deaf person told me, "He can never forget 2020 as long as he lives. For a year he kept washing his hands without expecting any FOOD!"

He didn't know anything about the coronavirus and everyone was laughing at him.

**A dedication and blessings of the children and their families on Sunday, March 14, 2021.** (Pr. Ruth's purple stole was given to her by ELDA.)



# Chicago Lutheran Deaf Ministry

By Nathan Zastoupil

The 2020 year was a disastrous year with the worldwide pandemic causing lots of plans to be paused and cancelled for the Chicago Lutheran Deaf Ministry (CLDM). In-person monthly Deaf Bible Studies and in-person interpreted worship services were suspended and quarterly in-person Deaf ASL Worship services were cancelled.

Most of our deaf members have been watching online live streamed worship services from Bread of Life featuring our friend Deacon Dorothy Sparks. Other deaf members have been watching online live streamed interpreted worship services of their respective churches of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Downers Grove and Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Schaumburg. We are truly blessed and thankful for how wonderful technology is for everyone having the capability to keep everyone connected by worshipping from home!

The CLDM recently began doing a monthly group VP session for our monthly Bible Studies on a Monday evening. We will continue to do our monthly Bible Studies through VP until it is safe to resume in-person gatherings.

Over the previous few years, Pastor Dayton Williams was with us in a limited capacity by providing emergency services, hospital calls, funerals, etc. He recently announced his full-time retirement and stated that he can no longer provide his services due to his health. We thank Pastor Dayton for his years of service to the CLDM, and we are blessed for the continuing friendship we have with him. We continue to pray for Pastor Dayton's health to improve.

We are truly blessed and thankful for the willingness from Rev. Tim Robertson from Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Downers Grove to step in and provide emergency services, hospital calls, funerals, etc. alongside with an interpreter for any deaf member requesting a pastoral visit.

The CLDM is anticipating and praying for everyone to become fully vaccinated to become protected from the nasty COVID-19 before we all can safely be together again in person for worship and fellowship hopefully soon.

# God's Wink

Story as shared by Don Rosenkjar



A young teenager became pregnant. She did not have the means to provide for this baby so she decided to give the baby up for adoption. The infant was placed with a loving family. The child grew up and became an adult. Every time she went to work she would drive and pass this massive, gorgeous cathedral. Keep in mind, she never had any religious feelings, nor belonged to any

denomination, but was intrigued by the beauty of the structure, and finally decided to find out more about it by attending their service. She sat in the back and watched the service happen. She decided to stay when it was done and watch people leave the cathedral. One woman happened to be sitting next to her and stayed. The two-woman ended up starting a conversation and chatting with each other. After some time, the woman realized it was her biological mother sitting next to her!

## ELDA Online

Remember our website is [www.ELDADeaf.org](http://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.

September, December, March and June

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 Linda Fairbanks, [lindafairbanks22@gmail.com](mailto:lindafairbanks22@gmail.com) Thanks!