



# ELDA

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

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Hello, ELDA Community!

We pray this newsletter finds you and your family well. Stories—more specifically, YOUR story—are essential. Through stories from others, we learn how God is with us, in us, and among us. These stories help us see that God is very much here in our lives, but we must choose to see. If we don't pay attention, we miss it. Let me share a powerful story with you. It's about Krista Sturtz, a cherished member of our church. Here's her story in her own words:

*I celebrate life every day and praise the good Lord for allowing me to survive my cancer and live a life of constant devotion to him, for him.*

*Challenged it may be, I'll be grateful forever. Twenty-nine years ago, two months past my twenty-first birthday, I found myself in the ER, nearing an aneurysm. They ran a CAT scan and found a tumor on the Cerebellum. They admitted me to the hospital that day and then scheduled me for a surgical resection. I was ecstatic to hear the test results and happy to learn that I was right and not going crazy. I had diagnosed myself with having a tumor on my brain, suffering from extreme pain and the inability to stay focused. The doctors that I went to told me that it was just stress and migraines. They prescribed me drugs and sent me on my merry way. The medicine did nothing for the pain. So I suffered, waited, and found alcohol to be the temporary escape that got me diagnosed. Alcohol swells the brain. It made the tumor grow to the point of hospitalization. A great surgeon carefully removed the tumor. It left me temporarily blind and needing to learn how to walk again, but I was alive. Weeks later, I left the hospital with a rolling cane and started radiation. One month, five days a week, two times a day that was the protocol. Chemotherapy followed with 11 months of 3 days inpatient stays. One full year of treatment, 28 years of survival! With His grace, I share my story with you. What's yours?*

Thank you, Krista, for sharing your story with us. My friends, what's your story?

In Christ,  
Rev. Lori Fuller  
ELDA Board President

# From the Director

Pastor Beth Lockard



Dear ELDA friends:

As we swing into Fall and the start of school classes, football, colorful leaves, and cooler weather, I have a few things to share with you.

We rejoice with Bread of Life Deaf Lutheran Church, who moved into their new location this summer. They are now housed at Minnehaha Communion Lutheran Church at 4101 37th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55406 after 68 years at their other location. Mail should now go to BOLD, PO Box 17444, Minneapolis, MN 55417. Office Manager and Communications Coordinator, Janie Barlow, can be reached at [boldoffice1@gmail.com](mailto:boldoffice1@gmail.com).

Christ the King Deaf Church (West Chester, PA) and Word of Life Deaf Lutheran (Lancaster, PA) will have a joint Deaf Women's Spiritual Retreat at the Riverview Retreat Center in Centreville, MD, which is near the Chesapeake Bay. The theme is "Live Your Faith, Follow Your Star," and will include a movie on Harriet Tubman and a visit to the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad and the Harriet Tubman Museum and Educational Center. We have 20 women signed up from three states. Four beds are left! reach out to Office and Finance Manager, Connie Wallace, at [office@deafcanpa.org](mailto:office@deafcanpa.org).

I spent my normal two weeks in July/August as the chaplain at two different camps for Deaf Adults with special needs at Camp Pecometh in Maryland and

Camp Innabah in PA. This year's focus was on the story of "Joshua and the Battle of Jericho" so the 50+ campers learned the story beginning from Moses' death to the Jericho event. This ecumenical group continues to inspire me and the campers look forward to learning a new part of the Bible each summer along with archery, canoeing, swimming, arts and crafts, basketball, splashdown on the lake, a 'smores campfire, bowling, a visit to a retired horse farm, and "God Time!" The highlight is a camper drama of the story on the last night with costumes and props. Many volunteers and donations make this possible.

Look for information on our ELM (Episcopal-Lutheran-Methodist) mission trip to Red Bird in the summer of 2025. Pr. Lori Fuller is leading this. I understand Palms Deaf Church (Florida) has found a site for the 2026 ELDA conference.

Don't forget to plan for your Deaf Ministry to show the ASL Jesus movie soon. It costs you nothing but Deaf Missions expects you to gather the Deaf Community who pay \$11 a ticket. This is a good evangelism project as many people like to see ASL films! Consider following it with a discussion and/or study group.

Have a good Fall!  
Pastor Beth  
ELCA Deaf Ministries

# Sign Language CAN! be fun

but, for us & many, it also can be deeply serious

Friends & Colleagues,

Our Beginning classes start Sept 10, with Intermediate and Advanced classes starting Sept 24 (the registration is attached so last call to SIGN up).

For us, Sign Language can be basic survival, but it is also art, spirituality, science, work, family, friends, and community!!

In just a few weeks, DeafCAN! will launch our new website, a new logo, slogan

“CARE COMMUNICATE  
CONNECT COMMUNITY.”

It has been a large investment but all intended to reach out, find, and support more Deaf people in need. For most hearing people we engage, they are surprised and often say “Never really thought about it but, of course there must be.... Deaf people in prison, refugees/immigrants/asylees, those who are Deaf & Blind, parents struggling with newly born Deaf children, Deaf who were fired, divorced, homeless, in hospice care.... and yes, also doctors, lawyers, teachers, counselors all trying to make things better.

We are also ‘building’ a hybrid classroom to reach isolated, vulnerable Deaf people we can’t reach physically, but CAN! SEE virtually, which allows us to Care Communicate, Connect, and build Community for and with them.

“From Isolation to Community” could have been our slogan, because that has always been essential part of our mission. Our hybrid classroom will soon reach Deaf Refugees/immigrants/ asylees beyond SE PA. We also hope that Deaf prisoners, isolated and spread throughout the country in Federal, State, and county prisons, with no or extremely limited access to programs and services, might now be able to have ‘visits’ and attend classes they can understand.

Post (we hope) COVID technology resources not only help us to reach others, but finally other, essential, even if remote services have opened doors and providing help in Sign Language:

Deaf 988 crisis/suicide hotline,

Deaf domestic violence hotline , both accessible directly by Deaf people’s videophones.

Deaf counseling services, and mostly Deaf themselves, that provide many counseling specialties, accept multiple insurances, and can team with local, ‘mainstream’ services to provide comprehensive and equivalent care.

Deaf people now do not need to worry about being rejected because of the cost of interpreters, or misunderstood by professionals with little to no experience in working with them. Finally (“PAH”), mis-understanding, mis-takes, mis-diagnosis, and mis-treatment no longer need to be the norm. The crippling dread of even seeking ‘help’ can now be replaced with actually getting it!

So, sure, SIGN up for our ASL classes, or put in a request for a staff training in health, human services, criminal justice, employment, housing, or other arenas. DEI, diversity equity inclusion, is not only NOT a dirty word. In fact, it is what we all seek as unique individuals, to be accepted, included, and part of a community.

As with many other nonprofits, your support is what makes our outreach and service to Deaf individuals and families possible.

Thanks, Bill Lockard



# Ministry News

## WORD OF LIFE DEAF

Lancaster, PA

WOLD bid a fond farewell to one of its charter members, Harrison Shirk, who passed away in August. Harrison was beloved by the community, and was a cherished member of WOLD's family. An interesting note – 30 years ago, WOLD was founded as a congregation with 44 people. Today, 8 charter members are still living and active with WOLD.

A summer highlight for WOLD was sending 6 members (2 of them WOLD charter members!) to the ELDA Conference in Rapid City, SD. When fall started, members were glad to get back to Bible study on Wed. nights, and to again have Sunday School discussion after worship.

WOLD members also enjoyed, not one, but two picnic worship services at the end of summer. We first attended Christ the King Deaf Church's picnic worship at the end of August. In early September, CTK members came and joined WOLD's picnic worship. It is a blessing for our two congregations to gather like this – we truly enjoy it and we thank God we can!

We had another "Meal-and-Movie" event in September. We served subs with soup and showed the movie "Susie's Hope." The movies we show are always based on true stories, which people like. This was the 24th movie event WOLD had since our first one in 2011.

Watch WOLD bible study recaps here: [wordoflifedeaf.org/bible-study](http://wordoflifedeaf.org/bible-study)

Join WOLD's bible study (Wed. nights 7pm EST) on Zoom:

Meeting ID: 813 2024 7582 Passcode: 790079

url: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81320247582?pwd=SSStSWHhCZWVUNVdNWWN4QWhscXNqZz09>

wd=SSStSWHhCZWVUNVdNWWN4QWhscXNqZz09

## HEARTLAND EPHATHA

Sioux Falls, SD

HEM has been busy with so many activities. Our next event is our "Deaf Awareness Sunday" at Peace Lutheran Church on November 10, 2024. The event will include a visit from Rev. Lori Fuller as well as a showing of the ASL movie "Jesus" at our church. If you're in the area we encourage you to visit.

We are still putting the finishing touches on a great ELDA conference. Please let us know your feedback by taking this survey

ELDA Survey:

<https://forms.gle/yq9vmGy1L5PAkhuJ6>

## BREAD OF LIFE DEAF

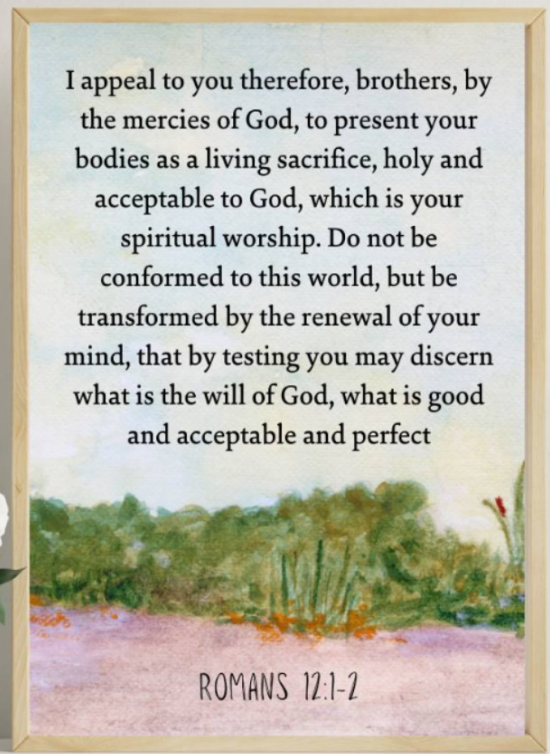
Minneapolis, MN

ELDA Community, at the time of our ELDA conference in Rapid City in June 2024, Bread of Life Deaf (BOLD) was nearly finished with moving and nearly completing the sale on the building of 38th Avenue South. We celebrated 68 years at the 38th Avenue location just the weekend before the conference with a farewell celebration with our community. Upon our return after the conference, BOLD moved to their new location - 1.7 miles south of the old location and we are still getting settled in as of October 2024. We are now renters to the church Minnehaha Communion Lutheran Church and we have designated worship, office, and storage spaces within the building for BOLD. It has been quite an adjustment for us, but we are very excited and hopeful to turn our focus back onto Deaf Ministry within the Deaf community. We want to remember again what it is like to SERVE OTHERS in the community rather than serving our building. We are truly grateful for all of your prayers and support from afar during our time of discernment and changes through the last year and a half - BOLD loves you all!   
\*\_Updates submitted on behalf of BOLD by Janie Barlow, BOLD Office Manager and Communications Coordinator\*

# Thanksgiving and Spiritual Article

Beloved friends and communities,  
I am changing the appeal a little this year - a Thanksgiving appeal and a spiritual appeal (more on this later).

Every year, ELDA has a Thanksgiving Appeal to help fund the expenses that allow ELDA to do God's work with our hands. This appeal means we ask for your financial participation in helping support ELDA and its needs. Needs include Board meeting costs, website upkeep, newsletter production, office supplies and equipment, nonprofit IRS fees, interpreters, ETC. We are thankful for all of our Deaf Ministries and for each individual's



I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect

ROMANS 12:1-2

support. We are humbly asking each of you to consider a donation toward our regular expenses, no amount is too small.

As your spiritual director, I want you to also consider your own spiritual

appeal. A spiritual appeal means the act of seeking a deeper understanding of existence and awakening one's best self. It also means being attracted to something on a much deeper level. This can be towards people, objects, ideas or aspirations. This appeal can mean a deeper spiritual connection with

yourself and God. There are many ways to go about this but the most important is to be truly focused, invested, and ongoing with this discernment to be sure you are focusing on your spiritual needs, and not your earthly, flesh needs. I am still learning about this myself; I encourage you to do the same during this season of Thanks and reflection for what we have. Reflect and find what gifts you have that you might be able to support your community and/or ELDA with, we would love to build more on the ELDA community!

Together, your gifts of any kind bless ELDA and allow us to support our organization and to serve you better. With this support now, that means 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

In the spirit of Gratitude,  
Janie Barlow, ELDA Spiritual Director



"Giving thanks for  
abundance is sweeter  
than the abundance itself"

Rumi







**Deaf ELM (Episcopal-Lutheran-Methodist) is returning to the Red Bird Mission in Beverly, Kentucky!**

**When? July 20th-25th, 2025**



## Interested?

The cost is \$500 per person. Includes what?  
Lodging, meals, and project donations.

Contact Pastor Lori Fuller at [lori@palmsdeaf.org](mailto:lori@palmsdeaf.org)  
for more information.



Yay! You have decided to join us on the July 20th-25th, 2025, Red Bird Mission Trip. We are excited to have you.

It is truly a great experience on so many levels. It's an opportunity to serve God while meeting new friends, learn, and grow together in faith.

As you may know, the Registration fee is \$500, which covers lodging, meals, and a supply donation. In addition, there would be some travel expenses. If you'd like to raise money to cover the costs of this mission trip, it's best to start early.

First, remember that you are not alone in this journey. Check with your church to see if funds are available for travel and mission expenses. Some churches have a budget just for that purpose. If not, remember to check with other churches your friends and family may belong to. The community is here to support you.

Below are some fundraising ideas you can use with your church, other churches, family, and friends, but not limited to:

- Adopt-a-mile fundraiser for a mission trip
- Work-a-thons, you collect pledges for participating in a big community service day.
- Babysitting
- Talent show
- Car wash
- Cook-Off
- Community Yard Sale
- Auction off baskets
- Ask for a mission support gift as a present for Christmas and Birthday
- And many more....

**Please talk to your church pastor before fundraising and follow church rules. Then, make sure money is given to your church treasurer to record and hold it safely until needed for the trip.**

*Jesus looked at them carefully and said, "It is impossible for human beings. But all things are possible for God." Matthew 19:26*





**REGISTRATION FORM**  
**DEAF ELM MISSION TRIP TO RED BIRD MISSION, BEVERLY, KENTUCKY**  
**July 20th-25th, 2025**

*And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me." Isaiah 6:8*

ALL CHECKS SHOULD BE MADE OUT TO RED BIRD MISSION  
ALL FORMS AND CHECKS SHOULD BE SENT TO:

Pastor Lori Fuller  
1851 NE 131st Ave  
Silver Springs, FL 334488

**DEADLINES: REGISTRATION FORM and \$250 per person REGISTRATION FEE due to Lori by March 10th, 2025. This is a NON-REFUNDABLE commitment fee.**  
**REMAINING \$250 is due to Lori by May 12th, 2025.**

**A COPY OF YOUR HEALTH INSURANCE CARD IS NEEDED**

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PLEASE FILL OUT **ONE FORM FOR EACH PERSON** GOING TO RED BIRD  
PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

PERSONAL INFORMATION:

Prefix (Mrs., Mr., Dr., Rev., etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Address-Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City and State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Church Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Church location (town and state): \_\_\_\_\_

Best/QUICKEST WAY TO COMMUNICATE with you, check one and fill in the information:

\_\_\_ Phone (Text): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Phone (Voice): \_\_\_\_\_

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



**HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY YOURSELF?** (Choose as many as apply to you.)

- Deaf
- Hard of Hearing
- Hearing
- Interpreter
- Pastor
- Lay person
- Male
- Female
- Adult (young and strong) \$500
- Adult (middle-aged and enthusiastic) \$500
- Adult (old and wise) \$500
- (other) \_\_\_\_\_

**Skills** (i.e., Carpentry, plumbing, masonry, simple household repairs, electricity, etc.).

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**Talents** (i.e., preaching, teaching, ASL interpretation, organizing, sewing, cooking, driving, etc.)

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**Challenges** (i.e., difficulty walking, food allergies, diabetes, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

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**Transportation:**

How do you plan on getting to Red Bird Mission?

Drive either by yourself or in a van with a group

Fly to nearby airport-Name/location of airport \_\_\_\_\_

If flying, what transportation will you use to Red Bird? \_\_\_\_\_

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

## ELDA Vision:

Vision Statement revised in 2022: "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, Deaf-Centered leadership development, and worship resources that show the love and grace of Jesus Christ to everyone we meet."

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

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## 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!