



# ELDA

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March 2019

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



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

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Mark Koterwski*

Greetings to everyone!

Guess what??? Easter will be here soon! Are we looking for a Rabbit with colored eggs, HUH??? Actually we are celebrating the resurrection of Jesus from the dead after the third day of his crucifixion and burial during 30 AD.

What does that mean to have Easter? There are many ways to discuss how important Easter is for us. One thing that I would like to address is the word "FORGIVE"!

The quote from the Bible Luke 23: 34-35 Jesus said "Father, forgive these people! They don't know what they are doing". Wow what a beautiful quote! What does that mean to you?

If you did something wrong, or did not realize that you made a mistake, or acted wrong, or you did not intend to do wrong; you are already forgiven by Jesus if you pray to God and ask for forgiveness! That will help everyone to reduce their feelings of being guilty, and feeling shameful, or anything that makes you feel low self-esteem. We will learn from our mistakes and change our ways for a better life. You can forgive anyone who did you wrong as well as forgive yourself for what you did.

That's GRACE and the best gift from God!!!



### ANNOUCEMENTS:

The ELDA is proud of our wonderful partnership with UMCD. 8 Deaf and Hard of Hearing people from 3 different Lutheran Churches will go with the UMCD team for a total of about 42 Deaf and Hard of Hearing people to the Red Bird Mission in Tennessee during the week of August 11, 2019. We will be doing either Education which includes tutoring, Classroom and

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AND MUCH, MUCH, MORE

# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT CONTINUED

Library Aides and/or Community Housing Improvement which includes being crew leaders, cooks, carpenters, and facility caretakers, etc.

Also, the United Methodist Congress of the Deaf (UMCD) will host the ELM (ELDA) Conference in Orlando, Florida during the summer of 2020. Please keep your eyes open for a flyer to be posted sometime in the Fall/Winter 2019. I would encourage you and your church to start fundraising and save your money for this exciting event. I want to say many thanks to UMCD for their willingness to host the conference. The next conference is July 23--26, 2020. Of course the ELDA Board will be happy to help UMCD if they need our assistance!

God Bless you and Happy Easter!

Mark Koterwski  
ELDA President

## LENTEN APPEAL

Spring is here....almost! It is also time to reflect on the Lenten season.

The season of Lent is already upon us and it is time for each of us to think and pray about what we can give up for Lent, and also think and pray about what we can give for the ELDA Lenten Appeal. This appeal helps ELDA grow the **HOPE and Zechariah Funds** so that we can help others who plan to go into ministry. It also helps support the ELDA mission trips. If you can donate any amount towards the Lenten Appeal, it would be greatly appreciated! Thank you!

**Spring is also the time for membership dues. The membership rates are as follows:**

**Churches or Ministries: \$125.00 yearly**

**Families: \$25 yearly**

**Individuals: \$15.00 yearly**

**If you are a Thrivent member**, you can direct your Thrivent dollars towards the **Thrivent Choice**. Be sure to list **ELDA** as one of your Thrivent Choices. If you are not sure how to do that, contact your Thrivent representative in your area.

Thank you!

**Your Lenten appeal donation and membership fees can be sent to our ELDA**

**Treasurer at:**

**Jeff Panek 625 Mary Drive Tea, South Dakota 57064**



# GOD WINK

Rev. Ruth Ulea in Nigeria

Was it possible that God would prepare an unknown poor daughter of a soldier to become a pastor some day? I ask that question myself and looking back, I do believe that it came from God. It did not look like a possibility when I became Deaf at age eleven years old while I was living in North East Nigeria and my father was based in South Nigeria.

It was around the same time, I met a Black Deaf American man by the name of Andrew Jackson Foster. Mr. Foster was my teacher and mentor at Christian Mission for the Deaf in Ibadan. It was his excitement at the church for the Deaf people that inspired me and continues to give me passion to serve the Deaf community today. I started out as Mr. Andrew Foster's Secretary. He promised to send me to a seminary in Igbaja, Nigeria where he had previously sent other Deaf students. I continued to work for Mr. Foster while waiting for my turn to go. Until 1987 when he passed away, I lost hope.

I then returned home to North East Nigeria, got married and became a school teacher at Special Education Centre in Jada. It was there that I met a Danish woman by the name, Jette. Jette encouraged me to go to Lutheran Seminary in Mbamba Yola from 1989-1992. I took a full pastor's training for four years and was the only Deaf person in the program. I depended on textbooks as an interpreter was not available. I passed all the courses. I became ordained as a pastor in 2013. In 2016, I had an opportunity to go to America to attend a conference. During that time, I was able to visit Gallaudet University as well as meet with Pastor Beth Lockard and old friends who had left Nigeria in the 1970s to 1980s to the United States.

God is great and wonderful. I am amazed and forever grateful to God as everything aligns in his time. There is an appointed time for everything as the Bible says in Ecclesiastes 3:1.

Many people have told me that they have never seen Mr. Andrew Foster but they have seen him in the dedication and the work I am doing because of him.

Let us do all the good we can, by all the means we can, in all the places we can. It could be in your career or in your job-just keep doing it, stay in your place and God will use it and make you a tremendous blessing.

# HAITI DEAF ACADEMY



These students in the photos are still laundering their own school uniforms one year later. Building life skills is an important part of the education happening at the Haiti Deaf Academy. Please help HDA during this current Haiti lockdown. Their website is [haitideafacademy](http://haitideafacademy) and you can click on the donate button. All donations are tax deductible.



# NEEDED: DEAF MINISTER AT ST. MATTHEW'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

St. Matthew's is looking for a new Deaf Minister!

St. Matthew's Lutheran Church is a progressive Christian community in North Hollywood, CA, with a strong commitment to LGBTQI rights, Deaf-inclusion, the Arts and community engagement. We are looking for a new part-time Deaf minister to minister with and lead the Deaf community we call Sharing Hands that was founded at St. Matthew's more than 20 years ago. Duties include leading worship, pastoral care and outreach. The Deaf minister works in collaboration with and under the supervision of the Pastor of St. Matthew's to create a vibrant, Gospel-filled religious community for the Deaf.

**Compensation:** The Deaf minister is a one-year, part-time position of approximately 12-15 hours per week. The salary is \$12,000-\$15,000 for 12 months, depending on experience. We offer 3 weeks vacation, but no other benefits.

**Applications:** To apply for the position of Deaf minister, please e-mail a cover letter, resume and name and contact information of three references to Pr. Stephanie Jaeger, [stmatthewsnohopastor@gmail.com](mailto:stmatthewsnohopastor@gmail.com) by April 15. Select applicants will be invited for interviews and to assist with a Sharing Hands gathering or Bible study. **Start Date:** May 1 or as soon as possible thereafter.

**Worship:** The main feature of our Deaf Ministry is All-ASL worship. It is a "safe space" for the Deaf to fully immerse in the spirituality of the Gospel, to fully celebrate the Eucharist, using the common language of American Sign Language. It is an interactive service where the congregants are welcome to "interrupt" the service for clarification or comments. The Deaf minister leads the service, prepares the readings and discussion, and serves as presider, making a point of inviting everyone to participate. This service normally occur on every second, fourth and fifth Sunday of the month. On the other Sundays, we join with the hearing congregation, assisting together in worship that is ASL interpreted. During the Lenten season, Sharing Hands traditionally does things "outside of the box" to deepen our sense of spirituality (i.e. fields trips to different Deaf churches, visits to a monastery, visits to other religious sites like Hindu or Buddhist temples).

**Pastoral Care:** The Deaf minister provides pastoral care with Deaf participants as needed, arranges and presides at baptisms, weddings, and funerals. The Deaf minister also organizes Deaf gatherings, Bible studies and other opportunities to benefit the spiritual development of the Deaf persons.

**Outreach:** The Deaf minister reaches out in creative and meaningful ways to Deaf persons in the community with the intent of building up the Deaf ministry at St. Matthew's. The Deaf minister builds and maintains relationships with Deaf organizations in the Los Angeles area as well as with the national Evangelical Lutheran Deaf Association.

**Qualifications:** Candidates for the position of Deaf minister should be fluent in ASL with preference given to persons who identify Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Candidates should have experience participating in and showing leadership in Deaf ministry in a Christian congregation. Candidates with demonstrated training or experience in counseling or peer support preferred. Strong communication and pastoral gifts required.

# ELCA DEAF MINISTRIES COORDINATOR'S REPORT



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Lenten greetings! I am thrilled to share the good news that our ELDA Secretary, Lori Fuller, has been approved by her Florida-Bahamas Synod as a candidate for entrance into the ordination process. She applied at three different seminaries, was accepted

at all of them, and chose Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN. She will begin an intense two-year program in June with all expenses paid. This is an innovative on-line program and Lori will fly back and forth to the seminary during the two years. We can look forward to having a new Deaf pastor in ELCA! Please keep her in your prayers as she prepares for this important work.

I just learned that Harriet MacDonald of Allentown, PA, turned 100. Harriet was involved in our earlier ELDA years and was a member of the former Lutheran Church of the Deaf in LehighValley which hosted ELDA's 1994 conference in Easton, PA. Harriet has been living in a Lutheran assisted living/nursing home in the area.

I had the opportunity to visit Chicago last month to attend meetings at the ELCA churchwide offices and a Companionship Training workshop to become allies with people who have mental health issues. Carol Josefowski has been coordinating the ELCA Disabilities Ministries and understands our Deaf Ministries cultural and linguistic focus.

While there, I attended meetings of the Disability Ministries team and listened to their concerns and we shared these with Bishop Elizabeth Eaton. I gave each person our ELDA Directory. Pr. Peter Heide, a blind pastor from Wisconsin, was also visiting. He and I are not a part of the Disability Ministries team but they welcomed us. Much of what he shared with

me matches our Deaf experience. We hope to collaborate on a future project sharing our biblical interpretations of various texts.

I also had the chance to visit with Bob Radtke and Nathan Zastoupil of the Chicago Lutheran Deaf Ministry. They represent Gloria Dei Lutheran in Downer's Grove and Prince of Peace Lutheran in Schaumburg, both just west of Chicago. Both are Deaf and trying to keep the ministry alive since Pr. Dayton Williams retired. Deacon Dorothy Sparks (MN) will be flying there to lead worship several times a year. Pr. Russ Rockwell (PA) flew in for part of my time in Chicago to discuss development of faith formation materials/media.

The Disability Ministries team was concerned about decreasing funds and restructuring and it is important that we keep our important work visible in ELCA. I want to share my own "God-wink" with you. We met with Rev. Philip Hirsch from the east coast who had just moved to Chicago nine days earlier to begin his new position in ELCA. When I gave him the ELDA Directory and explained I was from PA, he asked me which city and I told him. He then mentioned his wife had been a student at West Chester University majoring in Special Ed and still used ASL in her classroom. He knew where my church was located. I thought that was a God-wink. Later he asked me if I taught ASL at WCU and I said I had taught night classes about 30 years ago. Well, after talking to his wife, he informed me I was her ASL teacher! Double God-wink! The next day, he showed me a picture on his phone that his wife sent of the wedding gift I had given them 30 years ago! Triple God-wink! I don't remember much of this as I had so many students but God has shown me Deaf Ministries and Disabilities Ministries will not be forgotten by this new churchwide leader!

Blessings, Pr. Beth  
ELCA Deaf Ministries Director

# LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD: MARY EDWARDS

The Lifetime Achievement Award is awarded to those who have done distinctive work for and with deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing Minnesotans that spans their 20+ years of contributions.

Mary Edwards is the recipient of this award and she is a force to be reckoned with. Her service to people who are deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing goes beyond 20 years.

Mary has worked and volunteered for Minnesota's Deaf Community Health Workers Program, CSD's Deaf ABE program, Pink Deafies, Deaf Hospice, HCMC, Ramsey County, and more. She has done most of her work for little to no pay.

Her heart lies with deaf immigrants, many of who had limited access to language growing up. She has provided bus transportation training, Civics training, and Citizenship training. But wait, there is more.

Mary makes sure that deaf immigrants gain the tools to navigate the "system," get the services they need and have opportunities to become successful.

Her work with deaf medical patients is phenomenal. Mary goes to their appointments with them. She helps them understand their medical issues and their medications. If you have the opportunity, please ask Mary to explain diabetes or rabies... in classifiers.

Mary is a person who has truly changed lives! Congratulations to Mary Edwards on your Lifetime Achievement Award. Mary is a faithful member of Bread of Life Deaf Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, MN and Mary has attended several ELDA Conferences. Mary also went on the ELDA Mission trips to Jamaica School for the Deaf and volunteered her time there with the children at the school.

**Mary truly is an amazing woman!  
Again, congratulations, Mary!**



# MINISTRY NEWS- WORD OF LIFE DEAF

WOLD hosted a special breakfast fundraiser for the purchase of a bus for the Deaf Centre of the Lutheran Christian Church of Nigeria. This is one of 10 deaf churches in ELDA doing this same thing.

We are happy to share that it was a success. We had an enjoyable experience working with St Peter's Church kitchen crew who did all the breakfast cooking, and who stayed with us all the way. It was a wonderful unity between WOLD and St. Peter's. We couldn't have done this without their help. Thanks to everyone for their support; it is deeply appreciated.



## 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."

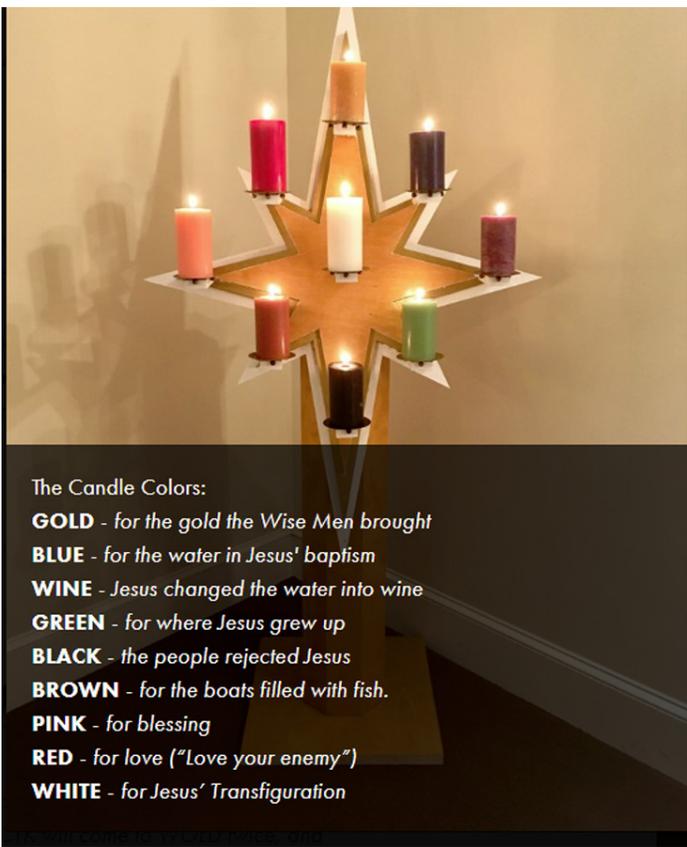
***Vision Statement:*** "Together as one, with God's help we strive to build a spectrum of ministries with Deaf people, passionately engaged in creating and supporting diverse ministries, outreach, communication, worship resources, and leadership development that show the love and grace of Jesus Christ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

-Pastor Russ Rockwell

In January, WOLD had a “meal-and-a-movie” event. We showed the movie, “Mr. Church,” which was a delightful, positive story about family and friendship. We plan to have another “movie-and-meal” event in March.



WOLD worshippers enjoyed guessing what color of candle would be put on our Epiphany Star every week. This was the 2nd year we used our new, custom-made Epiphany Star. The star helps add a little excitement to the cold winter months of worship. We needed that excitement because bad weather prevented people from coming to worship twice in January!

On Wednesday nights, our Bible study continues on the topic: “Bible Stories to Know.” Seeing the different signers on the Deaf Missions videos is great — the best thing was seeing a younger version of Dorothy Sparks signing a story from the book of Ruth!

WOLD will have Ash Wednesday service at 7 p.m., and join St. Peter’s members for midweek evening Lenten services. For the third year in a row, WOLD & CTK will participate in a “Lenten Pulpit Exchange.” Pastor Russ of WOLD & Pastor Beth of CTK will go to each other’s churches and lead worship & preach two Sundays in March.

Members of both churches really enjoy the pulpit exchange. The theme of this year’s pulpit exchange

is “Too Hard to Follow Jesus.” Different gospel lessons will show how some people found it “too hard” to follow Jesus because of either what Jesus said or what He expected of them. The series will help us think of our own challenges as we sometimes struggle to follow Jesus. To see what else WOLD is up to, check the announcements on [www.wordoflifedeaf.org/announcements](http://www.wordoflifedeaf.org/announcements).

At WOLD’s annual congregational meeting last November, it was decided not to worship on 5th Sundays in 2019. The congregation also voted to return to worshipping at 9:30 a.m. during the “school year,” and at 10:00 in the summer months. The exception is during Lent, when worship changes to 10:30 to make it easier for Pr. Beth to come to WOLD for the pulpit exchange. Palm Sunday & Easter Sunday worship will be at 10:00 a.m.

# BREAD OF LIFE CHURCH MINNEAPOLIS, MN

## Bread of Life Lutheran Church Sponsors a 1956 Bash!

On Saturday, February 16th BOLD hosted an event, called "BOLD's 1956 Bash." BOLD was founded in 1956. We decorated in 1950's style. We wore 1950's style of clothing. It was a fundraiser for BOLD. Those who attended had a fun time.

Pictures from this bash were provided by Dorothy Sparks.

When Dorothy was a little girl, she wore a purple skirt with a white dog. She wore it again as an apron for this event because the skirt did not fit her anymore. Her mother kept few clothes that Dorothy wore when she was little. She kept them in her storage chest.



Sporting the 1950's look!



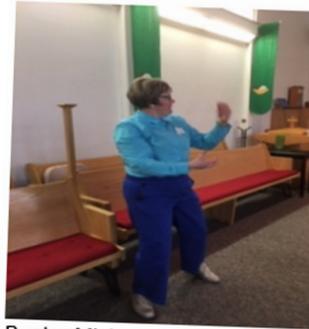
Barbara Schmidt



Basket Auction



1950's style food



Pastor Michelle Lewis



Full house!



Hot food was served too.



Drive-in Movie with popcorn.



Dorothy Sparks and Barb Schmidt



1950's Music



Dorothy Sparks



Mary Jo Duncan

# PASTOR RUTH ULEA

## REPORT FROM NIGERIA

### ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF CHRIST IN NIGERIA

The theme of this year convention is “Be very careful, then how you live”. It was taken from (Eph 5:15) which has been used by the guest speakers, The convention was very important for us because it refreshes us spiritually, and at the same time, it bring us together as Lutheran members in Nigeria and not only in Nigeria but it attracts visitors from churches all over the world. This year, we had visitors from Germany, America the ELCA and Denmark Mission Africa ,Ethiopia, Sweden etc. ,The most important part of the convention was the gathering of Lutherans and believers that come together to listen to the word of God, The beauty was that it was not only the Lutherans. Other denominations attended as well, even the deaf people are among them.

People always prepared for the whole year and look forward to attending this year’s convention. Attendance certainly had been more than ten thousand and because from the last convention, we only expected about ten thousand, but to my surprise when I asked, they told me it was 45,000 attendance!

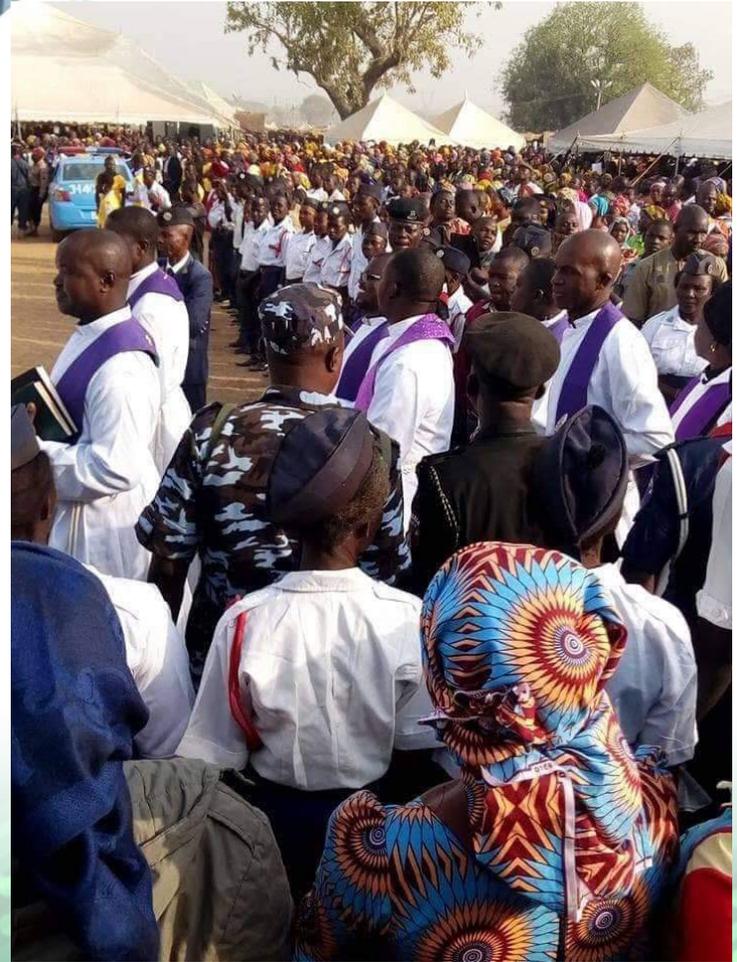
One of the Bishop was consecrated and 37 candidates were ordained, among them only one was a female. The convention ended in peace. Remember, I told you about our female conference coming in February 2019. The conference has been rescheduled to the 2nd week of June due to the election and vote in February. The children are back to school after Christmas break but many families are still struggling to settle school fees and other needs. Pray for provision and wisdom for the parents to plan well ahead of time. School had been closed yesterday due to the election coming on 16th -20 February 2019.

I heard the story of a Blind man who died and the preacher, at the last moment put his white cane and dark glasses into the grave. A crippled man died and at the last moment the preacher put his wheelchair into the grave. A deaf man died, and the preacher at the last moment threw the interpreter into the grave!!! That was why we all lack interpreters in Africa! It is a funny joke about the lack of interpreters.

Appreciation to all the ELDA members.  
God bless and reward you all,  
Pastor Ruth ULEA,



THE ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF CHRIST IN NIGERIA. IT HAS COME AND PASSED; THE CONVENTION BEGINNING ON MONDAY 28TH -29TH JANUARY FOR CLERGY MEN AND FEMALES AND THEN ON 30-3 FEBRUARY FOR THE CONGREGATIONS.



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 24 MARKS 6 YEARS SINCE PASTOR RUTH ULEA'S ORDINATION IN THE LCCN-NIGERIA.  
2/24/13-2/24/19  
"GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS"

# REPORT FROM PASTOR RUTH ULEA

Dear friends.

Greetings in Jesus' name from Nigeria LCCN Deaf Centre Academy, Jimeta Yola. I, Rev. Ruth Ulea, the proprietress of LCCN Deaf Centre Academy in Jimeta had experienced the major sources of the impressive progress achieved by the school within the short period of its establishment. We thank God for the added-on one block building classroom and even more projects are ongoing in our efforts to provide what benefits the teaching classroom. The school was established on love for the deaf pupils who are the assets of the school.

I reiterate that the deaf pupils, who are the cherished assets of the school are always treated and guided to perfection, as well as imbued with high moral rectitude, discipline and hard work. I also stated this during my final term speech at this year's closed term 2017/2018 at the end of the session party explained that since 2010 when the school was established, there had been significant successes recorded in areas of academic performance as well as competitions and sporting events.

I, the proprietress said I started this school in 2010 with crèche. Today I am so delighted with the progress we have recorded so far and we give all thanks to God Almighty. We started with one student, but now I am proud to say we have more than 35 pupils from Nursery-primary, secondary and senior secondary school. Three of our students passed the junior secondary examination with 'B' in all the subjects in the LCCN Hearing Academy. Thumbs up to the three of them and they have gain admission into senior secondary school at the LCCN Deaf Centre Academy. So proud! About the challenges faced by the school, I the proprietress noted that like every new project the teething problems confronting the school include accommodation, poor response of parents to payment for their children's fees. Among others but today we thank God that a few parent are responding better and they are also getting values for the

money they paid, but not all parents, some have never paid at all. This is a school built on a solid foundation which is Jesus Christ; every child regards of their background, gender, or religion is precious to us because as human beings, we are one. We see the children as our own biological children even before they arrive and we have abandoned deaf children which we sent to special Education with the help we received from LMF Denmark 1996-2009.

Our only source of income is the school fees that we collect from students. There is no other source of income. We have benefactions in terms of Building donations through Jay Johnson and Mission Africa, Bread of Life Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota, donations of some funds and a church building fund donation from Lutheran Friends of the Deaf. My experience especially with people complaining about fees is that the LCCN owns this school but LCCN does not fund it, either does the headquarters fund the school nor the Government. We also allow everybody whether Muslim or Christian to attend.

Go to the Headquarters and you will hear them ask who permit you to establish the school? How do you expect us to pay for the church and the teachers?

How do you run the school? I run this school, not as a principal but as a proprietress. I see the students as my sheep and I am their pastor. I see them as my students with very beautiful and bright visions.

God bless you all.  
Pastor. Ruth Ulea.



# THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF CHRIST IN NIGERIA

\*COMMUNIQUÉ ISSUED AT THE 94TH ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF CHRIST IN NIGERIA (LCCN) HELD AT THE CONVENTION GROUND, DEMSA, ADAMAWA STATE, NIGERIA, 28TH JANUARY TO 3RD FEBRUARY 2019\*

## **\*PREAMBLE\***

The Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria (LCCN) founded through the missionary work of the then Sudan United Mission Denmark in 1913, held its 94th Annual Convention at the LCCN Convention Ground Demsa, Demsa Local Government Area, Adamawa State, Nigeria, from 28th January to 3rd February 2019. The Annual Convention which was started since 1925 is a significant event in the spiritual, life and witness of the church, which offers opportunity for Lutherans in Nigeria to fellowship together beyond the usual church auditorium.

It is estimated that the 2019 convention was attended by over 45,000 Christians from all the congregations of the LCCN, its partners in mission and ecumenical partners, with women and youth making 75% of those that attended. This year 1 bishop was consecrated, and 37 candidates were ordained into the pastoral ministry of the church.

A two-day Pastors Pre-Conference was held on 28-29 January 2019 for prayers and reflection together on critical pastoral and socio-political issues. In view of the electioneering period in Nigeria, the Pastors Pre-Convention Conference reflected on the role of the pastors in promoting peaceful environment under the theme; Election related violence in Nigeria: The role of Christian Clergy.

The main convention was held under the theme “Be very careful then, how you live” (Ephesians 5:15). Other topics include, “Walk as Children of the Light, those who hope in the Lord, and what does the Lord required of you?, My grace is sufficient for you, The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and preparing for retirement.” There were special moments of prayers, songs and other activities.

We are grateful for the visit of a delegation from the German National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation, a representative of Mission Africa in Denmark. The occasion was also graced by the Chairman Adamawa State Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) Bishop Dr. Dami Mamza who brought greetings on behalf of the association and the President of the Youth Wing of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) of 19 northern states of Nigeria.

We acknowledge with gratitude the visit of His Excellency, the Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Professor Yemi Osibanjo, SAN, GCON, accompanied by His Excellency the Executive Governor of Adamawa State, Senator Muhammed Umaru Jibrilla Bindow, the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF) Dr. Boss Gida Mustapha Esq, and many top government officials. We also acknowledge the visit of our traditional rulers, political leaders, and many other guests.

We do express the following:

## **\*Our Concerns\***

That as a nation, we are confronted by countless social, economic, political, ecological, cultural and religious challenges including moral and ethical corruption; political manipulation, environmental destruction, gender discrimination, violent religious extremism, religious intolerance; herdsman terrorism; food insecurity and hunger; dysfunctional and deplorable social services and systems; unemployment and joblessness; desertification; exclusion in governance and politicization of media reportage. We are greatly concerned by the increasing level of systemic poverty and the massive divide between the rich and poor in our country.

We recognize some of the various efforts and initiatives of state and non-state actors to mitigate the outlined challenges. Indeed, more efforts are needed to change the sad narrative of the state of our nation.

# THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF CHRIST IN NIGERIA (CONTINUED)

## **\*Our Prayers and Commitment\***

Having been informed, admonished and empowered with Christian knowledge during this weeklong event, we pray to God to help us to:

Live uprightly as Christians as well as citizens of Nigeria, demonstrated in our civic responsibilities to the nation, especially in the forthcoming elections.

Remain faithful to our prophetic roles as witnesses of the gospel in the affairs of the church and wider society by speaking truth to power.

Continue in our Christian holistic ministry, education, transforming mission and evangelism as conveyors of the whole gospel to the whole human society.

Engage meaningfully in any process towards peace-building, reconciliation and advocating for justice for all in church and society.

Protect and preserve the environment through tree planting particularly actively participating in the Tree Planting Day of the Fellowship of Churches of Christ in Nigeria (TEKAN) on the last Saturday of May every year, this year being 26th May 2019.

Explore ways that empower women and youth to contribute more and more to the wellbeing of the church and wider society.

Trusting the grace of God is firm in our faith as witnesses of God's love in Christ even in hostile circumstances.

# HUMAN INTEREST

*By: Robert Radtke, son of Bob and Ann Radtke of the Chicago Lutheran Deaf Ministry Physician Assistant Program, College of Health Professions, Class of 2019*



THERE ARE FEW PROVIDERS THAT SPEAK OUR LANGUAGE AND, TO AN EVEN LESSER DEGREE, WHO SHARE DEAF CULTURE. WHILE BEING A PA FOR DEAF PATIENTS WAS A FACTOR IN CHOOSING TO TAKE THIS CAREER PATH, IT IS ENTERING A LIFETIME OF SERVICE THAT DRIVES ME.

My parents and I are Deaf and in our household we use American Sign Language. As technology has developed, so has my ability to use hearing aids with my residual hearing. Throughout my education, I have been in both Deaf academic programs and classrooms with hearing students. My high school, Whitney Young Magnet High School in Chicago, had two different worlds that I floated between; “mainstream” classes with hearing students and the basement where Deaf students learned. Even though I had classes with hearing students using

an interpreter, I would go downstairs and be filled with familiarity, community and comfort, while at the same time feeling unease and a sense of being apart or other. In my undergraduate education at the vast University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign I could count the members of my community on two hands, and fewer still used interpreting services like me. The most persistent challenge I felt when navigating amongst my peers was that balance of identity, conformity and friendship.

When I was admitted to RFU, a new landscape presented itself. Allies, advocates, an open-minded staff and I developed new ways to approach learning, communication and technology. I have a bank of resources now, ready to be reinvented and reinserted as-needed.

People are often curious how I listen to heart and lung sounds. I use a ThinkLabs One stethoscope. It is completely electronic, can be tuned as a bell or diaphragm and connects to my hearing aids via Bluetooth. If I so desired, it could be used to record heart and lung sounds as well as display the sounds as a waveform on an external digital display. Deaf healthcare providers are among the first to utilize Google Glass, pocket ultrasounds, innovative clear surgical masks, and so much more. I have to thank the Association of Medical Professionals with Hearing Loss for their mission in connecting, sharing and innovating with and for healthcare providers like me.

I have two people to introduce when I walk into a patient’s room, myself and my Sign Language interpreter. I have been surprised at the response I receive from patients—complete, unflinching acceptance. The most skeptical and inquisitive of my abilities have been the healthcare professionals behind me. Although the onus is on me to demonstrate “ability” to my colleagues, I do it proudly because disability does not represent inability but the duplicity of ability. There is an opportunity to show that there are novel, different and sometimes better ways to complete the task at hand.

# SPIRITUAL ARTICLE

by Don Rosenkjar

Spiritual Article by Don Rosenkjar

As you may recall in Mark Koterwski's article in the previous ELDA newsletter, he wrote that the main concern everywhere, is climate change. It is something that deeply affects all of us, today, tomorrow and beyond. It is a moral issue, no less. We as servants of God need to be aware of our responsibility to take care of God's creation: air, land, sea, and all living things. I am reminded of a quote that Tan Dun wrote: all living things are equal in value. Today, as you may see on television news, there are people who want to protect oil industry because they produce jobs and wealth. We all know for fact oil does pollute the air, and that causes climate change. It does not matter whether you are a Democrat or Republican, you are a Christian, and you are a custodian of God's creation.

Here in Los Angeles, we are having a most unusual amount of rain, as we are so accustomed to years of little or no rain, but in 2019 alone, we witnessed an amazing amount of rain. Elsewhere in our beloved America, we are seeing unusual climate changes -- more fires, more hurricanes and tornadoes, more heat waves. These are extreme changes. If we are to continue polluting air and land, according to many scientists, things will continue to get worse and eventually all living creatures will cease to live.

Good news: that can be prevented. There is hope. There is a way. And we have the responsibility to be good stewards of our planet--all of us. It is our moral responsibility if you consider yourself a good Christian. As an example, I try to use my car as little as possible, and use light rail whenever I can. I plan to buy a car that is powered by electricity. I use electricity in my home as little as I can. Whenever it is practical, instead of using lamps and light fixtures, I take advantage of night light which uses very little electricity. Whenever possible, I take the train instead of flying. There are many things you can do to be a good steward of God's earth. This is my prayer.

## Isaiah 24:5-6 Contemporary English Versions (CEV)

**The earth is polluted because its people disobeyed the laws of God, breaking their agreement that was to last forever. The earth is under a curse; its people are dying out because of their sins.**

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## NEWS

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## September, December, March and June

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