



ELDA

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

Volume 18 • Summer 2023 • Issue 69

FROM THE PRESIDENT

LORI FULLER

Welcome! We are thrilled you are here with us.

Summer has arrived. Flowers have bloomed. Grasses are becoming green. Kids are finishing up their school year and getting ready for camp. Summer plans are being made! Such an exciting time.

One of the plans some members of ELDA have will be to volunteer for a week at the Red Bird mission in August of 2023. Thanks to United Methodist Church for inviting us to join them on this mission. This mission trip aims to provide home repair for low-income community residents and maintenance for Mission buildings and grounds. An example that has



been done in the past was replacing a floor in one of the homes. When we arrive, we will find out what we will be doing this year! So in the following ELDA newsletter, you'll see some pictures of this trip.

Curious, what are your summer plans? Please share pictures of your summer fun to include in the next ELDA newsletter! Why? So we can rejoice in each other's journey TOGETHER and give thanks for all God has done for us.

A friendly reminder, as you

may have seen in the last ELDA Newsletter, that Heartland Ephphatha is hosting our next ELDA Conference next summer. So if you haven't already, please save the dates for June 13-15th in Rapid City, SD, near the Black Hills! Be on the lookout for more information.

Summer Blessings to you and your family from ours,

Lori Fuller

ELDA President

Inside this Issue



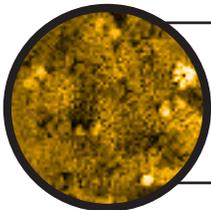
FROM THE DIRECTOR

Pastor Beth shows opportunities for you to engage in ELDA ministry!



ELDA CONFERENCE SAVE THE DATE

See the welcome video for the ELDA Conference in 2024 in Rapid City, SD



SPIRITUAL ARTICLE

Janie Barlow explains what change means to her and how God's plans can be realized through change!

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear ELDA Friends:

God's grace and peace be with you this summer season!

So much is happening, I don't know where to start! Our ELDA Board just sent a **letter to all 65 ELCA Synods** expressing our interest in locating Deaf people within the different Lutheran partnership synods around the world. The letter explained who ELDA is and our interest in outreach to these Deaf people and helping the synods to support ministries to include the Deaf Community. We explained our relationship with LCCN in Nigeria and our support of Pastor Ruth Ulea and seminarian Samuel Dimas as well as our annual VBS at Jamaica Christian School for the Deaf in pre-pandemic years.

This letter was written and approved right before the pandemic and now the time seems right to finally send it out. **This newsletter encloses a copy of the letter.** If your bishop or other synod staff mention it, you will know what it means. It may even inspire synods in our country who currently have no Deaf churches or interpreted ministries for the Deaf. Stay tuned for God's surprises!

Three of our ELDA churches, **Bread of Life Deaf Lutheran (MN), Christ the King Deaf Church (PA), and Palms Deaf Church (FL)** are collaborating on a Lilly grant to design a two-year Deaf leadership training program. This program will have six classes meeting on Zoom and in-person retreats to learn about the Bible, taking care of our members' needs, and becoming effective leaders to help our ministries become stronger. Participants will also help develop Deaf-friendly resources that all of our Deaf churches can use. If the Lilly grant is given, the cost will be FREE. One set of students will meet Fall 2024--Spring 2026 and the second group will meet Fall 2026--Spring 2028. **We hope many of you will join the program.** The grant winners will be announced this Fall.

Every summer, the **Smithsonian Institute has a ten-day Folklife Festival** on the national mall of the Capitol in Washington, D.C. This year the dates are June 28--July 4 and July 6--9 and the two themes are "The Ozarks: Faces and Facets of A Region" and "**Creative Encounters: Living Religions in the U.S.**" I was asked to participate in the second part to discuss Deaf Ministry, female spiritual leaders, etc. This is free and open to the public with ASL interpreters. It will have food, art, dancers, concerts, workshops, storytellers, etc. and the **Deaf Community is encouraged to tell their stories on July 9 (USE QR CODE TO SEE MORE).**



We invite you to join the **Red Bird mission trip to Kentucky August 6--12, 2023.** Our ELDA President, Pr. Lori Fuller, will be there and I am including the **brochures in this newsletter.** Participants will help repair homes and prepare clothing for the thrift store serving the community. The cost is \$425 and this is sponsored by the United Methodist Congress of the Deaf and open to all of us! Please contact Pr. Patti Ravilious at 302-382-8882 or rev.patti.rav@gmail.com.

Pr. Lori is inviting us to join her in an **ASL-interpreted tour of the Holy Land (Israel) April 2--12, 2024.** The cost is \$3990 with an extra 3-day trip to Egypt for \$990. This will leave from Miami, FL and is led by two Lutheran pastors, one who has a Deaf daughter. IF you are interested in more information, please contact Pr. **Lori at lori@palmsdeaf.org.**

Enjoy God's world and take time to worship Him this summer!

Pastor Beth+
ELCA Deaf Ministries Directors

SPIRITUAL ADVISOR'S COLUMN

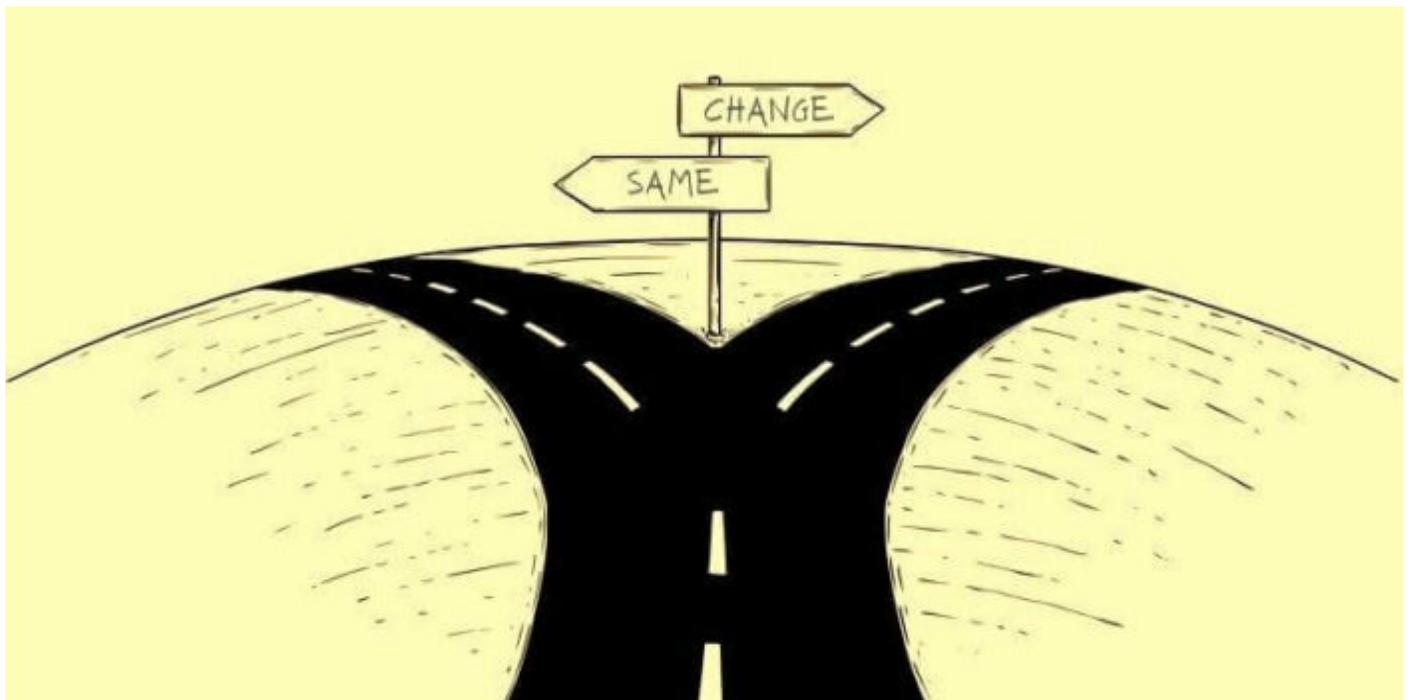
JANIE BARLOW

Change. Transition. Journey. What do these words mean to you? Every day that we breathe and live, we are changing. The changes may be miniscule and you may not realize the changes are happening but over time, you will recognize changes. Sometimes the changes that are happening are big, and hard to ignore. Sometimes, we are aware of the changes and at other times, God is working quietly in our hearts and souls to make way for the changes. Perhaps these changes are things like a new job; a new experience; adding and/or losing something in your life; the loss of a loved one or a beloved possession; the possible changes are endless.

Once a change is recognized, then comes a transition period. The transition period can be a challenge. Adjusting is not always easy. This is where

I believe the Holy Spirit comes in and touches our hearts and the depths of our souls to help guide where the Good Lord wants us to be. Remember, He knows the plans He has for us and He would not leave or forsake us. This is true for ourselves as individuals and as a community, as a body of one in Christ.

Summertime often brings opportunities for changes as people travel, have new experiences, some just recharge and take a look at their lives and others enjoy what they have right where they are, busy or not. Perhaps your change is trying something new such as a Red Bird mission trip or perhaps you have a change within your family or community that impacts your life. Perhaps you are traveling to a new place or perhaps you are searching for opportunities in your life. Perhaps God is calling



you to somewhere new and different and unknown or perhaps God is asking you to do His Work right where you are in your community. Each change and each transition is important and is impactful to people to see God's Work and His Love; you may see the result or you may not and either way is okay. Whether your change and transition may be full of joy, or sadness, or anxiety, or uncertainty for the unknown – remember to trust in God and to pray to our Heavenly Father for all things good and bad. Tell Him all that is in your heart, worries and joys, anger and nervousness, sadness and gladness. Yes, He knows all that is in your heart but He likes to listen. Once you've talked to him like a good friend, wholeheartedly listen back. Open your heart and eyes to what He wants to show you and what plans He has for you, for your community. Remember, as Isaiah 43:18-19 says, do not dwell on the past. God is doing a new thing in each of us every day.

My major change that is happening within my personal life is adjusting to being a family of seven, two of whom are young children and growing with their own interests and activities each as well as with an infant learning about the world around them and the two fur-kids who have needs as well. This is not easy! But with each day, I grow with more love towards my family and husband than I imagined possible. Life is not always going to be about smiles and sunshine. We do have our bad days but even with those negative experiences, we grow and learn either within ourselves and/or together. With each new experience, we can learn from the past and grow into our full potential. Relying on God more and more for my needs has been an eye opener. This is both mine and our family's journey. Within my community, specifically my church, BOLD is going through a change and transition in our journey. Their journey has been ongoing since 1956, currently 67 years! As a

community and as a leader in that community, I was very nervous about how people would react to the potential change of leaving the beloved building that we own and have had as a home base for 60 plus years. Imagine my surprise when at one of the Town Halls, most of the people (unofficially) agreed that it would be a better path to sell the building and begin the search for a new home base! My community at BOLD consists of mostly seniors who like their habits and their traditions; my feeling of being surprised was with a mix of shock. I knew this had to be the Holy Spirit and God quietly at work. Also, time. It is important to allow time to process, time to discuss with other members of the community, time to pray and think over the change personally. We are still working through our transition as we search for our new home base; we trust that our journey is not yet finished.

With the daily growing and learning we do, we are closer to hitting our full potential. Perhaps you feel you have already hit your potential. Guess what?? God has more plans for you; you will always have more to reach and grow for a continuous possibility of reaching your best self. Maybe it won't be what you imagined, and that's okay! That is the beauty of a journey; it is always and never-ending. The same is true for our community; the journey of our Deaf community and Deaf ministry is never-ending. Where something may end for one, it will still continue through someplace somewhere through someone. Isn't that beautiful and amazing!? Wherever you may be this summer and whatever you may be doing, remember that your journey will have changes and transitions. And, that is okay and is a beautiful thing! Our Heavenly Father, Jesus our Savior, and the Holy Spirit are always with us, even if it may feel sometimes they are not. Journeys are meant to be taken both alone and with others in the community. May you go forth and grow!

MINISTRY REPORTS

BREAD OF LIFE DEAF LUTHERAN CHURCH (BOLD)

Bread of Life Deaf (BOLD) Lutheran Church of Minneapolis, MN is currently going through a journey of change and making decisions about the church's future. BOLD has been a deaf independent church since 1956 and has owned their own building for 67 years.

Since February 2023, BOLD and its congregation along with community members have made the decision to research what could be in BOLD's future.

What brought about this discussion and journey is the recognition that BOLD has the means, financially, to continue for just exactly one more year before funds are dried up and gone.

After much discussion, the three potential paths that the congregation agreed on was one: to stay at the building and grow; two: to stay at the building and become a landlord; three: sell the building and move into a different building. After many town halls and discussions along the way since February 2023, we have come down to this: the BOLD congregation has unofficially agreed to sell the building and look for our future home base within another building.

As of June 2023, BOLD has downsized the decision to two buildings with two potential congregations in which it is not determined yet how that looks like. More research is being done and more details are to come. Please add BOLD to your prayers as the congregation and community continues to recognize and try to determine what path God wants for the church of BOLD. Thank you for your support as a fellow Deaf Ministry community.

Updates submitted on behalf of BOLD by Janie Barlow, BOLD Office Communications Coordinator and BOLD Church Council Vice President

WORD OF LIFE DEAF PENNSYLVANIA

There's little to report at WOLD! Our Wednesday night online Bible study and our Sunday School v-log discussion are now on summer break – they'll resume after Labor Day.

On June 10, WOLD will have another movie event. Sloppy Joes are on the menu for lunch, and then we'll show the movie, Radio (based on a true story). God's blessings & Peace to all!

HEARTLAND EPHPHATHA SOUTH DAKOTA

We are excited to continue to prepare for the ELDA Conference in 2024 in the Black Hills of South Dakota. We recently took a tour of our conference location and were amazed at the beautiful location. Here is a video of some of our planning members' reaction to our site, Terra Sancta Retreat Center! Use the QR Code to see the video



We also are in progress working on a new video platform for our interpreted worship. Once completed, we will have a new website with the live and recorded broadcasts with ASL interpreted worship and closed captioning.

We also partner with "Church on the Street" in Sioux Falls, SD to bring God's word to those who don't come to our worship. We served grilled cheese sandwiches and helped people do laundry for free.



Christ the King Deaf Church (PA) has been busy the past few months. When the earthquakes hit Turkey and Syria, CTK wanted to help Deaf victims in Syria because international aid was not allowed. We asked our Syrian refugee family how to smuggle donations to a Deaf organization (“Creadeaf”) who agreed to find Deaf individuals and families who lost homes in the earthquake or were homeless from their 12-yr civil war.

On **Pentecost Sunday**, CTK welcomed five new members (above): Leslie Wildermuth, Atiya Cheung, Kathie Gray-Plotkin, Rosie Hazirci, & Peggy Hughes. JOY!!!



CTK started a **mission fund** & the Deaf Community was very generous. The first funds were sent to Deaf living in a tent city and helped them get firewood, food, and water. In the pictures you can see Syria had no machines to dig out people and many died when buildings collapsed.



Then Creadeaf drove six hours north to give 24 Deaf people a surprise gift of 150,000 Syrian pounds each (\$ below) from CTK. From the USA with love! **Deaf Christians to Deaf Muslims!**



CTK used the last donations to **buy a used car & title transfer** for a Guatemalan family with a Deaf daughter. God provides what we need! (see left)



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO WELCOME?

PASTOR RUSS ROCKWELL

Last year, from July through October, I was on sabbatical. I am remembering that time now as I send in final reports to the Lilly Foundation (they provided the grant money needed for me to go on sabbatical).

One of my goals for sabbatical was to attend worship at a wide variety of churches. Every Sunday, I went to a different church, and I was blessed to have my son join me. Visiting all the different churches was the definite highlight of my sabbatical time away.

I went to Pentecostal, Charismatic, Fundamental, Roman Catholic, Ukrainian Catholic, Coptic

Orthodox, ELCA, LCMS, AME Bethel (a Black Church), Mennonite, Presbyterian, and Episcopal churches. Two churches did their services in languages that I didn't know! It was a fantastic experience to be in all those churches. I came away with a renewed love for liturgy.

Of the sixteen churches I visited, only two were "welcoming." By "welcoming," I mean this: as a visitor, I was noticed, welcomed, and made to feel included in the community of worshipers that I visited. By "welcoming," I mean that the pastor greeted me and spoke with me personally after the service; lay members introduced themselves to me

and spoke with me before and after the service; I was told about special events coming up in the congregation and invited to them; one person even sat with me and guided me through the service.

I did not feel those two churches were interested in me as a potential member or as a person who could "fill their pews." Instead, I felt they were genuinely interested in ME, and that

they wanted to get to know me and form a relationship with me as best they could in the short time we had together. That's what I mean by "welcoming."

By "welcoming," I mean this: as a visitor, I was noticed, welcomed, and made to feel included in the community of worshipers that I visited.

How welcoming are our churches? How welcoming are we as members in our churches? These thoughts have been on my mind since I visited all those churches, and it's a thought I'd like you (church member or leader), to consider. May we all show visitors how real our faith is – by showing them the interest, love, and concern that Jesus Himself would if He were in our church (which... He is!).



Evangelical
Lutheran Deaf
Association

Office of the ELCA Liaison to ELDA
730 South New Street, West Chester, PA 19382
lockardbeth@gmail.com www.eldadeaf.org

DATE: May 2023
TO: ELCA Synods
FROM: Evangelical Lutheran Deaf Association
RE: Outreach to your global partnerships

Dear Synod Bishops and leadership:

God's grace and peace be with you! Many of you may not be aware that the Deaf Lutherans in the United States formed an organization in 1992 focused on the spiritual, social, and educational growth of our ELCA Deaf congregations and ministries. We are reaching out to you with some requests for your consideration. Our website is www.eldadeaf.org.

Because ELDA formed a partnership with the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria (LCCN) Deaf ministry, and some of us met with The Rev. Dr. Panti Filibus Musa, the Archbishop of LCCN and the president of the Lutheran World Federation, we shared our vision for connecting with other Deaf people in our global family. ELDA has also led a Vacation Bible School for many years with the students of Jamaica Christian School for the Deaf and sent limited support and visits to Deaf people in Haiti, Vietnam, Cambodia, Kenya, Turkey, and other countries.

As many of you share companion partnerships through your respective Synods, we ask that you consider asking these global friends to identify and connect us with Deaf residents in their area so that we can consider ministry possibilities. Over 95% of the Deaf Community is unchurched. In 2018, 80% of the Deaf children who live in developing countries did not receive an education. The 4-minute YouTube video, **"Patrick Speak: Deaf Boy in Uganda,"** is astounding and reveals the barriers that Deaf children continue to face. We strongly urge you to take time to watch it!

Our relationship with Rev. Ruth Ulea, a Deaf pastor in the LCCN, is a significant reason for our partnership with the Deaf Church in Jimeta, Nigeria. After graduating from the LCCN Seminary, she was denied access to ordination because she was Deaf and a woman. After 21 years and the help of the Danish Lutherans, she was finally ordained. In the meantime, Rev. Ruth led worship on a porch under a tree. We are now helping a Nigerian Deaf man, Samuel Dimas, attend Bronnum Lutheran Seminary.

We ask you to prayerfully consider our vision, share it with your companion synods, and consider financial support for ELDA to literally do God's work with our hands.

In Christ,

The Rev. Beth Lockard, M.Ed., (ELCA Liaison), Rev. Lori Fuller (President, FL), Jeannie Fischer (Vice President, PA), Linda Fairbanks (Secretary, MN), Mark Koterwski (Treasurer, SD), Janie Barlow (Spiritual Advisor, MN), and Deacon Dorothy Sparks (former Board member, MN)

EASTER CAMP REPORT 2023

NIGERIA UPDATE

Greetings in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ from LCCN Deaf

Center, Nigeria; the 52nd Annual Zonal Easter Camp of the Deaf.

Theme: Holiness, Hebrews 12:14

Date: Thursday 6th – 10th Monday.

All praises and glory to our God who in His mercy and companionship keeps us to celebrate our 52nd year of annual Easter Camp. The 52nd year experiences have exposed us to many challenges almost canceled at the last minute, due to financial challenges. But for most of them is securing a permanent place of worship for our churches in Nigeria out of about 30 branches of our Church, less than 10 of them are on permanent sites. However, Church building is good, the most important is the spiritual strength of the Church members. We thank God for this care for us to continue to mature spiritually before the next decade, it is possible many church branches will have settled or permanent sites. Also we must not forget that the majority of our branches are located in the southern part of Nigeria effort needs to be directed to reach the lost souls of the deaf in the North. At this special occasion let us not forget our church founder, the late Dr. Andrew Foster, the man God used to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah, (Isaiah 29:18). European missionaries were coming to Nigeria before 1960. They started schools and then Churches through which many people became Christians, however, these missionaries were not equipped about how to reach the deaf with the Gospel. It was this Christian Mission for the deaf Church Founder Whom God sent from America to fulfill the prophecy in Africa. In 1960, the Christian Mission for the deaf started schools for the deaf through which the Gospel

ministry began. Then years after the annual Easter camp was introduced to Nigerians. It has been put into practice up to date now. To God be the Glory.

Easter Reflection: the power that gives a new beginning. As deaf Christians around the world celebrate Easter this year 2023.

Ruth Ulea, a female Deaf Pastor would like to draw attention to the power that gives a new beginning that this season represents and the lessons that Nigeria as a Nation can learn from it. Easter is a time of hope and renewal, a time we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and power that gives a new beginning. It's a time when we reflect on the sacrifices that Christ made for us and the new Life that His Resurrection represents.

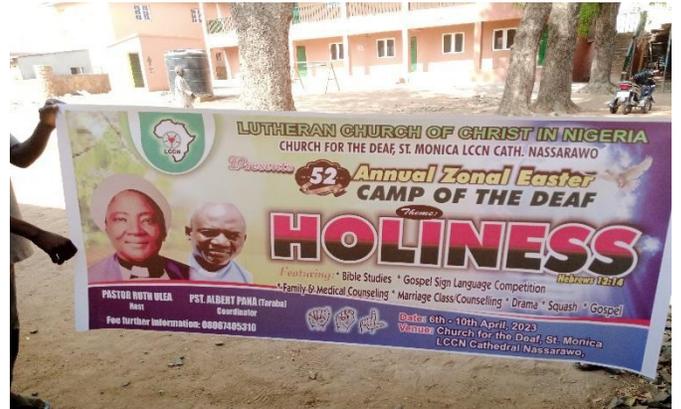
As a Nation, Nigeria has faced many challenges in recent years from insecurity and economic instability to social and political unrest. However just as Christ rose from the dead and brought New life to the world, we too can rise above our challenges and start afresh this Easter, let us all come together and renew our commitment to building a better Nigeria CDMCN let us embrace the power that gives a new beginning and work together to create a brighter future for ourselves and our Churches, let us put aside our differences and come together in unity just as Christ Resurrection brought together people from all walks of life. May God bless LMF, and grant us peace and prosperity in abundance.

Happy Easter!

Ruth Ulea

N.B

We Appreciate God Almighty for the success of this Year's Zonal Easter Camp 2023.



He's sad he doesn't want the camp to end

ELDA CONFERENCE 2024

HOSTED BY HEARTLAND EPHPHATHA

SAVE THE DATES:

June 11-12, 2024 Board Meeting

June 13-15, 2024 ELDA Conference

June 16-18, 2024 ELDA Pastor and leaders meeting



Prices and agenda will be out soon! Plan on a trip through the Black Hills and to stay at Terra Sancta Retreat center in Rapid City!



Check out the welcome video for the 2024 ELDA conference. Make plans to join us for a wonderful experience! Use the QR Code to watch!



Red Bird Mission Work Camp



“A praying people answering
peoples’ prayers”



Changing lives since 1921
www.rbmission.org

About Us

Red Bird Mission and Clinic have been providing ministries in this region of the Appalachian Mountains since 1921.

Today the need remains critical in this isolated, rural distressed area. Chronic poverty, lack of jobs, poor housing, and rugged mountainous terrain provide obstacles to a fuller life for the residents of this area. Red Bird Mission and Clinic strives to meet these needs through ministry in five areas: Education, Health and Wellness, Community Outreach, Economic Opportunity, and Community Housing Improvement.



MISSION STATEMENT

Red Bird Mission, guided by Jesus Christ, empowers individuals and advocates justice by providing spiritual, educational, health, and community outreach ministries in southeastern Kentucky.

**REGISTRATION FORM
DEAF ELM MISSION TRIP TO RED BIRD MISSION, BEVERLY, KENTUCY
AUGUST 6-11, 2023**

*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:

Rev. Patti Ravilious
4528 Cagney Lane
Middletown, Delaware 19709

DEADLINES:

REGISTRATION FORM and \$50 per person REGISTRATION FEE

due to PATTI **by October 1, 2022**

This is a NON-REFUNDABLE commitment fee.

REMAINING \$375 is due to PATTI **by June 1st, 2023.**

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 access information:

Phone (text): _____

Phone (talk): _____

Email address: _____

Relay service: _____

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PLEASE TURN PAGE OVER

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

- Deaf
- Hard-of-hearing
- Hearing
- Interpreter
- Pastor
- Lay person
- Male
- Female
- Toddler (up to 5) free
- Child (6-9) \$212.50
- Teenager (10-18) \$425
- Adult (young and strong) \$425
- Adult (middle-aged and enthusiastic) \$425
- Adult (old and wise) \$425
- (other) _____

Skills (e.g. carpentry, plumbing, masonry, simple household repairs, electricity, etc.)

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

Challenges (e.g. difficulty walking, food allergies, Diabetes, etc.) _____

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

NEW ELDA Vision:

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

ELDA BOARD MEMBERS DIRECTORY

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