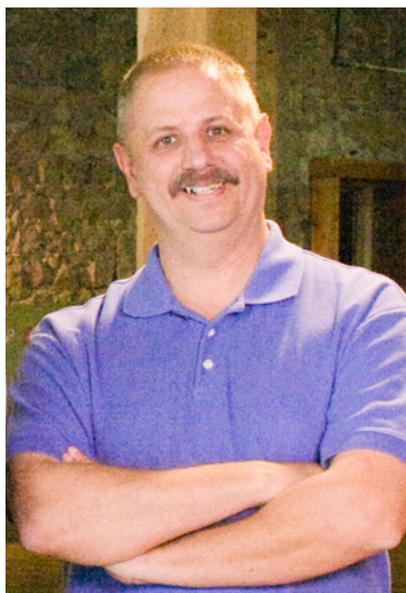




# ELDA

VOLUME • 10  
ISSUE • 31  
OCTOBER 2013

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



**Mark Koterwski**  
**ELDA President**

## CHURCHWIDE REPORT!

ELCA Churchwide Assembly 2013

Kayla, my daughter; Angela, my wife, and I went to ELCA Churchwide Assembly as voting members in Pittsburgh, PA Aug 12 – 17, 2013. We celebrated ELCA 25th Anniversary. There were close to one thousand participations from all of over the country. They did warmly welcome us. They did a good job with prepare and provided 4 excellent interpreters and closed captions on screen for whole one week! Kudos to ELCA committee!!!

This year we had a new record for youth to participated assembly with 17% or 110 youth and young adult under 30 years old. We had a wonderful greeting

from Catholic Bishop, Military Chaplain, Ecumenical Partners, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, Full Communion Partners, World Council of Churches, Interfaith - Jewish Council and World Sikh Council.

We discussed and vote on different topics included The Church and Criminal Justice, ELCA's first major fundraising campaign, the Book of Faith initiative, ELCA budget proposals for 2014-2016, community violence, Israel and Palestine, Holy Communion, immigration reform, pastoral ministry among same-gender couples and their families, the Uniting American Families Act, Gender identity discrimination, 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation to a social policy, Voting rights to all citizens and more. (See result on [www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org)) We had met with several hearing people that



**Kayla, Mark and Angela Koterwski at Churchwide.**

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

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FIRST DEAF AIM IN THE ELCA

PASTOR SUSAN MASTERS SPIRITUAL COLUMN

# FROM THE PRESIDENT (CONT.)

have deaf people in their life (relatives and friends) also a lady from The Deaconess Community to discuss what ELDA can do for deaf and hard of hearing in our country. We gave them our ELDA Business card for them to contact us.



***Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, is the new bishop of the ELCA***

img/8.jpg PITTSBURGH (ELCA) - The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Northeastern Ohio Synod, was elected Aug. 14 presiding bishop of the ELCA at the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly. She was elected on the fifth ballot. There were 889 votes cast, and 445 votes were needed for an election. Eaton received 600 votes and the Rev. Mark S. Hanson, ELCA presiding bishop, received 287. Eaton is the ELCA's first woman presiding bishop-elect.

She will be installed on Oct 5, 2013 at Rockefeller Memorial Chapel in Chicago. She will begin her official as ELCA presiding bishop on Nov. 1 for 6 years term. Current Bishop Mark Hansen gave a beautiful blessing and offered her with his support.

During election for our next Bishop, Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton was elected as ELCA Presiding Bishop. The information below from ELCA News Releases:

<http://ih.constantcontact.com/fs177/1102701453684/>



***Procession at the ELCA Churchwide Worship***

Kayla Koterwski (CODA) was elected as ELCA Churchwide Council for 3 years term. She will be one of first youth to be able to voice and vote. The council meeting will be held in Chicago.

The next ELCA Churchwide Assembly meeting will be on August 2016 in New Orleans. We are working about possible to have ELDA booth during that event.



***The Koterwskis with outgoing Bishop Hanson and his wife. (Lindsay Boehmer on Right)***

ELCA will celebrate 500 years of the Reformation (Lutheran) in 2017.



Evangelical  
Lutheran Deaf  
Association

Save the Date!  
ELDA Conference, 2014  
Liverpool, NY  
(use Syracuse Airport)

July 27-August 2  
July 27-30: Church Workers Retreat  
July 30-August 2: General Conference

## Historic Joint Deaf Conference with

The Episcopal Conference of the Deaf  
and  
The Evangelical Lutheran Deaf Association  
and possibly  
The United Methodist Congress of the Deaf

For the first time, our deaf groups will meet together to share worship, fellowship, and a program of speakers, service projects, and fun. We will also discuss how we can be ministry partners in the future.

More details to come.

For more information:  
[sumasters57@gmail.com](mailto:sumasters57@gmail.com)

All are warmly welcome.

# GOD'S WORK. OUR HANDS.

ELCA and ELDA members participated in "God's work. Our hands." on Sunday, Sept 8th. The message from ELCA stated "God's work. Our hands." is an opportunity to celebrate our 25th anniversary as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America — one church, freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor. We are a church that rolls up our sleeves and gets to work. On Sept., 8, 2013, let's join together as 4 million members, nearly 10,000 congregations, 65 synods and the churchwide expression for a dedicated day of service. Let's clean up neighborhoods, deliver meals, collect supplies for refugees overseas, visit our neighbors or help a child learn to read. You work every day to welcome your neighbors and make your community a better place. Now let's do it together as one body, using our hands to do God's work of restoring and reconciling communities in Jesus Christ's name throughout the world.



## Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

## ELDA ONLINE

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

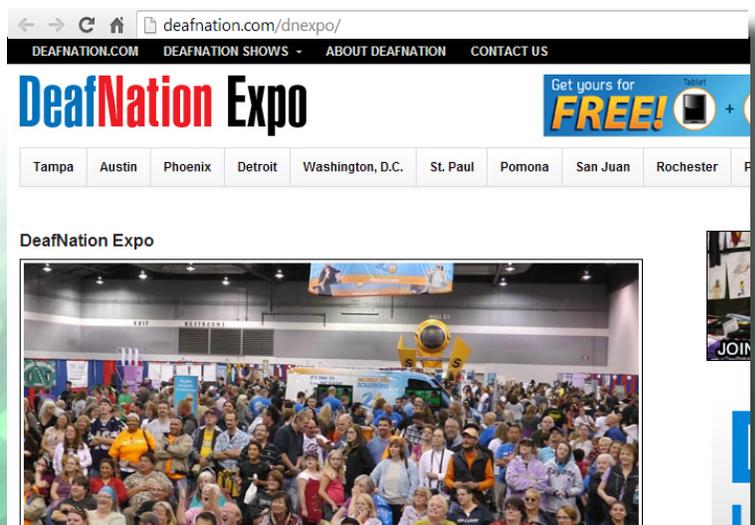
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ELDADeaf/>

## NEWS

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

## NATIONAL EXPO BOOTH:

ELDA will have a booth at Deaf National Expo in Chicago, Ill on Saturday, Nov 2nd. If you happen to be around in Chicago, please stop by our booth! For more information – see <http://deafnation.com/dnexpo/>. Hope to see you all there!



# INTERPRETING CONFERENCE



is cordially asking you to

**'Save the Date'**

November 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>, 2013

## **Preaching to the Choir!**

Religious Interpreting Professional Development Conference

Target Audience:

- Advanced Interpreters
- Beginning Interpreters/Church Signers
- Deaf Members
- Deaf Ministry Leaders/Church Leaders

**More information and registration availability coming soon!!**

Questions? Please contact Billy Sanders or Kafi Lemons @ [naobidcp2tc@gmail.com](mailto:naobidcp2tc@gmail.com)

National Alliance Of Black Interpreters, District of Columbia (NAOBI-DC) •  
PO Box 90532 • Washington, DC 20090

Visit us at [www.naobi2.org/dc](http://www.naobi2.org/dc) • Follow us on Twitter @NAOBIDC • Facebook NAOBI-DC

# DEAF CAN!

*You are invited to join us for a celebration luncheon*

***CHRIST THE KING DEAF CHURCH  
Deaf Community Action Network  
DeafCAN!***

*“From Isolation to Independence”  
Sunday, November 3, 2013*

***10:30 a.m. worship at Calvary Lutheran***  
*730 South New Street, West Chester, PA 19382*

***Celebration Luncheon, 1--5 p.m.***  
*Wyndham Garden Exton Hotel*  
*815 North Pottstown Pike (Rt. 100), Exton, PA 19341*

***Keynote Speaker: Howard Rosenblum, Esq.***  
***Deaf Lawyer and CEO of the National Association of the Deaf***  
***and a tireless advocate for the deaf and hard of hearing***

*Menu:*

*Fresh Fruit Medley*  
*Mixed Garden Salad & dressings*  
*Pasta Primavera*  
*Grilled Salmon with Mandarin Orange Sauce*  
*Petite New York Strip Steak with Brandy Cream Sauce*  
*Roasted Red Bliss Potatoes with Garlic & Herbs*  
*Green Beans Almondine, Dinner Rolls & butter*  
*Vanilla Ice Cream and Anniversary Cake*  
*Coffee, Tea, Iced Tea, & Cash Bar*



*Howard Rosenblum is the Keynote Speaker at DeafCAN! on Sunday November 3, 2013 at Calvary Lutheran in West Chester PA.*

As the Chief Executive Officer of the National Association of the Deaf (NAD), Mr. Rosenblum oversees the operations of the NAD to carry out its mission of preserving, protecting and promoting the civil, human and linguistic rights of deaf and hard of hearing people in the United States.

Mr. Rosenblum brings with him twenty years of experience as a disability rights attorney including: nine years as a Senior Attorney at Equip for Equality, a nonprofit organization designated as Illinois' Protection and Advocacy entity; and ten years before that with a private law firm. His legal practice has been in the areas of disability rights and special education. He has provided numerous workshops nationally and internationally on the Americans with Disability Act, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

In 2010, he was appointed by President Obama to serve on the U.S. Access Board. Mr. Rosenblum received his law degree from IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law (1992), and his Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Engineering from the University of Arizona (1988).

We welcome Mr. Rosenblum as we celebrate *"Isolation to Independence"* in the lives of many that we serve through the Deaf Community Action Network (DeafCAN!)

-----cut and send-----

Name (please list names of all guests): \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail & phone contacts: \_\_\_\_\_

I will be attending the following events:

- \_\_\_\_\_ 10:30 a.m. church service. Service will be voiced.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Celebration (\$60 per person). Please list number of guests per entree
- \_\_\_\_\_ Pasta Primavera \_\_\_\_\_ Grilled Salmon \_\_\_\_\_ Petite New York Strip Steak
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am one of the \$300 fundraising partners supporting DeafCAN services!! (free luncheon)
- \_\_\_\_\_ We regret we cannot attend but wish to send this donation to support services for Deaf /HOH

**Send checks to CTK Deaf Church, 730 South New Street, West Chester, PA 19382 by October 27**

# DO YOU HAVE A SEAT AT GOD'S TABLE?

Dorothy Sparks signs her song called "God's Table"



by Pr. Susan Masters

Luke 14:1, 7-14

7 Jesus saw how the guests had tried to take the best seats. So he told them: 8 When you are invited to a wedding feast, don't sit in the best place. Someone more important may have been invited. 9 Then the one who invited you will come and say, "Give your place to this other guest!" You will be embarrassed and will have to sit in the worst place. 10 When you are invited to be a guest, go and sit in the worst place. Then the one who invited you may come and say, "My friend, take a better seat!" You will then be honored in front of all the other guests. 11 If you put yourself above others, you will be put down. But if you humble yourself, you will be honored. 12 Then Jesus said to the man who had invited him: When you give a dinner or a banquet, don't invite your friends and family and relatives and rich neighbors. If you do, they will invite you in return, and you will be paid back. 13 When you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. 14 They cannot pay you back. But God will bless you and reward you when his people rise from death.

Jesus was always stirring up trouble with his new teachings about God. So it's no surprise that when one of the religious leaders invited him to a meal, the other guests kept their eyes on Jesus. They probably wondered what crazy thing he was going to do next. But they did not realize that Jesus was keeping his eye on them, too. He noticed where everyone was sitting at the table: some people chose the best seats of highest honor, while others were left to sit in the least honorable seats. And I will say more about this in a minute.

In Jesus' time, there was no newspaper or internet, so people had to be creative about how they received and shared news about what was going on in the world. Often people would invite guests to their homes for meals, and after the supper, they would take turns standing up and giving speeches. Usually the "more important" people (the ones with money and power) got to speak first. These people always sat at the seats of highest honor at the head of the table. People who were "less important" sat at the end of the table – or sometimes next to the table – and usually didn't get a chance to share any news or voice their opinions.

It seems that maybe the guests at this meal that Jesus attended were being rather greedy and were grabbing the more important seats. So Jesus gave his own speech about being more humble. He told them: "Be more humble and choose a less-important seat. Otherwise, you might be embarrassed if someone makes you move!"

I had an experience like this one time. Years ago I attended a play at the famous Ordway Musical Theatre in St. Paul (Minnesota). I misread my ticket and thought I was sitting in Row C. I was so excited because I was in the third row! I was feeling pretty big-headed about it and was bragging to my friend about how good my seat was. Then the usher came, looked at my ticket, and pointed to the balcony. He told me, "You're in Row Q, not Row C. Please move!" Jesus was right – it was very embarrassing to be told to move to a different seat....

I wonder if Jesus' teaching about tables and seats is a symbol for our lives. I imagine that God's table is a huge table and everyone is invited to sit down. In our country these days, it seems that some Christians want to say, "If you are black or deaf or gay or a woman or poor or \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank), you don't have a seat at God's table." And I think that when God sees that happen, God's heart is broken. Because God wants ALL of his children to come to his table and enjoy the banquet he has prepared for us. No one is excluded.

Dorothy Sparks, who is the Associate in Ministry at Bread of Life Deaf Lutheran Church in Minneapolis wrote a beautiful ASL song called "God's Table". Here is the link to the song on youtube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=moN26H3a5rE>

I hope you will watch Dorothy's ASL song and be reminded that EVERYONE is invited to God's table. Our job, as Christians, is to make sure everyone has a seat – and to remember that it's GOD'S table, not ours!

# ELDA BOARD MEETING

The ELDA Board met at the ELCA Headquarters in Chicago this summer. We were welcomed warmly by the ELCA and accomplished a lot. Here is a video of our director Pastor Beth Lockard and our President Mark Koterwskithat we recorded at the ELCA headquarters.



Rev. Cherlyne Beck the Program Director for Disability Ministries at the ELCA



Pastor Beth presiding at Holy Communion for closing worship at the Board Meeting.



Left to Right: Mark Koterwski, Jeff Panek, Beth Lockard, Linda Fairbanks, Jason AnderaThe ELDA Board. Don Rosenkjar and Susan Masters were not able to attend



The link for Mark Koterwski's message  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nMuk5UoAV-w>



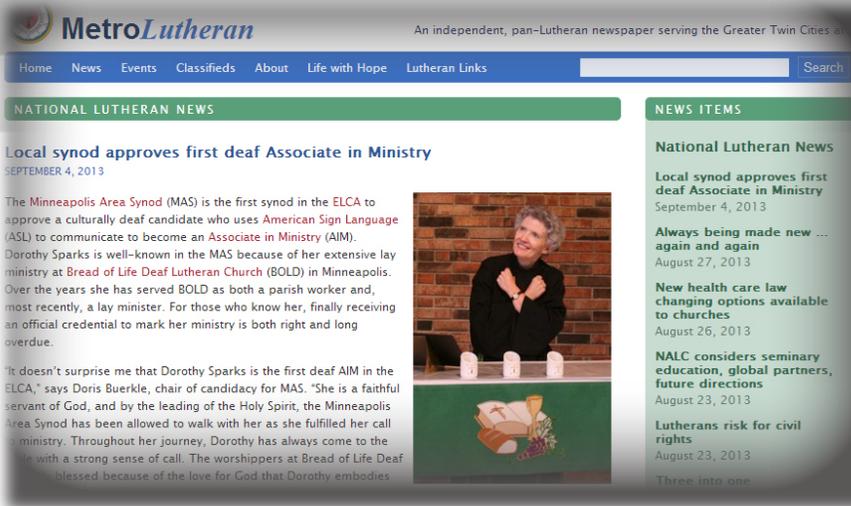
The link for Pastor Beth's message  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4XoN85EQuUs>

# CONGRATULATIONS!

## *Local synod approves first deaf Associate in Ministry*

The Minneapolis Area Synod (MAS) is the first synod in the ELCA to approve a culturally deaf candidate who uses American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate to become an Associate in Ministry (AIM). Dorothy Sparks is well-known in the MAS because of her extensive lay ministry at Bread of Life Deaf Lutheran Church (BOLD) in Minneapolis. Over the years she has served BOLD as both a parish worker and, most recently, a lay minister. For those who know her, finally receiving an official credential to mark her ministry is both right and long overdue. “It doesn’t surprise me that Dorothy Sparks is the first deaf AIM in the ELCA,” says Doris Buerkle, chair of candidacy for MAS. “She is a faithful servant of God, and by the leading of the Holy Spirit, the Minneapolis Area Synod has been allowed to walk with her as she fulfilled her call to ministry. Throughout her journey, Dorothy has always come to the table with a strong sense of call. The worshippers at Bread of Life Deaf are truly blessed because of the love for God that Dorothy embodies and relates.”

The Rev. Susan Masters, a hearing pastor in deaf ministry, noted the implication of Sparks’ achievement for other deaf leaders: “I’ve known Dorothy for a long time, and we’ve worked side-by-side in deaf ministry for years. She is one of my mentors and I am so delighted that her faithful and hard work is being recognized. For the ELCA deaf ministry community, which has very few deaf leaders, this is huge. It says to other deaf people considering church leadership in the ELCA, ‘God can use



The screenshot shows the MetroLutheran website interface. At the top, the logo for MetroLutheran is displayed with the tagline "An independent, pan-Lutheran newspaper serving the Greater Twin Cities area". Below the logo is a navigation menu with links for Home, News, Events, Classifieds, About, Life with Hope, and Lutheran Links. A search bar is located on the right side of the menu. The main content area features a green header for "NATIONAL LUTHERAN NEWS" and a sub-header for "NEWS ITEMS". The article title "Local synod approves first deaf Associate in Ministry" is prominently displayed, along with the date "SEPTEMBER 4, 2013". A photograph of Dorothy Sparks is shown, and a quote from Doris Buerkle is visible. To the right of the article, there are several other news items listed with their respective dates.

Click on this article to read it online

<http://metrolutheran.org/2013/09/local-synod-approves-first-deaf-as-associate-in-ministry/>

you, too, and we will support you as you discern and pursue your call.’ We are so proud of Dorothy and for what this means for her and future deaf leaders in our churches.”

Ask Sparks when she first felt a sense of calling to ministry, and she describes the loving, supportive Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod congregation in Lincoln, Nebraska, in which she grew up. “My entire family is deaf, and our church had a strong deaf ministry at that time, so I grew up surrounded by deaf church leaders. When I was a young adult, my pastor recognized that I was a good Bible teacher and, even though I had only a high school diploma, he encouraged me to lead our Bible study.” Her pastor co-led the Bible study with Sparks, and when he later resigned, Sparks led the study alone.

Although she loved teaching and felt a strong sense of calling to serve God as a teacher or pastor, Sparks struggled with two formidable obstacles: She had only a high school diploma with little hope of going to college, much less seminary; and she struggled with scripture that seemed to indicate women should not be church leaders. For a number of years, Sparks assumed there was no hope of ever becoming a church leader.

In her early 30s, Sparks moved to Minneapolis to become a parish worker at BOLD, leaving behind the familiarity and security of her deaf world in Lincoln. At BOLD, she encountered a large deaf community that had not been exposed to a lot of deaf

worship leaders as she had been. When the Rev. Mark Hendrickson invited her to sign the gospel in ASL during worship, Sparks remembers, “I could see [church members’] faces light up. It was as if they were understanding the gospel for the first time, signed in their own language, by one of their own. It was so powerful for all of us.”

Over the years, other pastors at BOLD invited Sparks increasingly to share her leadership skills, first teaching and, later, occasionally preaching. In 2001, during a period of interim, the congregation called Sparks to serve as their lay minister. For the next six years — with her sense of call to ministry only growing stronger — without a college degree, working fulltime at a bank, and serving the congregation halftime, she became a long-distance student at St. Thomas University in Florida, completing all the required coursework except a thesis for a master’s degree in deaf ministry. And she began having conversations with both MAS staff and faculty at Luther Seminary about pursuing an alternate route to ordination.

It seemed that she was finally realizing her dream to become a pastor. And then serious health problems forced her to step down from her ministry at BOLD.

Recuperating from heart surgery, and laid off from the job at the bank, Sparks used the 14 months she drew unemployment to immerse herself in volunteer work in the local deaf community. She taught health classes, provided tutoring, and volunteered with a deaf hospice program to gain a better understanding of the particular needs of the deaf community. She joined a team of ecumenical deaf church leaders to visit a church-sponsored deaf school in Jamaica to provide a Vacation Bible School program.

With support from MAS staff, she decided to pursue the AIM credential instead of ordination. After the process was delayed several times

over a year and a half, Sparks was approved in June.

### In Word and Service

When asked how it felt to learn that she had been approved after such a long journey — one that began, really, in childhood — Sparks enthusiastically declared, “It felt wonderful! I didn’t think it was possible, but God led the way. I am honored to be a pioneer for other deaf people to follow me because there is so much need for deaf leaders in deaf ministry.

“Only 10 percent of deaf people go to church; what about the remaining 90 percent? My call to Word and Service compels me to reach out to that 90 percent, to help overcome all the barriers that keep deaf people not only from going to church but from being successful in all the parts of their lives. I have always been called to do that, but now I can do it with some authority from the church behind me.”

With all the extra work of pursuing the AIM credential now behind her, Sparks hasn’t slowed down a bit. BOLD will soon officially call her to be their AIM, and, as the congregation is currently in an interim period, Sparks is part of an interim leadership team, teaching and preaching regularly. She also continues her outreach work in the deaf community, teaching and tutoring as needed. She says of her current vocational plate: “I haven’t gone back to work since I was laid off, and my schedule is still busy and demanding. But, at my age, I am finally doing what I was called to do. And it feels so good.”



# THANKSGIVING APPEAL

Dear ELDA Friends in Christ:

Fall, 2013

## Greetings to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

I am Pr. Susan Masters, the Pastoral Adviser for ELDA. I want to thank each of the ELDA congregations who have already paid your 2013 membership dues. We depend upon your contributions to carry out the important mission and ministry of ELDA, which is to share God's love with the deaf community. If your congregation has not yet paid your ELDA dues, it's not too late to do so! Could you please do me a BIG favor and send in your dues as soon as possible? On behalf of the ELDA Board of Directors, thank you!

Each fall, ELDA has a Thanksgiving appeal, and gifts collecting during this appeal go into ELDA's general fund. You may be wondering, "Huh, what's the general fund? How are you using the money I give you?" That's a great question – let me answer it for you. We use this fund to help cover expenses such as:

- Board meeting expenses: transportation, meals, housing when our Board meets each year
- office supplies for Pr. Beth Lockard (our national coordinator) and our ELDA officers;
- ELDA conference expenses: awards, interpreters, supplies, etc.
- many miscellaneous expenses that come up throughout the year.

As you can see, the general fund helps to pay for a lot of ELDA expenses, and your contributions through the Thanksgiving appeal are SO important. We are accepting donations to this appeal through December 31. **Will you please consider sending a contribution to help us continue our ministry in the Deaf community?**

The theme for our national church (ELCA) is "God's work, our hands." Hands are very important to deaf people! And God wants to use the hands of ALL the members of ELDA – both deaf and hearing – to continue His work. You help us do that work with your financial gifts. All contributions are tax deductible and may be sent to "ELDA" at the above address. Once we receive your contribution, a letter for tax purposes will be sent to you.

Thank you so much for your continued generosity – we couldn't do the work of ELDA without you.

Faithfully,  
The Rev. Susan R. Masters  
Pastoral Adviser, ELDA  
Minneapolis, MN



# FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear ELDA Friends--

Summer went by swiftly and already it is fall! ELDA had a productive Board meeting in Chicago which included meeting the new Director of ELCA (Dis)Ability Ministries, Cherlyne Beck, whom I will work with. Cherlyne's picture is in this newsletter. We were able to take a tour of the churchwide offices, meet some key staff people, and make plans for the coming year. We are excited about the planning of our next ELDA conference near Syracuse, NY. It will be an opportunity to meet and work with our Deaf Episcopalian and Methodist leaders.



I will return to Chicago the end of October to do some planning with other ELCA leaders in (Dis)Ability ministries. This will include networking, sharing resources, creating awareness and education programs, working with the Director of ELCA fund raising campaign, and reaching out to the new Presiding Bishop and other churchwide leaders. There is much to do. Although most Deaf people do not consider ourselves "disabled" but "abled", we need to work together to make things happen. This group is impressed with ELDA's progress, newsletters, website, and conferences.

It was very important for the Koterwski Family to be at the Churchwide Assembly to put a

"face" on Deaf Ministry. It is also a big step for ELDA to send the Koterwskis and Paneks to the Deaf Nation Expo to give the Deaf Community the "face" of ELDA. Congratulations to Kayla Koterwski for being elected to the churchwide Council. That is an awesome honor and responsibility!

We are all pleased with Dorothy Spark's achieving her AIM status and look forward to seeing more of her ministry in action! She has worked long and hard to meet all the requirements and we are proud of her!

Dorothy and I agreed to take responsibility for some programming and projects for the Jamaica Christian School for the Deaf near Montego Bay. We plan a trip at the end of June 2014. Please contact her or me if you wish to go with us. It will probably be a ten-day working trip with a cost of approximately \$1200 per person for travel to and from Philadelphia, lodging, meals, and daily transportation to the mountain school. We are still working out details with the school and travel agency. If you cannot go next June, consider going on future trips.

Mill Neck has more new ASL Bible story books. Please go to their website at [www.millneck.org](http://www.millneck.org) to order books for yourself, your church, friends and family. They make great gifts! Dr. Mark Prowatzke is retiring from Mill Neck this month and the Board is searching for a new CEO. We thank Dr. P. for his many years of service and his heart for global Deaf ministry.

Blessings,  
Pastor Beth Lockard  
ELCA Deaf Ministries

