



# ELDA

Volume • 12  
Issue • 47  
DECEMBER 2017

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



**Linda Fairbanks**  
**ELDA President**

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Linda Fairbanks*

"O Come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord"

Christmas greetings to all! Christ is the reason for the season! The ELDA Board wishes you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! May 2018 bring you good health, joy, love, laughter and peace!

The year, 2017 brought a lot of different reasons for prayers. The Board had two members who had illness that were not only life-threatening, but also took some time for their recovery back to good health. We were thankful that both Pastor Beth Lockard and Dorothy Sparks were able to go to Jamaica to work with the children at the Jamaica Christian School for the Deaf and the deaf adults in the area. This was the 5th trip that they both

made to Jamaica.

The ELDA Board had a safe trip out to Las Vegas, NV for a board meeting and also to tour the hotel where the 2018 ELDA Conference will be held. We met with two members of the St Matthews Lutheran Church, North Hollywood, CA and they were able to explain all the plans for the conference. The Board got to finalize a flyer and conference registration forms. We look forward to seeing you all at the conference next year. Please, start making your plans to come and join us!

If your church has not started fundraising for the conference yet, it is a good time to start doing that now! We also ask for fundraising to send representatives from ELDA to the country of Nigeria to visit Pastor Ruth Ulea and the Deaf Church and school in Nigeria. We hope and pray that this trip will happen this spring. If it does, we will send out details to share with your churches.

The ELDA newsletter continues to be sent out every quarter. We thank Jason Andera for his time and patience in putting the newsletter together and get it ready to send out. I would like to thank those of you for sending me articles, pictures, flyers and other items for the newsletter on or before the due dates. It helps when your submissions are received on time so that the newsletter can be sent out in a timely matter. Thank you! Thank you, all!

**Remember when....** a bit of ELDA history; taken from past newsletters:

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

ELDA  
CONFERENCE

PASTOR RUTH  
REPORT FROM  
NIGERIA

DOROTHY'S  
SPIRITUAL  
SIDE ARTICLE

REPORT FROM  
HAITI

MORE...

# GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT (CONTINUED)

**15 years ago**, Volume 3 Issue 2 Fall 2002  
This issue of the ELDA newsletter highlights the recent biennial retreat held in Ashland, Nebraska. "Experience the Good Life in Jesus" was the conference theme. Workshops, business meetings, social times, local tours and worship services were all part of the conference. Dorothy Sparks gave a workshop on "Deaf Worship" and "Stress Management" was led by Pratt Counselors. New Board members were elected; Linda Wasilowski (Fairbanks), MN as Secretary, Luanne Duennerman, NE as Treasurer and Pr. Gisele Berninghaus, WI as Pastoral Advisor. Pr Russ Rockwell was the newsletter Editor.

**10 years ago**, Volume 5 Issue 1 February 2007 Leslie Riggs, WI was the newsletter Editor. At every ELDA Conference, something different and unusual happens. In 2004, Pastor Rockwell's name tag mysteriously became Oly's mustache. In 2006, during a Deaf worship led by Dorothy Sparks, her sermon was briefly interrupted by a bat that swooped into the chapel. Pr. Joe Varsanyi stepped down as pastor at St Phillip's Lutheran Church and received a call to be Director of Pastoral Care for a hospital in Philadelphia. Christ the King Deaf Church celebrated its 15th anniversary and Bread of Life Deaf Church celebrated 50 years. Dorothy Sparks, MN received a Certificate of Completion in Deaf Ministry from St Thomas University in Miami, FL on January 3, 2007. Don Rosenkjar sent a nice article and pictures for the newsletter, from their global mission trip to Vietnam and Cambodia.

**5 years ago**, Volume 9 Issue 29 October 2012 President Mark Koterwski reminds us

in his President report to remember what we have learned at the conference. The conference was held in Sioux Falls, SD and the conference theme was "Love in Action". The group at the conference was involved in the "Feed the Hungry Children" project. It was agreed by the conference assembly that ELDA will join with ECD for the 2014 conference. Four ELDA members joined a group of 16 hearing and deaf members (ages from 13 to 70) for a ten day mission trip to Montego Bay, Jamaica. Their mission was to work with the students and staff at the Jamaica School for the Deaf which is located in the mountains above the coastal city. The group was also able to visit the CSSD Deaf Village and to observe the training programs. The mission trip was led by Carol Stevens from the United Methodist Deaf Ministries.

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given"  
Isaiah 9:6  
Peace, Linda

## Christ the King Christmas Service schedule:

Christmas Services with Holy Communion  
Saturday, December 22 at 2 pm, Christmas Service with dessert reception at St. John's Lutheran 3101 Tyson Avenue, Philadelphia, PA  
Sunday, December 24th at 10:30 am, Christmas Service with light refreshments at Calvary Lutheran 730 South New Street, West Chester, PA  
Sunday, December 31 at 10:30 am, at Valley View Home, Elwyn, PA; no service at CTK

## ***Evangelical Lutheran Deaf Association and ELM Conference***



**Hosted by St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, North Hollywood, CA**

**At the fabulous and exciting  
Tuscany Suites & Casino, Las Vegas**

**"Sharing Hands with Love"**

### **Pastoral Workers Meeting**

**Sunday, July 22 - Arrive in the afternoon  
Sunday, July 22 – Tuesday, July 24**

### **ELDA Board Meeting**

**Tuesday, July 24- ELDA Board arrives  
Wednesday, July 25-Thursday, July 26 AM**

### **ELDA/ELM Conference**

**Thursday, July 26 PM-conference delegates arrive  
Thursday, July 26 – Saturday, July 28**

**Sunday, July 29 - Check-Out, Farewell**

**REGISTRATION FORM is in the ELDA Newsletter  
and on the ELDA website; [www.eldadeaf.org](http://www.eldadeaf.org)  
For more information, contact Donald Rosenkjar at  
[donkhai99@AOL.com](mailto:donkhai99@AOL.com)**

# ELDA 2018 REGISTRATION FORM

Please print clearly, fill in and mail this page with payment to:

**St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, 11031 Camarillo St, North Hollywood, CA 91602, Attention: Donald Rosenkjar**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

VP: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Church or Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Text, VP, or Phone#: \_\_\_\_\_

+++++ Meals (lunch and dinner) and Housing are included in the price +++++

1) Pastoral Workers: July 22 PM- July 29 AM \$ 670.00 per person \_\_\_\_\_

2) ELDA Board: July 24 PM- July 29 AM \$ 420.00 per person \_\_\_\_\_

3) Conference Attendees: July 26 PM- July 29 AM \$ 345.00 per person \_\_\_\_\_

4) Commuters: (no rooms) (Includes supper on Thursday) \$60.00 \_\_\_\_\_

(No rooms) (Includes lunch and supper on Friday) \$ 70.00 \_\_\_\_\_

(No rooms) (Includes lunch and banquet on Saturday) \$ 80.00 \_\_\_\_\_

(No rooms) (Includes banquet only on Saturday) \$ 70.00 \_\_\_\_\_

(Meal tickets are Non Refundable) TOTAL: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Check made payable to St. Matthew's Lutheran Church; with note at the bottom of check: ELDA Conference**

\*Room rates are the same for King and Standard rooms.

\*Check which room you would like. Also write down who will be in that room. Thanks!

King room-1 bed, 1 person \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

King room- 1 bed, 2 persons, \_\_\_\_\_ Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Standard room- 2 beds, 4persons, Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Standard room- 2 beds, 2 persons, \_\_\_\_\_ Names: \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE REGISTER EARLY, FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED:**

**Special Needs:**

1) Interpreter, SSP, Voice Interpreter: (Please circle)

2) Other: Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

3) Mobility Needs: Wheelchair Y or N

4) Special Meal Needs: Vegetarian, Diabetic etc. \_\_\_\_\_

\* **Early Bird Deadline: February 28, 2018**

\* **Payment by March 31 – pay \$60 more per person**

\* **Payment by April 30 – pay \$110 more per person**

\* **Hotel Check-In begins at 4:00 p.m. on July 22nd. All guests must check in before 8:00 p.m.**

\* **Check-In begins at noon on July 26<sup>th</sup>. All guests must check in before 8:00 p.m.**

\* **Check-out: by noon. on July 29<sup>th</sup>. All guests must be checked out by noon.**

**Transportation:** Use either Uber or Lyft. Be sure you have an account with either one. If not, download an app, and set up an account. Cost of transportation is \$6.00-\$8.00, and is the cheapest and quickest way to get to the hotel from the airport. You may take a taxi from the airport, for around \$9.00 per person.

**DO NOT USE THE SHUTTLE TO THE HOTEL!!!** (Expensive and long wait)

The address of Tuscany Suites & Casino is 255 E Flamingo Rd, Las Vegas, Nevada 89169

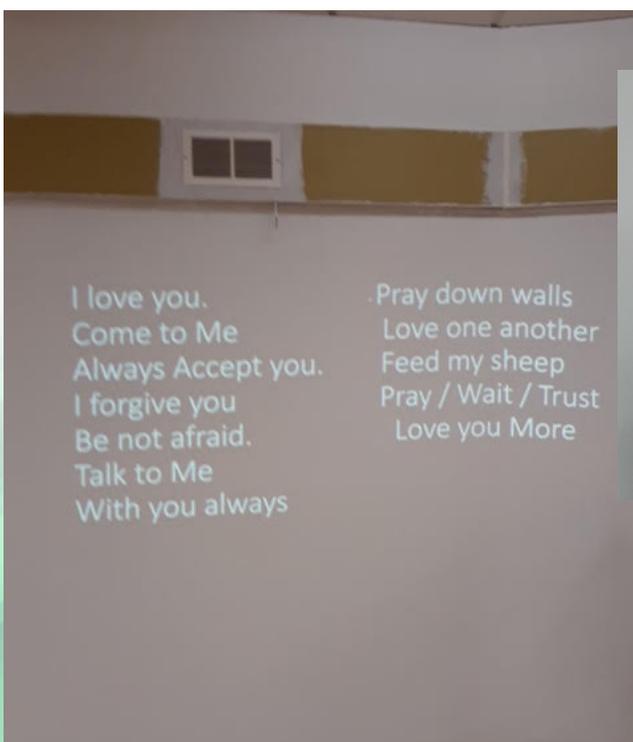
\* Are you interested in going on the Hoover Dam Tour with Lake Mead Cruise?  
Yes or No, circle one. (This is a post conference tour, July 29 or 30<sup>th</sup>)

(Cost: \$120.00, pay at the conference if there are enough people interested)



# BREAD OF LIFE DEAF

On December 2, Bread of Life Deaf Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, Mn. had a Christmas brunch. We got some financial support from Thrivent for this event. Theme is 'God's Christmas Bucket List for You.' About 50 people showed up. We served a delicious breakfast. Then deacon Dorothy Sparks lectured on the Christmas story and how it apply to us today. For example, when we put garland on our Christmas tree, it reminds us that God's love is around us. The event is truly inspiring. Christmas is all about God's love.



# ST. MATTHEWS CHURCH

All of us at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in North Hollywood, who will be hosting our next ELDA conference, are counting days before the start of an exciting conference. It will be at an exciting city: Las Vegas and it will be at a beautiful place, Tuscany Suites and Casino, a block away from Main Street where all great casinos are located. We have a wonderful committee who is dedicated to make the conference a truly successful one. Theme of the conference is "Sharing Hands with Love", and if you want to share your love with others, making lives better for others, then don't miss this event.

The Deaf at St. Matthew's have been faithfully involved on Wednesdays at Homeless Project where we feed the homeless breakfast and lunch, plus a bag for dinner. We also provide showers and clothing. Thanks to Thrivent, we were able to purchase underwear and socks. Church volunteers bake casseroles every week to provide nutrition for them. As a result of this work, St. Matthew's started to see new members from the homeless community, and we all are delighted about it.

Our pastor, Stephanie Jaeger, continues to receive sign language lessons from Vae, herself a Deaf member of the church, and also a member of ELDA conference team. Stephanie is totally committed to make sure that Deaf ministry will continue to thrive. She plans to attend the conference, so all of you will be able to meet her.

To save money, be sure to register for the conference EARLY, before the price goes up. You will be able to find the registration form elsewhere in this newsletter.

Folks, I do look forward to see each and every one of you!

Peace,

Donald Rosenkjar+

Chairperson, ELDA Conference

## 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.*

# WORD OF LIFE DEAF LANCASTER, PA.

WOLD had a joint council meeting with St. Peter's in October; the meeting was filled with warm relations between our two congregations. Also in October, WOLD hosted a meal-and-a-movie event with the movie, *The Shack*, which people enjoyed very much (especially the discussion afterwards).

In November, WOLD held its annual meeting, and finished its Bible Study on *The Messianic Prophecies*. The next study at WOLD is *The Bible's Big Story*, adapted from Crossways International.

For the Advent season, WOLD joined St. Peter's for midweek (interpreted) services. Because Dec. 24th and Jan. 31st both fall on Sundays, WOLD is changing its worship schedule for those two days.

Dec. 24

9:30 a.m. - regular worship for the 4th Sunday of Advent  
10:45 a.m. - break with light refreshments and socializing  
11:30 a.m. - early Christmas Eve service

Dec. 31

9:30 a.m. - regular worship for the 1st Sunday after Christmas  
10:45 a.m. - break with light refreshments and socializing  
11:30 a.m. - early New Year's Eve service

WOLD is planning a special celebration for the Epiphany season in January. Looking ahead to Lent, WOLD and CTK will do another "Lenten Pulpit Exchange." The theme is "Jesus and..." A way to abbreviate "and" is with the plus sign (+) which looks like a Cross ("Jesus +").

Pictures from WOLD

WOLD church members got together for Christmas lunch with friends at Lititz Cupboard Restaurant on December 2, 2017.

Photos Credit: Luanne Bartens

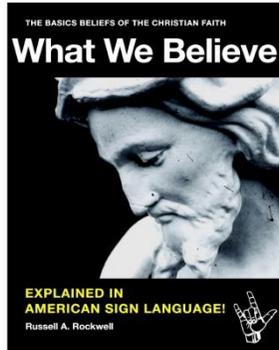
Members of the Word of Life Deaf (WOLD) Church enjoyed a Thanksgiving/Christmas dinner at Yoder's Restaurant. It was a good day with good food and friends.

WOLD Women's Retreat at Wildwood, NJ on October 6-8, 2017.



# WHAT WE BELIEVE

## PASTOR RUSS ROCKWELL



### “What We Believe”

Twenty years ago, when I first started working in a Deaf church, there weren't a lot of resources I could use in my teaching ministry. When I was in my Hearing church, I could order a variety of different of resources; but, sadly, teaching resources for Deaf ministry were "few and far between."

I noticed how many of us who worked in Deaf ministry had to make our own resources, or adapt Hearing church resources to accommodate ASL. Little from church publishers could be used “off the shelf” in Deaf ministry.

Today, after 20+ years Deaf ministry, I can say that little has changed. There are still not enough teaching resources to use in Deaf ministry.

This ongoing need for Deaf teaching materials led me to create a first-of-its-kind resource -- a digital book called "What We Believe."

"What We Believe" was created especially for Deaf people who want to learn more about God, faith, and the Bible. "What We Believe" is made for iPads, iPhones, & Macs. It has 74 videos of ASL explanations of onscreen text. In total, "What We Believe" has 100 minutes of signed ASL video. After watching the video, the text on the page is easier to understand.

"What We Believe" has five chapters covering the basic beliefs of the Christian faith. Deaf members of WOLD who previewed the book liked what they saw. You can download a sample copy of the book here: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/book/id1318565953> (you must have an Apple device to view the book!). You can read more about "What We Believe" at this website: [www.faithsignsllc.com](http://www.faithsignsllc.com) (click on Products & Promotions).

Because there are so few resources for Deaf ministry, any information on new resources like "What We Believe" needs to be shared -- which is the reason why I've written this summary for the ELDA Newsletter.

Peace to you all,  
Pastor Russ Rockwell

## Evangelical Lutheran Deaf Association

### ELDA SHINING LIGHT AWARD

*“Make your light to shine so that others will see the good that you do and will praise your Father in Heaven.”  
Matthew 5:16*

**This award is for any individual in recognition of his or her outstanding Christ-like ideals demonstrated through his or her work.**

Individual Nominated: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City, State, Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Please explain why this person is being nominated:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Who is nominating this person: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Please, circle one: VP Voice or text

**NOMINATIONS ARE ACCEPTED THROUGH JUNE 1, 2018.**

**Please send your submission to:**

Jeannie Fischer  
301 Weaverland Valley Rd.  
East Earl, PA 17519  
[Jeannie@frontiernet.net](mailto:Jeannie@frontiernet.net)

---

### ELDA Shining Light Award

**“Make your light shine, so that others will see the good that you do and will praise your Father in Heaven.” Matthew 5:16**

2006	Donald Rosenkjar	St Matthews Lutheran Deaf Church, CA
2008	Dayton Williams	Lutheran Deaf Ministry, IL
2010	Daniel Glenney	St. Philip’s Deaf Lutheran Church, PA
2012	Dorothy Sparks	Bread of Life Deaf Lutheran Church, MN
2014	Barbara Schmidt	Bread of Life Deaf Lutheran Church, MN
2016	Mark Koterwski	Heartland Ephphatha Ministries, SD

Evangelical Lutheran Deaf Association

**ELDA CITY ON A HILL AWARD**

*“You are like light for the whole world. A city built on top of a hill cannot be hidden.”  
Matthew 5:14*

**This award is for any congregation or organization in recognition of their donation of resources, programs or ministries that strengthen the Church’s outreach to Deaf people with the Gospel anywhere.**

Church or Ministry Nominated: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City, State, Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Please explain why this church or ministry is being nominated \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Who is nominating this church or ministry: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Please, circle one:  
VP, Voice, or Text

**NOMINATIONS ACCEPTED THROUGH JUNE 1, 2018.**

**Please send your submission to:**  
Jeannie Fischer  
301 Weaverland Valley Rd.  
East Earl, PA 17519  
[Jeannie@frontiernet.net](mailto:Jeannie@frontiernet.net)

---

**ELDA City On A Hill Award**

**“You are like light for the whole world. A city built on top of a hill cannot be hidden.”  
Matthew 5:14**

- 2006 Hands of Christ Deaf Ministry, WI
- 2008 Christ the King Deaf Church, PA
- 2010 Heartland Ephphatha Deaf Ministry, SD
- 2012 DeafCAN! Social Services, PA
- 2014 Bread of Life Deaf Lutheran Church, MN
- 2016 The Jamaica Mission Team, PA/MN

# SPIRITUAL SIDE

## BY DOROTHY SPARKS

The bible does not talk much about Jesus's earth father, Joseph. I had recognized that Joseph does not talk much but he had shown faith through action.

He did not expect Mary's pregnancy.

He did not expect that an angel appeared in his dream.

He did not expect that the inn was full.

He did not expect that Jesus was born in the barn.



He did not expect that the shepherds came and worshipped baby Jesus.

He did not expect that Simeon and Anna came to the baby Jesus in the temple and praised the Lord.

He did not expect that the wise men came to baby Jesus with gifts.

He did not expect that the angel told him to escape to Egypt with Mary and baby Jesus.

He did not expect that the angel told him to return to Israel.

Joseph did not expect to face many things but he did not give up and walk away from them.

Today, we have faced many things that we don't expect. It seems to be out of control. We may feel fears and worries.

Let's look at Joseph. What did he do? He kept looking up at God and trusted Him.

He reminds us of a driver of a cargo ship. When a terrible storm is around the ship, all the driver can do is look at a compass. A needle on the compass will always point north. The direction will never change. A driver keeps an eye on the needle instead of looking at the storm.



Worth to look up and trust God. **Praise!**

Worth to look up and thank God for His gifts of peace, love, joy and hope. **Praise!**

Worth to look up and celebrate God's love for all people in the world. **Praise!**

Worth to look up and say prayers knowing God more. **Praise!**

Worth to look up and Praise forever!

**ILY to God!**

---

# *Blue Christmas*

*December 21*

7:00 pm

at

*Bread of Life Deaf Lutheran Church*

*2901 38<sup>th</sup> Ave S.*

*Minneapolis, MN 55406*

*Join with us in sharing and hearing prayers,  
scripture, and music that acknowledge that  
God is present with those who mourn, for  
those who grieve, for those who struggle.  
God's Word comes to shine light into our  
darkness. All are welcome. Come.*

*You may bring a picture to remember of loss **loved one.***

*(Light Refreshment will be provided after service.)*

[boldpastor@gmail.com](mailto:boldpastor@gmail.com) / 612-314-9796 (VOICE)



# PASTOR RUTH ULEA'S REPORT

Dear Linda Fairbanks,

«This also come from the Lord of Hosts, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working”  
Isaiah 28; 29.

First and foremost, let me say hello, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

We remember our coming Easter celebration, all in arrears. In our avowed commitment to reach deaf people for Christ, and thus ensure that they realize all of their potentials in Christ, I went to Ibadan in November to participate in a program and a meeting for the upcoming Easter camp 2018. I am sorry for the lack in sharing with our progress reports from time to time. I am aware of this mistake often and I will find a way of correcting it. But sometime I find it very difficult to approach people with our problems and I have to do it again and again, especially at this time as well. Our burned classroom has reached the lintel stage at the moment. The children’s classroom is still outside under the neem trees.

Also we the LCCN wishes to solicit funds for our forthcoming Easter camp on March 29- April 2, 2018 which will be, by the grace of God coming up soon. Your support will assist us in actualizing these days. We pray that God will bless you for your gifts.

Words are not sufficient to thank you for all your gratitude, efforts, prayers and support; yet from the bottom of my heart, I say thanks so much! I am wishing you all a happy Christmas and also a happy new year!

With lots of love,

Pastor Ruth Ulea





The Re-Built Classroom

The burned out classroom at the school for the deaf.

## The Hendersons at the Haiti Deaf Academy

The Haiti Deaf Academy was established in 2013 to serve Deaf children in Haiti. Many older Deaf people in Haiti had no opportunity to attend school. So, when Kathryn Montoya and Margaret Spratlin asked a group of Deaf people in the community of Leveque how they could help them, the Deaf replied, please start a school for Deaf children.

Children come from all different areas and live at the HDA home in Cabaret while they go to school in Leveque 15 minutes away. Meredith first visited HDA while she was on a mission trip with a Deaf team in July 2015. Since Meredith had worked as a Dorm counselor at Tennessee School for the Deaf in college, seeing these Haitian children reminded her of how much she loved Deaf children. She returned to Minnesota and told her husband, Keith, that she wanted to go back to Haiti Deaf Academy. Keith was surprised when she said she wanted to go and serve for 2 or 3 months at a time, instead of going for only a 1 week mission trip.

Over the next two years, Keith went to Haiti three times with Meredith, and she went another 3 times with Deaf mission teams. The Haiti Deaf Academy Board of Directors saw their love for the students and asked if they would please read the job description for a newly created position and pray about accepting it. The position was for a couple who would be the In-country Director of Operations for HDA.

Keith and Meredith took the position and moved to Haiti before summer school in 2017. And as a special God wink, they flew in on the same date that Meredith had arrived in Haiti for her first trip two years earlier.

HDA is home to 45 students, from 5 to 18 years old. They have 16 staff members and 11 of them are Deaf. HDA and Keith and Meredith have two main goals. First, they all want the students to understand who God is and His love for them, so they can come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ. The second goal is for them to have educational or vocational training so they can provide for themselves and help their families, if needed, once they are 18 and leave HDA.

One of the students has been taking sewing lessons. Since every child who attends school in Haiti wears a uniform, they hope Dachea will be able to develop her skills so she can work as a tailor. Then HDA can hire her to sew their uniforms, but she can also get work sewing for other schools.

Keith and Meredith made a 2-year commitment to serve at HDA, but they expect they will work as Directors for about 4 or 5 more years. As they serve, they are asking the Lord to bring along a Haitian couple to train and mentor. Then, in time, the Haitian couple can take their place.



HDA students return home for Christmas break, Easter break, for two weeks in June, and then for the month of August. Those who live nearby are encouraged to go home on the weekends.

This fall HDA is helping the students learn to teach Haitian Sign Language to their own families and friends. And they are encouraging each family to come and take weekly HSL classes if they live nearby. HDA is also working on developing HSL materials.



**Meredith and Keith Henderson at the Haiti Deaf Academy**

If you would like to help make a difference in the lives of these Deaf children, please consider supporting Haiti Deaf Academy or the Hendersons. The website is [www.haitideafacademy.com](http://www.haitideafacademy.com). The Henderson's info is under the Missionary Support tab on the left on the home page. The students' biographies are under the Sponsorship tab. You can donate online or send checks to: Haiti Deaf Academy, P.O. Box 8437, Surprise, AZ 85374.

For more information, you can email: [Meredith@haitideafacademy.com](mailto:Meredith@haitideafacademy.com) You can also follow Haiti Deaf Academy on Facebook or Twitter.



**Student who wants to be a tailor**



# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear ELDA Friends:

It seems each year the holy-day season comes faster and faster. We get pulled into the busy tasks of cards, baking, shopping, gifts, decorating, parties, and other special events. We need to remind ourselves to take time to focus on the real meaning of the Advent and Christmas season--to look for signs of God's coming into the world in different ways and how we can celebrate this with other people.

One thing I enjoy during Advent is special devotions or quiet times with God. I am reading these devotions at breakfast time. These devotions talk about different people who were involved in the first Christmas: Zechariah and Elizabeth, Mary and Joseph, Anna and Simeon, the shepherds, angels, and wise men. God chose so many different people to be a part of His story. God chooses you and me to be a part of His story on earth. He wants us to look for His coming each day--Maybe you will see God in the sparkling snow, the wagging tail of a dog, the forgiveness of a friend you hurt, the smile of a stranger, the joy of the children, etc. See, enjoy, and thank God for His presence here and now.

Some people are disappointed when Christmas is over. It seems short after all the preparation. I like to celebrate the 12 days of Christmas from December 24--January 5. Plan something each day to enjoy the season and God's gift of Jesus to us. Don't take down your decorations until January 6. Drink hot chocolate, enjoy a warm fire, have a party, visit friends. Think about how God might want you to use your new year.

This new year we have an opportunity for a small ELDA group to visit our friend, Pastor Ruth Ulea, in Nigeria. Many of you met her at the ELDA Conference in St. Paul, MN in the summer of 2016. Maybe she visited your church. Pr. Ruth is Deaf, pastors the Lutheran Church of Christ, Nigeria (LCCN), and teaches at a small deaf school next to the church. Look for pictures of LCCN in this newsletter.

Pr. Ruth wants us to come at Easter time so we can see her Easter Camp. Jay Johnson, a Lutheran engineer who helps set up clean water wells in the area, will lead this trip. Dorothy Sparks and I are committed to going and we invite you to join us. The cost of this two-week trip will be about \$3,250 which includes a round trip air fare to Nigeria plus several smaller airplane trips in the country. The dates of this trip are tentatively March 27--April 8/9.

You will need a visa and a current passport that does not expire until September 2018. You must be able to accept hot dry weather (80--110 degrees), new foods, and new experiences. We will NOT be in fancy hotels. We will be visiting Deaf schools, churches, and people.

Pr. Ruth was a secretary to Pr. Andrew Foster when she was young. Foster was the first African American Deaf man to graduate from Gallaudet in 1954. He went to Africa and taught the Deaf people ASL and many skills. He set up 32 deaf schools in central Africa before he died in a small plane crash in Rwanda in 1987. Gallaudet has named an auditorium after him and has an exhibit in their museum about his work.

Please contact Dorothy Sparks or me if you are interested in joining the trip!

Advent hope, Christmas joy!

Pr. Beth Lockard

ELCA Deaf Ministries

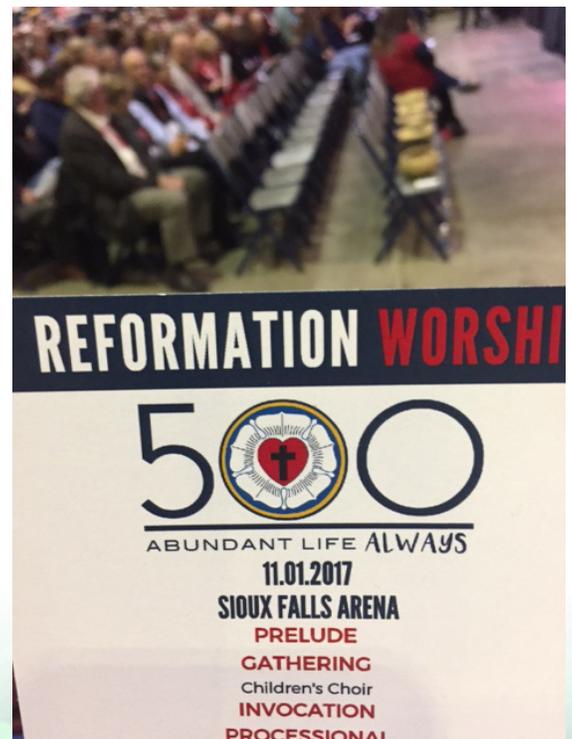


# REFORMATION CELEBRATION

Reformation 500 year celebration  
-Angela Koterwski, Sioux Falls, SD

There was a big worship on November 1, 2017 at Sioux Falls Arena to celebrate 500 years of Reformation. Mark and I both went to the worship and witnessed a big crowd of people attending from all over South Dakota. Interpreter was provided.

We felt blessed and overwhelmed with the vibes we had during the worship we attended. It was an beautiful service with worship, singing, offering and communion.



# END OF YEAR DONATIONS

ELDA 2017 End of Year Donations

Word of Life Deaf Church, WOLD (Lancaster PA)

Bread of Life Deaf Church, BOLD (Minneapolis, MN)

Trinity Deaf Church (Reading, PA)

Luanne and Gordon Barton

Lori Fuller and Family

Mark and Angela Koterwski

Linda Fairbanks

Jeff and Belinda Panek

Thrivent Choice donations:

Jeff and Belinda Panek

Thank you for your donations! You may ask that your donations be sent to the HOPE Fund or the General Fund. Your check, made out to ELDA can be mailed to:

ELDA Treasurer Jeff Panek 625 South Mary Drive, Tea, SD. 57064

If you have Thrivent Choice, be sure to add ELDA as one of your choices. ELDA is a non profit 501 (c) 3 tax-exempt organization.

We appreciate any donations that you make to ELDA.

Merry Christmas! Jeff

## 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

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](mailto:lindafairbanks22@gmail.com) and I will share with our Newsletter Editor. Thanks!