



# ELDA

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN DEAF ASSOCIATION  
A MINISTRY OF THE ELCA**

**Volume 18 • Fall 2023 • Issue 70**

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

**LORI FULLER**

Hello EDLA Community!  
I pray your summer has been safe and joyous.

Some updates: ELDA Board will be meeting in Rapid City, South Dakota, on September 10th-13th, 2023, to tour where the conference next summer will take place! Be on the lookout for the following newsletter for updates on our time in South Dakota. We thank Heartland Ephphatha

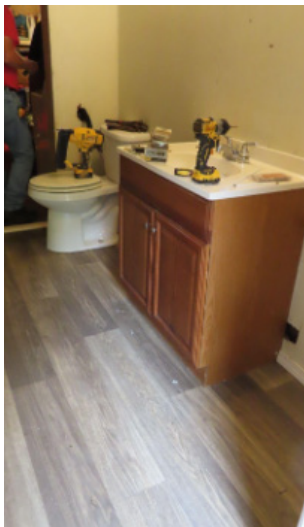
for working hard on planning this conference to make it enjoyable for all!

As I mentioned in the last newsletter, there was an opportunity to do some mission work right here in the United States (Kentucky)! Again, we thank the Methodist Deaf Ministry for inviting us to join them in an incredible mission. There were 19 of us from different walks of life this year. The youngest volunteer is 25 years old, and the oldest volunteer is 81 years old. People who worked at this mission were from Texas, DC,



Virginia, Florida, and even Delaware. There was plenty of work for all of us.

There were four projects that our group focused on. One house needed some painting on its ramp/porch and a bathroom floor to be replaced as the wood underneath was all rotted. The second house needed some patching on the floor. The last project was to work at the community store, sorting out donations to sell. Our group of 19 people was split up based on what we wanted to do. I was part



PICTURES FROM RED BIRD MISSION TRIP

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

# Inside this Issue



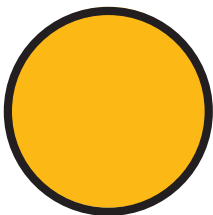
## FROM THE DIRECTOR

**More Inside**



## ELDA CONFERENCE SAVE THE DATE

**More Inside**



## FROM THE PRESIDENT CONTINUED

of the first house where we replaced the bathroom floor. I also took some time to help paint when opportunities arose.

The heart of this community is the Red Bird Mission. This organization has been in existence for 100 years. One of several leaders who work at Red Bird Mission guided us on these projects and shared that he was only 18 years old. He just graduated from high school two and a half months ago! He was one of the lucky

ones, as most of his friends were still looking for jobs. One advantage he had was that his stepmother worked at the Red Bird School Cafeteria, and his father worked as a mechanic there. Red Bird Mission is much more than just a work camp. They offer education (K-12, Residential Dormitories, Early Childhood Development), Health and Wellness (Dental and health services), Community Outreach, and economic opportunities through their community

store, craft store, and marketing. At the craft store, local artists display their work for sale! All this incredible ministry shows God's love through the people in this community. Best of all, we will be doing this again in 2025! So be on the lookout for more information as time gets closer. Blessings to you and your family from ours,

Lori Fuller  
ELDA President

# FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear ELDA friends--

Greetings to each of you as we begin the fall season! I have to admit it is my favorite time of the year. In Pennsylvania, we have the opportunity to see the season unfold with the colored leaves which fall and leave the trees bare. Squirrels gather nuts for the colder months. Canadian geese stop by as they begin flying south. The university across from my church fills up with students who fill our town and force us to drive very carefully. I will not mention football!

I just returned from some productive ELDA Board meetings in Rapid City, South Dakota, where we stayed at the beautiful and spiritual Terra Sancta retreat center where our 2024 ELDA Conference will take place next year. We were awed by the rooms, the view, the food, and the staff. The Committee from Heartland Ephphatha Ministries (HEM) have done a good job planning for a wonderful event and won our approval. We will be able to visit Mt. Rushmore monument and Crazy Horse Memorial in the Black Hills. More surprises are planned! We were joined by six-month old Makenzi who kept us in good spirits during many hours of work.

Speaking at the Smithsonian Institute Folklife Festival in Washington, DC for several days in July was a highlight of my summer. I met so many interesting people including a group of Ukrainian singers, native Americans who shared their stories, Ozark craftspeople, and more! Our CTK group also visited the Deaf-owned Mozzarella pizza restaurant and Deaf Starbucks, plus fascinating museum displays between workshops. You can find an online workshop of me

and deaf Rabbi Darby Leigh discussing Deaf Ministry and another workshop with three women discussing female leadership in communities of faith.

I was also able to lead the “God-time” of two different week-long summer camps in Maryland and Pennsylvania for special needs Deaf adults hosted by the United Methodists. We focused on Moses and the 10 Commandments and what that means for us today. The campers did some awesome dramas. In between the two camps, I journeyed to BOLD to support them during their decisions to sell their beloved church building and decide between two other churches to become their new home base. Continue to keep BOLD in your prayers as they journey boldly forward!

St. Matthew’s Lutheran Church in North Hollywood has a new pastor as Pr. Stephanie Jaeager accepted a call to the East Coast. We will get to meet her at the ELDA conference. Pr. Lori is meeting and gathering Deaf people in Florida as Palms Deaf Church becomes a community of Christ.

As ELDA President Lori explained in her column, the Red Bird Mission in Kentucky is a wonderful individual or church mission trip for you to consider. IF you cannot attend in 2025, consider collecting and sending items that they need to do God’s work in that area. Pr. Lori has also put the Tour of the Holy Land in January on hold as she explores a fully Deaf tour.

Fall is here! What is your ministry doing to share God’s love?

Pastor Beth+  
ELCA Deaf Ministries Director

# SAY HER NAME: MAKAYLEN JAYMES

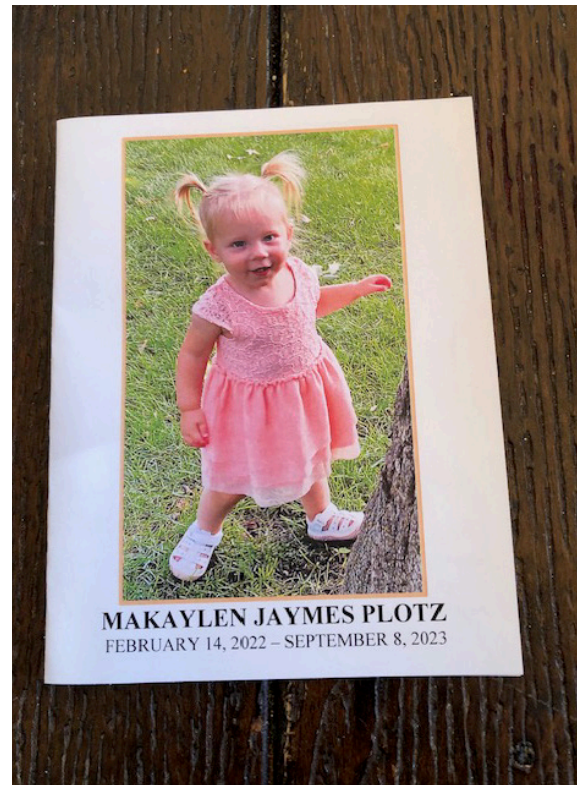
By Linda Fairbanks

On September 8th, 2023 my precious little 18 month-old great-niece did not wake up from her sleep. It was a shock and very heartbreaking to everyone in my family. Makaylen Jaymes was the youngest member of our large family. She was the granddaughter of my sister, Rhonda/Steve and the daughter of my niece, Mallory/Adam and a little sister to Aliyah who is 4.5 years old. The days following her death were a blur while her parents planned her funeral.

My only job during that time was to support my sister as she described how she found Makaylen that fateful morning and also to line up an interpreter, I chose Melissa, a long time friend of mine who is also one of 2 interpreters at the Bethel Lutheran Church in Rochester, Melissa also is an interpreter for plays and different dramas.

The celebration of Makaylen's life was shown in pictures; hundreds of them lined up the room, along with Makaylen's artwork, her favorite toys, and a video that showed the different phases of her very short life. Makaylen's little white casket was closed and decorated so beautifully with flowers.

The church was filled with over 400 people who knew Adam and Mallory and came to pay their respects. In one long



pew, I sat with my 3 sons and their families (including my 4 grandchildren). It was a nice service and for me, the songs were different from what I know and were more upbeat.

A smaller group of family and close friends went out to the cemetery, Under a nice large oak tree, Makaylen's tiny casket was placed, and at the end of the graveside service, 18 balloons for each month of Makaylen's life were released and then two white butterflies appeared and were flying around the grave!

The family returned to the church to pack up all the pictures, flowers, gifts etc. Then the family returned to their home. Unexpectedly there was a tiny rainbow over the entire neighborhood. The family felt that the 2 white butterflies and the tiny rainbow were signs sent by Makaylen. These signs are truly God winks.

Forever in our memories:  
Makaylen Jaymes Plotz

# THANKSGIVING APPEAL

Dear friends--

Each Fall, ELDA has a Thanksgiving Appeal to help fund the expenses that allow ELDA to do God's work with our hands. This includes Board meeting costs, website upkeep, newsletter production, office supplies and equipment, nonprofit IRS fees, interpreters, ETC. We are thankful for our Deaf Ministries and individual support and ask each of you to consider a donation toward our regular expenses. Together your gifts bless us and allow us to support our organization and serve you better so that all spring donations can go to our HOPE mission work.



Thank you in advance for helping us move forward. We are THANKFUL to God's surprise gifts through you. May you be blessed as you allow ELDA to bless others.

Thanksgiving Appeal gifts for ELDA may be sent to  
Treasurer Mark Koterwski,  
5105 S. Marion Road, Apt. 309,  
Sioux Falls, SD 57106.



**“GOD IS NEVER  
LATE, WE ARE JUST  
IMPATIENT.”**

**WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THAT STATEMENT?**

# REPORTS

## BREAD OF LIFE DEAF LUTHERAN CHURCH (BOLD)

Fellow Deaf Ministry partners, we are still on the journey of figuring out where BOLD is to go next. With overwhelming support from the congregation, on July 16, 2023, the BOLD congregation officially decided to start the process of selling the building they have independently owned for 67 years. Church council leaders are now in the process with a realtor. BOLD also is doing test worship services at the two churches in consideration and will be hosting a town hall later this fall concerning the two churches and our experiences there. Please continue to hold us in your prayers and we are thankful for your support in this journey.

\*Updates submitted on behalf of BOLD by Janie Barlow, BOLD Office Communications Coordinator and BOLD Church Council Vice President\*

## WORD OF LIFE DEAF PENNSYLVANIA

Like many churches, WOLD enjoyed a quiet summer. On the last Sunday of August, WOLD joined CTK in West Chester at their picnic worship. On the first Sunday after Labor Day, WOLD had our own picnic worship and CTK members came and joined us.

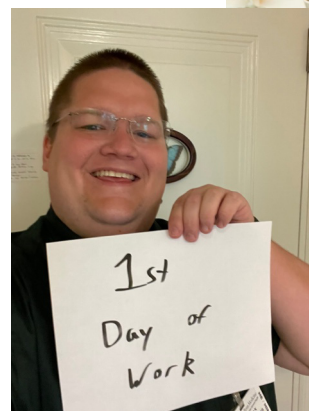
WOLD's Wednesday night bible study resumed in September. We are continuing the series, "Bible Stories to Know." We are still doing it online because it lets people outside our local area participate. If you're curious about the study, use Zoom Meeting ID: 813 2024 7582 with Passcode 790079 on Wednesday nights at 7pm.

On Sept. 30, WOLD had another "Meal-and-a-Movie" event, with a subs lunch. We showed "Run Boy Run," a true story.

Peace to you,  
Russell A. Rockwell, Pastor

## SPECIAL ACCOMPLISHMENT JEANNIE FISCHER HAS A DOCTOR IN THE FAMILY

ELDA Board member Jeannie Fischer would like to make a special announcement. Jeannie and her family are proud to announce that her son, Dr. Ryan Fischer had finished his residency at Penn Medical Hospital at Lancaster, PA. Today, September 18, 2023 Dr. Fischer starts his first day as a Family Doctor at Penn Medical Hospital at New Holland, PA Congratulations Dr. Ryan!



## SUMMER OF FUN LINDA FAIRBANKS'

### FAMILY

Here's a photo of the Ridgeway Family Reunion they had that was taken at her sister's place near Spring Valley, Minnesota. She shared that it was the most exciting and fun time she had all summer. She loves her family!!



## HEARTLAND EPHPATHA MINISTRIES

Hello, our ministry in South Dakota had a nice summer! We have been busy with meetings to prepare for the ELDA conference in 2024!

We have also continued with service projects like teaming up with "Church on the Street" by making meals and helping do laundry for those without a house.

We continue to plan a great time in South Dakota next June. We can't wait to see you.



# PASTOR RUTH REPORT

## DEAF LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE 2023 REPORT.

We are grateful to God Almighty for the opportunity to hold the leadership conference 7th - 13th August 2023, despite the many challenges confronting us all. Thank God, it was successful! I, Rev. Ruth In particular was one of the special speakers at the conference. Participants expressed satisfaction with the lessons learned. It is our prayers that the Lord blessed all of us and enriched us with the Holy Spirit to serve the Lord our God.

I'm still interested to share with you all. Theme: "servant leadership" 1st Peter 5:8 and 1st Timothy 3:1-16

Jesus, a man who served, looks for leadership with servant hearts. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and give His life as a ransom

for many [Mark 10:45] the goal of the Christian leadership is to be a servant of all when we allow the desire to become a leader; to be our focus. Servant



heartedness quickly diminishes Jesus as the man of compassion and comes to look for leaders of compassion.

We must acknowledge and appreciate the fact that we are called to be leaders.

- Care for God's flock. (Deaf Nigeria)
- We must be concerned about what we can give to the Nigerian Deaf and not what we expect to get from them.
- We must lead by example, not by force, therefore our role as a pastor, or your choir master, mistress, church treasurer, Sunday school teacher, Children, adults, teacher, women teacher ETC. Let us lead as though we are an integrity servant leader.

An Article Written By Chad Entinge, Chad Entinge Is an associate editor-in-chief with daily devotions for the deaf. Shared reasons why deaf people remain in all rich people groups in the world, that despite all advantages open for reaching out to them as Jesus did in the ministry. "The Sad Reality" is that Chad Entinge says that many deaf people do not know Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior.



It has been estimated that out of 250 to 300 millions of people in the world, only 2% of them are Christians. That means 98% of the deaf people will miss out on the blessings of the eternal life with Jesus Christ in heaven. No doubt, these people are among the largest and richest people groups even in Nigeria and some states are still with the gospel. Thanks to my efforts, Taraba state has the gospel. One may be wondering why is it that so many deaf people do not know Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and savior? Here is a story that may help us understand and within this story, one could see some obstacles to deaf learning about Christian love.

Years ago, I witnessed a deaf man, who was not a Christian. While chatting with the man, he never understood what was going on. Apparently he did not have an interpreter and no one in the church communicated with him in the only language he knew best: home language, and homemade signing language. So his impression from the church while growing up was that the pastor's main job was to make money from the church. Why did he think this way? All that the deaf man saw and clearly interpreted for himself was that the offering plates were going around with people putting their money in there. Then the plate laden with money will be given to the pastor in front of the congregation, and the pastor then with a big smile on his face talks. The pastor, as we all know has been praying for the God's blessings upon the offering but the deaf man did not understand this as he couldn't hear because of the negative experience and impression giving up the church, and he wanted nothing to do with Jesus or his church

The story above is a common experience among the deaf people. Deaf people are often abandoned, neglected and isolated

even within their own church. Outside of the church the experience in their family, our peer groups, most parents abandon their deaf children because they don't know what to do and where to go for help and even with the establishment of a special school for the deaf. Most parents find a dumping ground for deaf children. Hence some parents see them as a curse, and to get rid of them. This explains why there are many deaf orphans. Not so because they lost either parents or both, but because of communication barriers. In addition, deaf people are looked down on and again, it is estimated that 9 out of 10 deaf children are born to hearing parents. Only 23% of such parents learn sign language. Even church members often pay little or no attention and don't learn sign language to communicate God's words to deaf people.

As a deaf pastor and teacher, I discover yet another challenge in reaching out to the deaf people within our reach. Which is that the English language is often the second language for the deaf. What we need to do is to continue our prayers that it opens the way for me to visit Chad deaf people this year or next year with the gospel of (Matthew 28:19)

I still hope to come early next year for the ELDA Conference June 2024. I save that date.

God bless you all.

Pastor. Ruth Ulea



# SO MANY REASONS TO COME TO ELDA 2024!

**TERRA SANCTA  
RETREAT CENTER  
IS BEAUTIFUL**



**HAVE A  
MONUMENTAL  
EXPERIENCE!**

**CRAZY HORSE & MT RUSHMORE**



**WE ARE WORKING ON EVENTS TO INCLUDE  
THE YOUTH, AND FAMILIES AND REDUCED  
RATES FOR KIDS. STAY TUNED FOR MORE  
IN THE NEXT EDITION!**

# ELDA 2024

## CONFERENCE

## REGISTRATION



**June 11-12, 2024**

ELDA Board Meeting (TUE-WED)

**June 13-16, 2024**

ELDA Conference (THUR-SUN morning)

**June 16-18, 2024**

ELDA Pastors meeting (SUN-TUE)

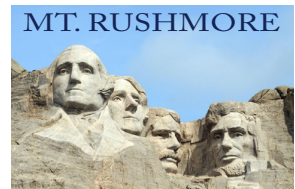
Register now to reserve your spot in the beautiful Black Hills of South Dakota where we will explore what “Paha Sapa” means and how - “God is the heart of everything that is”.

This conference is hosted by Heartland Ephphatha Ministries in South Dakota.

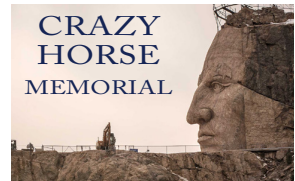
We can't wait to see you!



TERRA  
SANCTA  
RETREAT CENTER



MT. RUSHMORE



CRAZY  
HORSE  
MEMORIAL



Evangelical  
Lutheran Deaf  
Association

## ELDA 2024 CONFERENCE

Terra Sancta || June 2024 || Rapid City, SD

### REGISTRATION FORM (EACH PERSON MUST FILL ONE OUT)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

TEXT # \_\_\_\_\_ CHURCH OR ORGANIZATION \_\_\_\_\_

HOME ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

EMERGENCY CONTACT NAME AND NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

INTERPRETER NEEDS  VOICE (for Hearing) HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE ROOM ? \_\_\_\_\_

TACTILE (for DeafBlind) SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS \_\_\_\_\_

ARE YOU  FLYING T-SHIRT SIZE \_\_\_\_\_

DRIVING Any questions or need help filling out the form? Let us know

## CONTACT INFO

☎ 605 310 9647

🌐 www.BeOpen.church

✉ jason.andera@gmail.com

Heartland Ephphatha

Choose the option that fits you best.

Put a check mark next to your choice!



**Follwing Prices are  
Early Bird Pricing!**

Prices are good until the  
deadline on January 31, 2024

## Option A • Conference Attendee

(Thursday - Sunday Morning)

### HOTEL STYLE

- 2 in a room= \$350/person
- 3 in a room= \$325/person
- 4 in a room= \$300/person

### MONASTIC STYLE

- 1 in a room= \$325/person
- 2 in a room= \$275/person

## Option B • Board Meeting + Conference

(Tuesday - Sunday Morning)

### HOTEL STYLE

- 2 in a room= \$550/person
- 3 in a room= \$525/person
- 4 in a room= \$500/person

### MONASTIC STYLE

- 1 in a room= \$475/person
- 2 in a room= \$425/person

## Option C • Conference + Pastors Mtg

(Thursday - Tuesday Morning)

### HOTEL STYLE

- 2 in a room= \$550/person
- 3 in a room= \$525/person
- 4 in a room= \$500/person

### MONASTIC STYLE

- 1 in a room= \$475/person
- 2 in a room= \$425/person

## Option D • Board Mtg + Conference + Pastors Mtg

(Tuesday - Tuesday Morning)

### HOTEL STYLE

- 2 in a room= \$750/person
- 3 in a room= \$725/person
- 4 in a room= \$700/person

### MONASTIC STYLE

- 1 in a room= \$475/person
- 2 in a room= \$425/person

## Sightseeing Tour

(Friday)

- Bus Tour = \$50/person

12 / ELDA

## Sightseeing Tour

- Coach bus tour to see Mt. Rushmore and the Crazy Horse Memorial.
- Covers parking, and admission

**LIST ROOMMATE(S)**  
or be assigned a roommate

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Directions:

- 1) Mark one option on the left for lodging in either option A, B, C or D
- 2) Choose if you want to go on the sightseeing tour.
- 3) Write down roommates in box above, or leave blank to be assigned.
- 4) Add up costs and enter it below
- 5) Send in payment

### Total Cost

Room Cost \_\_\_\_\_

Tour Fee (\$50) + \_\_\_\_\_

If after Jan 31 add \$50 \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL COST** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### SEND PAYMENT AND FORM TO:

HEARTLAND EPHPHATHA MINISTRIES (HEM)  
5509 W. 41ST STREET  
SIOUX FALLS, SD 57106

or Venmo payment to:

@peacelutheransf

(make sure to add a note that says "ELDA")

# TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

TUESDAY JUNE 11

- ELDA BOARD MEETING

WEDNESDAY JUNE 12

- ELDA BOARD MEETING

THURSDAY JUNE 13

- ELDA BOARD MEETING 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
- Arrival and Registration 1:00 PM - 6:00 PM
- Meal 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM
- Opening Worship 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM
- Ice Breakers and Fellowship 8:30 PM - 10:00 PM

FRIDAY JUNE 14

- Meal 7:30 AM - 9:00 AM
- Devotion 9:00 AM - 9:30 AM
- Monument Tour 9:30 AM - 4:00 PM (BAG LUNCH)
- Meal 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM
- Workshop "Paha Sapa Discussion led by HEM" 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM
- Fellowship 8:30 PM - 10:00 PM

SATURDAY JUNE 15

- Meal 7:30 AM - 9:00 AM
- Devotion (Prayer Labyrinth) 9:00 AM - 9:30 AM
- ELDA Business Meeting 9:30 AM - 12:00 PM
- Meal 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM
- Workshop 1:00 - 2:30 PM
- ELDA Town Hall 2:30 - 3:30 PM
- Free Time 3:30 PM - 6:00 PM
- Banquet 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
- Closing Worship 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM
- Fellowship 9:00 PM - 10:00 PM

SUNDAY JUNE 16

- Meal 7:30 AM - 9:00 AM
- Devotion 9:00 AM - 9:30 AM
- Room checkout and goodbyes 9:30 AM - 12:00 PM
- Meal 12:00 pm - 1:00 PM
- Pastors and leaders retreat begins 1:00 PM

# ELDA MISSION STATEMENT



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-Centered spirituality and empowerment, Deaf global missions and youth outreach, interpreter training, and a biennial conference.

## NEW ELDA Vision:

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

## ELDA BOARD MEMBERS DIRECTORY

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BOLDOffice1@gmail.com  
VP: 651-968-8166

### The Rev. Beth Lockard, M.Ed. (she/her)

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