



# ELDA

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

**Volume 16 • September 2021  
Issue 62**

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

### MARK KOTERWSKI

Greetings to everyone,

Wow - Time goes by fast. Summer is already gone and fall is here now! I was thinking of how those leaves change from green to Yellow, Orange, Purple, and Red. What do those colors mean to us? I researched on the internet. It's interesting and shows that colors have the power of using words with a lot of positivity!

**Yellow** represents happiness, hope, and positivity.

**Orange** represents energy, happiness, enthusiasm, warmth and vitality.

**Purple** represents creativity, wisdom, devotion, peace, pride and independence.

**Red** represents life, health, courage, passion and love.

Often the negative is very powerful and overcomes our thinking. We need to be thankful that we have colors to help us think of positive attitudes!!! Sharing with everyone makes life joyful and meaningful. Enjoy walking through the trees with very colorful leaves!!!

The ELDA Board members had a meeting in person for the first time since two years ago at West Chester and Lancaster, PA. We had wonderful and productive meetings for 4 days. We are excited to have the ELDA conference held next year during June 26 - 28 at Lancaster, PA. I was very impressed with the Word of Life

Deaf committee!  
They worked very hard with all the planning and kept the costs as low as possible. We did visit the Hotel at Eden Resort & Suites, which will be the site for our conference. It was an amazing and beautiful lodge.



It has everything that we need during our stay (see first flyer in this newsletter for more details). We will visit the Amish and learn about their culture and lifestyle. It would be a great learning experience! I encourage you all to start saving money for the conference. Hope you all can come to the ELDA Conference next year. Please watch for more detail in the next newsletter!

God bless you all!  
Mark Koterwski  
ELDA President



# Inside this Issue



## Director's Report

Pastor Beth reports on the progress of Lori Fuller and some personal notes.



## Spiritual Report

Don Rosenkjar reflects on Galatians call to live in freedom and what that means for us..



## ELDA Conference News

It's been a long wait but there is finally news of the 2022 ELDA conference.

# 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 spirituality and empowerment, Deaf global missions and youth outreach, interpreter training, and a biennial 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.”

# FROM THE DIRECTOR

## PASTOR BETH LOCKARD

Dear ELDA Friends:

I cannot believe it is fall already. The summer has gone by quickly. I guess that means I am getting older? Here are some of the highlights:

- In the last issue I told you **Lori Fuller** graduated from the seminary. Plans are being made for her ordination in January, 2022 after she receives her call. She will begin mission developer training for her new church with retired Deaf Ministry pastor, **Rev. Gisele Berninghaus**, as her coach.. ELDA Board helped her with a name for her new church and you will hear more about this in the next issue. Lori wants all this planning to be Deaf-friendly!

- I am waiting to hear if **Pr. Ruth Ulea** in LCCN was able to purchase the van with the \$10,000 gift we sent. Three ELDA members paid for her deaf member, **Samuel Dimas**, to begin seminary in August. The money gift paid for his tuition for the year, his interpreter, and text books. ELDA members will have the opportunity to help fund Samuel's journey the next few years and then Nigeria will have another Deaf pastor!

- The ELDA Board met at Christ

the King in West Chester the first week of August and had a productive meeting and many laughs. We were able to visit the site of the 2022 ELDA Conference in Lancaster being hosted by Word of Life Deaf Lutheran. **ELDA will celebrate 30 years!** Thanks to members of CTK and WOLD for raising \$855 for the Board meeting expenses. More info will come from President Mark Koterwski and WOLD about these events.

- The last week of August, I worked as a camp **chaplain**, for my 11th year **with the United Methodist Deaf Ministry**. They provide a camp for Deaf special needs adults. In 2019 we had 50 campers, in 2020 we cancelled due to the pandemic, and this year two camps of 25-30 campers each were held in Maryland and Pennsylvania. Our theme was Noah's Ark. This is part of my ecumenical work through ELCA.

- **ELM Seeds** (Episcopal-Lutheran-Methodist Deaf Ministries) is planning another opportunity for a mission work week at **Red Bird mission in Kentucky** in 2022. Plan to attend!

- I have resigned from my Board



position with **Mill Neck Deaf School** Family of Organizations on Long Island, NY. I have been involved for around 20 years and they are heading in a different direction than in the past.. They will celebrate their 70th anniversary this fall. This was also a part of my ELCA work.

- On a personal note, I had another foot surgery in July and have healed well. Son Aaron received





his certifications for exterior firefighting and water rescue. Aaron was put to work in the recent flooding in our area during Tropical Storm Ida. Messiah Lutheran was flooded and one DeafCAN! worker's family lost their home. Another CTK member lost his car. We had no power for 24 hours and it was an anxious time for many. Son Jesse and wife Hillary had another baby, Reid William, (9.3 lb. & 22 inches) in August. Reid joins his big brother Ari and the Lockard clan expands!



Blessings to all,  
Pastor Beth Lockard  
ELCA Deaf Ministries



## CODA

### NEW MOVIE ON APPLE TV

Apple TV has produced a movie of interest to the Deaf community – CODA. CODA features a Deaf family, and focuses on the Hearing daughter's story.

The movie is praised for embodying “authentic representation onscreen.” CODA is the first film in Sundance Film Festival history to win all top prizes in the US Dramatic Competition category.

#### Synopsis of the movie:

Seventeen-year-old Ruby (Emilia Jones) is the sole hearing member of a deaf family – a CODA, child of deaf adults. Her life revolves around acting as interpreter for her parents (Marlee Matlin, Troy Kotsur) and working on the family's struggling fishing boat every day before school with her father and older brother (Daniel Durant). But when Ruby joins her high school's choir club, she discovers a gift for singing and soon finds herself drawn to her duet partner Miles (Ferdia Walsh-Peelo). Encouraged by her enthusiastic, tough-love choirmaster (Eugenio Derbez) to apply to a prestigious music school, Ruby finds herself torn between the obligations she feels to her family and the pursuit of her own dreams.

Learn more about the movie here: [www.apple.com/tv-pr/originals/coda/](https://www.apple.com/tv-pr/originals/coda/)

You will need an Apple TV subscription to watch CODA (there is a 7-day free trial).



# Evangelical Lutheran Deaf Association Conference

## "WALK IN FAITH"

June 23-26, 2022

(ELDA Board Meeting - June 21-23, 2022)  
(Pastoral Workers Meeting - June 26-28, 2022)

at  
Eden Resort & Suites  
222 Eden Rd  
Lancaster, PA 17601  
[www.edenresort.com](http://www.edenresort.com)

Amish Tour, workshops, meetings, skits, fellowships,  
and worship time.

Everyone is welcome!  
Better start saving money NOW for this conference.

# ELDA 2022 INFORMATION

## ELDA 2022 Conference Schedule:

ELDA Board meets:	June 21-23 (Tues. afternoon – Thur. morning)
ELDA Conference:	June 23-26 (Thur. afternoon – Sun. morning)
Pastoral workers:	June 26-28 (Sun. afternoon – Tues. morning)

## Hotel Info:

The Eden Resort & Suites is an award-winning, locally-owned, independent hotel. See their website: [www.edenresort.com](http://www.edenresort.com). Features of the hotel include:

Heated outdoor pool & Kidz Water Zone • Outdoor recreation area • Heated indoor pool & whirlpool • Fitness center • Sauna • A 24-hour gas/convenience store with made-to-order hot food is mere steps from the hotel

Rooms are 100% smoke-free with 2 queen beds. Room features include:

Free high-speed wireless internet (WiFi) • Refrigerator • Microwave • Coffee maker • Large flat screen TV(s) with cable television and pay-per-view movies • Hair dryer • Full-size ironing board & iron • Free in-room safe

## ELDA Board Info:

The ELDA Board will meet **BEFORE** the Conference, from **June 21-23** (Tues. afternoon – Thur. morning). Make your hotel reservations ASAP, under the group name: “ELDA Conference.” You must make your own reservations; *remember to make your reservations for the whole time you will be there*. Also remember – the ELDA Conference Registration fee (paid to WOLD) only covers meals during the Conference, not during ELDA board meeting dates.

## Pastoral Workers Info:

The Pastoral Workers will meet **AFTER** the Conference, from **June 26-28** (Sun. afternoon – Tues. morning). Make your hotel reservations ASAP, under the group name: “ELDA Conference.” You must make your own reservations; *remember to make your reservations for the whole time you will be there*. Also remember – the ELDA Conference Registration fee (paid to WOLD) only covers meals during the Conference, not during Pastoral Workers’ meeting dates.

• • • You are responsible to contact the hotel and make your reservation. • • •  
Make your reservation under the group name: “ELDA Conference.”  
Eden Resort & Suites: 717-569-6444

# ELDA 2022 REGISTRATION FORM “Walk In Faith”

June 23-26, 2022  
(Thursday afternoon – Sunday morning)

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

ELDA REGISTRATION  
% Gordon Bartens  
16 Springcrest Dr., Akron PA 17501

*Make checks payable to **Word of Life Deaf Lutheran Church***  
**Questions about Registration?** VP Gordon Bartens at 717-283-4284

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

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

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Text \_\_\_\_\_ VP \_\_\_\_\_

Your Church or Organization \_\_\_\_\_

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

Text \_\_\_\_\_ VP \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**CONFERENCE REGISTRATION (paid to WOLD) is same for all attendees.**

***The earlier you register, the less you pay!***

pay by 2/15 – **\$ 180/person** – covers food & conference only

pay by 3/31 – **\$ 230/person** – covers food & conference only

pay by 5/15 – **\$ 280/person** – covers food & conference only

Interpreter needs: \_\_\_ Voice (for Hearing) \_\_\_ Tactile (for DeafBlind)

Conference Attendee\* \_\_\_\_\_ # of people: \_\_\_\_\_ x reg. = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Attends Conf. 6/23-6/26*

Include Amish Tour **YES / NO** (circle one) \_\_\_\_\_ # of people: \_\_\_\_\_ x \$35 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Cost: \$35 (add to registration cost)

*Guided tour of “Amish country” on coach bus; includes Amish home-cooked meal in Amish home. Seating limited to 55 people.*

**YOUR TOTAL REGISTRATION: \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**REMEMBER!! –**

**YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE to contact the hotel and make your ROOM reservation!**

**Hotel will tell you your price for room. All rooms have 2 Queen beds.**

**• Share rooms – save money! •**

**Make reservation under group name:**

**“ELDA Conference”**

**Eden Resort & Suites: 717-569-6444**

**Deadline for hotel reservations: May 21, 2022**



**ELDA 2022**  
**TRANSPORTATION FORM**

(send to WOLD when you have your tickets!)

**note:**

Plan your arrival by 3PM Thursday (hotel check-in is 4PM)

Plan your departure anytime after breakfast on Sunday (hotel check-out is 11AM)

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Flying:**

Choose Destination, EITHER:

Lancaster Airport (LNS), Harrisburg Airport (MDT), or Philadelphia Airport (PHL)

**ARRIVAL**

Airport (circle): LNS MDT PHL

Airline: \_\_\_\_\_

Flight Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Arrival Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Arrival Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Need Picked Up? \_\_\_\_\_

**DEPARTURE**

Airport (circle): LNS MDT PHL

Airline: \_\_\_\_\_

Flight Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Departure Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Departure Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Need Dropped Off? \_\_\_\_\_

Your Text Number: \_\_\_\_\_ (so we can be in touch if needed)

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**Train:**

[www.amtrak.com](http://www.amtrak.com)

Choose Destination: Lancaster, PA (LNC)

Date Train Arrives: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Train Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Need Pickup? \_\_\_\_\_

Date Train Leaves: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Train Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Need Drop-off? \_\_\_\_\_

Your Text Number: \_\_\_\_\_ (so we can be in touch if needed)

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**Drive / Commute:**

Expected Date & Time of Arrival: \_\_\_\_\_

Address of Hotel:

Eden Resort & Suites  
222 Eden Road  
Lancaster, PA 17601

Your Text Number: \_\_\_\_\_ (so we can be in touch if needed)

# SPIRITUAL REPORT

DON ROSENKJAR

## Freedom! Freedom?

We are Christians. We try to follow Jesus' teachings: love thy neighbor, love thy enemy. If everyone everywhere faithfully follows this teaching, this country would be an amazing land, so full of love. But, we know that it is not so. It is up to us to be a "good Christian".

We live in a country where we are free to make decisions, to form opinions and to decide what is best for us. There are people who would not take Covid vaccination. We see people who would rather not wear masks. Many of them believed it is their right — to exercise freedom of choice. Freedom! Freedom?

There is a simple and short, and important verse in the Bible and these words were written by Paul. I hope you will read it carefully:

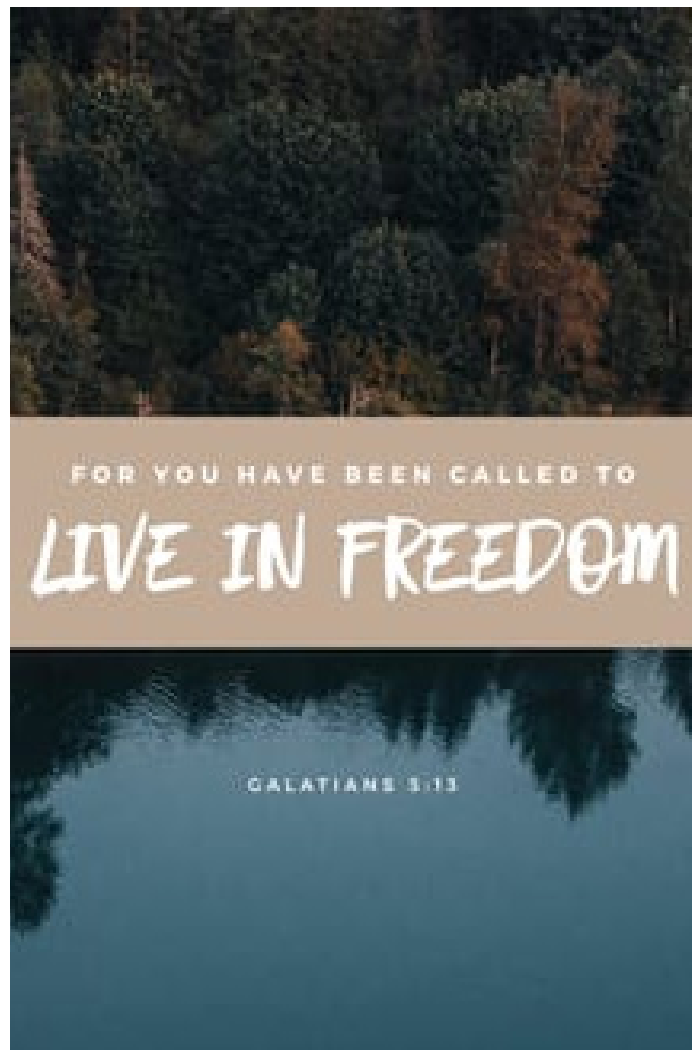
### Galatians 5:13

*"My friends, you were chosen to be free. So don't use your freedom as an excuse to do anything you want. **Use it as an opportunity to serve each other with love.**"*

If you decide not to be vaccinated and without realizing it, you are already infected with the virus, and you have a chance to expose the virus to those whom you love, and that is not love. Here is an example: suppose you decide NOT to wear your seat belt, and your daughter follows your sense of "freedom", and rides with you. You get into an accident and your daughter gets hurt. Freedom? Yes, but without "an opportunity to serve each other with love". There are TWO sides of love about

getting vaccinated: to preserve your own health, **and** the health of your loved ones. It should be not because you are a Democrat or a Republican, but because you are a Christian.

*Read the scripture again: "My friends, you were chosen to be free. So don't use your freedom as an excuse to do anything you want. **Use it as an opportunity to serve each other with love.**"*



# ELDA THANKSGIVING APPEAL

Each year we gather to celebrate Thanksgiving as many American families do. But Thanksgiving is not just about eating turkey and celebrating with family and friends. It is a time to remember God's many blessings to us each day and to share with others.. ELDA has two opportunities each year to share donations to support ELDA mission and ministry.

Our Thanksgiving Appeal is a time congregations and individuals can share donations to help ELDA run our organization and pay for our expenses. The expenses include Board meetings, travel expenses, program supplies and equipment, office supplies, etc. Your gifts keep us going throughout the year. This is supplemented by our annual membership dues. In 2022, we will celebrate our 30th year!

Our second opportunity to give is the Lenten Appeal. Gifts at this time support our mission efforts and go into our HOPE and Zechariah Funds. We have used these funds in the past to assist with mission trips, empower leadership training, and support disaster relief for Deaf people locally and globally..

You and your church can give any time during the year. ELDA appreciates your giving and will follow your instructions for the use of the gift. Please send donations to Treasurer Jeff Panek at 625 South Mary Drive, Tea, SD 57064.

## HAITI DEAF ACADEMY MANAGER OF OPERATIONS

Our residential school for the deaf and hard of hearing serves 48 children. Located in Cabaret since 2013, we are moving our program to cottage- family style housing on the secure, inclusive, Lifesong campus in Bercy in January 2022. We are looking for a missionary/expat willing to live full time in Haiti to oversee operations and our Haitian Supervisors and 20 staff members. This person would be strong in operations, program development and reporting; working toward fluency in Creole and be willing to learn Haitian Sign Language, as our students and much of our staff use sign language. The position would begin as soon as possible, but desired by January 2022. Our mission to Educate, Encourage, Empower and Employ deaf Haitians drives our desire to teach children with no language- sign language so they can hear the Gospel, be educated, empowered in a deaf community and included in the hearing world. Please contact us at [Margaret@Haitideafacademy.com](mailto:Margaret@Haitideafacademy.com)

With warm Thanks, Leslie Wildermuth

# I CAN FULLY PARTICIPATE

RE-PRINTED FROM LIVING LUTHERAN

BY STEPHANIE N. GRIMOLD - SEPTEMBER 14, 2021

Growing up as a deaf child in the Philippines, Mary Grace Asuncion felt unsupported. Her family didn't know sign language, nor did they care to learn. "I wasn't able to talk to anybody," the 44-year-old recalled. "My mind was dead. It was extremely frustrating."

When she moved to the United States in 2013, life continued to challenge her. She married into domestic violence and finally called 911 to separate herself from a toxic, dangerous partner.

Then she found Christ the King Deaf Church, a two-point congregation in West Chester and Philadelphia, Pa. The community is home to Beth and Bill Lockard.

Beth, pastor of Christ the King and the first deaf female pastor in the ELCA, did what she has done for years—she helped the woman find the physical and spiritual resources she needed.

Asuncion started taking classes at Christ the King to improve her English and her American Sign Language (ASL), and that bloomed into driver's education classes, citizenship classes and more. As her social skills grew, so did her confidence.

On May 14, Asuncion became a U.S. citizen. Today she lives in her own apartment and works at a county



DeafCAN! is a human service program of Christ the King Deaf Church, Philadelphia, and offers a variety of services to the area's deaf community. Here English as a Second Language participants finger-spell the word "LOVE." Many deaf people learn ESL because American Sign Language is their first language.

hospital doing specialized cleaning of the surgery rooms. She's also one of her congregation's most engaged volunteers, Beth said.

"Now, I'm happy," Asuncion said. "Before, when I was alone, nothing made sense. So now, the Bible, church, working with people, history, communities, it all makes sense. ... [I have] a community, and the sermons make sense, and that's what is most important."

## Advocating for the deaf community

Unfortunately, many deaf people in the United States face obstacles similar to Asuncion's, Bill said. The majority of families who have a deaf child don't know how to sign, he noted.


And around 90% of the deaf community in the United States are not churched, Beth said, adding, "That's not how it should

be. Generally speaking, as a deaf community we can compare ourselves to an ethnic minority with our own language and culture, rather than a disability community."

The Lockards have seen that there aren't enough advocates for deaf people, especially for immigrants and inmates. They've advocated for the deaf community for decades, and for 11 years they have led the Deaf Community Action Network (DeafCAN!), working with about 250 deaf and hard-of-hearing constituents each year, including refugees and immigrants such as Asuncion. A ministry of Christ the King, DeafCAN! serves a large Bhutanese deaf community in its region.

Bill, program director for DeafCAN!, said every day is a challenge, especially when it comes to funding, and even finding interpreters isn't easy. There are 130 sign languages, so even if an ASL interpreter is available,





they can't translate for someone who uses Nepali sign language. "The [professional] people we usually meet are often not able to translate their expertise and services to this community. [Communication] falls on us," he said.

These are the sort of considerations that show the ministry's uniqueness. "The work that Beth and Bill do, and services that DeafCAN! provide, they're making sure that people are not going to fall through the cracks in the system," said Christine Shelly, a hearing member of Christ the King and an ASL interpreter who volunteers with the Lockards. "[Beth] doesn't need those words 'treat others how you want to be treated'—she lives them every day through the grace of God."

### **A new way to worship**

When Beth isn't teaching citizenship class or helping her husband with other DeafCAN! endeavors, she's pastoring Christ the King. She has adapted the liturgy for the congregation, which includes both deaf and hearing members. Every worship service is conducted in ASL, while Bill or another interpreter voices the service for hearing members who don't know sign language.

"We have roughly translated the [Lutheran Book of Worship] liturgy," she said, "but the pace is slower than a hearing worship service and we have maybe one song or none at all."

A different member signs the Lord's Prayer each week, and they tend to read one lesson, usually the Gospel, which is the basis of Beth's sermon.

"My sermons tend to be dialogue sermons where I may ask the people a question and get their comments

and answers," she said. "This assures me that people are following the flow or if more expansion is helpful. Many of our people come from unchurched backgrounds or grew up in a congregation without a sign language interpreter or signing pastor. ... [Much] of our religious terminology is unknown or unfamiliar: 'Christ the Good Shepherd,' 'the Alpha and the Omega,' grace, the parables, psalms, apostles, etc."

That understanding is spot-on, Asuncion said, adding, "I knew nothing about God or church or the Bible growing up. I didn't understand what the big words meant in the Bible, so getting it all translated with a deaf pastor, it's been really enjoyable. I'm finally in a place where I can fully participate."

### **Looking for leadership**

The ELCA has around 10 groups with functioning deaf ministries, said Beth, who also serves as the part-time ELCA coordinator for deaf ministries. In that capacity, she supports and advocates for deaf ministries, communicates with synods and others, and works closely with the Evangelical Lutheran Deaf Association.

In addition, there are only three female deaf Lutheran pastors: Lockard; Ruth Ulea, a pastor in the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria; and Lori Fuller, who just graduated from Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn., and will be ordained later this year.

"The problem is, English is a second language for most deaf people, and seminary is tough with tons of books to read and papers to write, all in English," she said. "I'm fortunate that I'm bilingual [in English and ASL]. ... I became deaf when I was 6; I

was hearing for 6 years ... I had that advantage. Most deaf people don't."

While having interpreters is a step in the right direction, the deaf community needs more deaf leaders, Beth said. "I think some churches hire people who are good signers, but they're really not interpreters," she said. "They know kindergarten-level sign language. Whereas at a deaf church, there are totally equivalent language concepts. I think at a deaf church, for someone like Mary Grace [Asuncion], they have a chance to become leaders: they get on church council, the choir ... they get to be fully participants, not just people who come and sit in the pew. Whereas in interpretive worship, all you do is warm the pew."

Shelly agreed: "I have interpreted church services, and the deaf or hard-of-hearing congregation has to receive my interpretation of a spiritual leader or the laypeople doing the readings—and interpreting in any language is not a perfect science. But to have Pastor Beth is such a wonderful gift because there's no interpreter needed.

"In a perfect world, we wouldn't need interpreters, because everyone would know sign language."

Beth said her dream is to help start a Deaf Lay Leadership Academy—a mini-seminary of sorts that would be led by deaf people for deaf people so they could become evangelists within the community.

"I would love to see that happen," she said. "I enjoy seeing people learn and grow to reach their potential as God's children and become empowered to help themselves and serve others in the process. With 90% of the deaf community unchurched, our field is ripe but harvesters are few."

