



ELDA

Volume • 15 Issue • 58
SEPTEMBER 2020

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



From the President Mark Koterwski

I am sure that everyone worries and has more anxiety that we have COVID-19 in the world. It's a great challenge for all of us to deal with our health and to stay positive. It's very interesting that Paul mentioned in several verses in the Bible, that he kept saying those two words, "Thanks and Comfort".

Mark Koterwski
ELDA President

The 2 Corinthians 1:3-6 verse stated ***"Praise God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! The Father is a merciful God, who always gives us comfort. He comforts us when we are in trouble, so that we can share the same comfort with others in trouble. We share in the terrible sufferings of Christ, but also in the wonderful comfort He gives. We suffer in the hope that you will be comforted and saved. And because we are comforted, you will also be comforted, as you patiently endure suffering like ours."***

If we think and develop good habits with thinking "positive and comfort," it will spread out to other people to keep them calm and comforted by our actions.

I want to say many thanks to those people who replied with their support or object in regarding to suspending Article 5 Section 3 of the ELDA Bylaws for Jeannie Fischer to continue as Vice President and Jeff Panek as Treasurer temporarily. Since there was no one objecting to suspend Article 5 Section 3, its official that Jeannie Fischer will continue as Vice President and Jeff Panek as Treasurer temporarily for two years.

God bless you all!

Mark Koterwski

ELDA Vice President Lori Fuller would like to share two video links for children who are interested in learning more about Communion and Baptism.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

**President's
Report**

**Worry About
Coronavirus?**

**God Wink
Story**

LCCN Report

**Children's
Videos in
ASL**

**And much
more...**

Spiritual Article

“Worry about Coronavirus?” by Donald Rosenkjar

Almost all of us worry about the Covid-19 virus, and we try to take care not to catch the virus. Worry? Well, let's take a good look at what St. Matthew wrote,

Matthew 6:25-34:

I tell you not to worry about your life. Don't worry about having something to eat, drink, or wear. Isn't life more than food or clothing? Look at the birds in the sky! They don't plant or harvest. They don't even store grain in barns. Yet your Father in heaven takes care of them. Aren't you worth more than birds?

Can worry make you live longer? Why worry about clothes? Look how the wild flowers grow. They don't work hard to make their clothes. But I tell you that Solomon with all his wealth wasn't as well clothed as one of them. God gives such beauty to everything that grows in the fields, even though it is here today and thrown into a fire tomorrow. He will surely do even more for you! Why do you have such little faith?

Don't worry and ask yourselves, "Will we have anything to eat? Will we have anything to drink? Will we have any clothes to wear?" Only people who don't know God are always worrying about such things. Your Father in heaven knows that you need all of these. But more than anything else, put God's work first and do what he wants. Then the other things will be yours as well.

Don't worry about tomorrow. It will take care of itself. You have enough to worry about today.

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.

Therefore... **DO NOT** **WORRY**

MATTHEW 6:25-34

For tonight's dinner, I check to see what I have, then I decide what to prepare. I need to be aware of what we can and cannot eat. I also need to be careful not to burn the food. After the dinner, I wash dishes, making sure they are really clean. Those are the rules what I am to do in the kitchen. No worries. It's routine. It would be a waste of time and energy if I worry. The same can be applied to all of our lives during the pandemic. We take care of ourselves by distancing, wearing masks, and keeping ourselves safe. We have that experience for past five months. So, it's routine. Sounds simple? Well, to be honest, I do worry. At times, I need to convince myself that

I worry too much. So, what I do is to spend some time meditating. I choose a symbol that will give me a sense of peace, and that is both a crucifix and a stone head of Buddha. I do this every morning, and it works for me. You may do it differently, and that is okay so as long as it will give you peace — and stop worrying. Keep Jesus in your heart. I suggest you read the Matthew passage again, and convince yourself about its message. It is a beautiful and important passage.

ELCA Deaf Ministries

Director's Report



Dear ELDA Friends:
God's grace and peace be with you! 2020 is almost over and we have had so many challenges. People are asking, "Is this the end of the world?"

- I have spoken to friends and family on the West Coast who have sent pictures and told me of the

smoke clogging the air from many fires;

- My nephew and wife survived the recent Hurricane Sally in the Florida panhandle but need to go into flooded Pensacola Monday to give birth to their first baby.

- A church member's sister, husband, and 22-year-old son are all painfully suffering through COVID-19 and worried because the husband has blood cancer and his wife was taking care of their elderly mother.

- Other church members lost their jobs and then their health benefits.

- Our daughter-in-law's brother is a state patrolman who had urine thrown at him during the social unrest and anger against police brutality.

- A Deaf student texts and Facetimes me from Albania where he is taking care of his father and wonders, "Is America having a war?" All he can see on a TV (without captions) are burning fires, protests, and rising numbers of pandemic deaths.

It is times like this that test our faith...that make us search for God...that push us to reach out to our neighbor with love and service. If we look carefully, we will see God at work through our hands:

- Deaf care attendants at our local nursing home for the Deaf and DeafBlind (Valley View) who sweat through layers of protective clothing and masks all day to keep the 35 residents safe;

- ELDA members and churches who have given to the growing van fund for our brothers and sisters at the Lutheran Deaf Ministry in Nigeria;

- Protestors and police officers who shook hands and shared hugs;

- People who patiently wear masks and socially distance to protect others as well as themselves.

- Waving to our 9-month-old grandson from a distance as he smiles and bounces even if we have not been able to hold him in our arms since February;

- Rejoicing with Deaf seminarian, Lori Fuller, who recently received endorsement from her Florida Bahamas Synod;

- Sharing a weekly online meeting with ELDA church workers to explore the texts for the coming Sunday;

- Continuing to worship God whether it's online, outside, or in-person with masks. We know the Church is not a building but two or more people who gather in God's name.

God is indeed at work. As we pray for each other, let us remember the following:

- Deaf lay pastor Don Rosenkjar (St. Matthew's, Northern Hollywood) who has been fighting infection and inflammation of his kidney, liver, pancreas, and gall bladder and a slowed heartbeat;

- Trinity Lutheran (Reading, PA) and lay leader Dee Horst upon the closing of their Deaf Ministry and sadness of this ending;

- ELCA churchwide offices which are undergoing another restructure as they attempt to be more inclusive and welcoming to the diversity of God's people;

- The struggle of school staff and students to continue their education without endangering each other;

- The voters of this country as we elect new leaders November 3;

- For each of us to see God-winks all around us and remember God's in charge!

Peace and prayers, Pastor Beth Lockard
Director, ELCA Deaf Ministries

VIDEOS

for children

ELDA Vice President Lori Fuller would like to share two video links for children who are interested in learning more about Communion and Baptism.

The links are: Come To The Water, Little One:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JOK0gQZapPQ>

[A Place for you, Litte One:](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJHhvWPpaXo>

Credit for the videos was a joint project with Lori Fuller, ASL talent, the author who gave permission to use his book, Lisa Corneilson who is a local teacher for the gift of her voice, and Curt Fuller (Lori's husband) who put the video together. Thank you! The videos work better if you have Youtube.



LCCN

Report from Pastor Ruth Ulea from Nigeria

Greetings from Nigeria in Jesus' Name.

Easter was over four months ago! When we used to celebrate Easter camp almost 49 years ago, we had never missed a single year without camp. It is so easy to feel close to God in those times of COVID 19 pandemic. The people have already forgotten the joy they felt on those days. Our life has gone back to normal and life is hardly, and difficult decisions have to be made and we often don't know which path to choose; stay home without payments or go to work and get COVID 19. Some felt very conflicted, and some felt almost scared because they don't want to make wrong decisions, but we all remember Christ's Easter Promise- New Life- "Resurrection!!" Eternal New Life!

This promise helps us to recognize that life goes on whether or not we feel good about how it is right now, but it also reminds us that when things get tough like the COVID 19 pandemic, that it won't be this way forever as there is life after death.

Let the message of hope and faith go viral and the COVID 19 will stop spreading! Not many of us are wise by human standards, not many of us were influential, and not many of us had a noble birth. God chose the foolish things of the world to shame

the wise, and God chose the weak things of the world to shame the stronger 11. Cor. 1; 26-27.



Each child of God has the life, and he that has the Son has this life that is higher like Ebola in the days of past and will do the same through our days. In the name of Jesus, the coronavirus will bow out! Calm your fears! All who are infected with COVID 19; they shall recover. Mark 16; 15-18.

The ELDA Team is long gone----But we can save still our world. We have the life of God in us. Spread the faith! Stop the fears! Stop

the deaths! Yes, you can! The world belongs to you and because you belong to Jesus, HALLELUJAH!!

SCRIPTURAL PROPHETS AND SOCIAL INJUSTICE IN NIGERIA

I don't understand why white police officers are always gunning down or directly murdering Black children. Jackets with hoods up and we first learned of Trayvon Martin who got gunned down for no reason, whatsoever.

er a security guard killed him in February 2012. The Black Lives Matter movement was established in 2013, but its attitudes, dissatisfactions and goals are centuries in making and building on the long history of resistance and resilience of black people. Most recently, the murder of George Floyd cast another bright light on the racism that persists in USA. And it calls for change out aloud, yet some still balk at the movement, seeing progress as evidence that the fight for racial justice is over. At this moment of palpable energy, and tension and with so much at stake, we need to finally create a just society for all people.

The biblical prophet can help us to understand what is happening now and they can inspire our continued efforts in the future.

Many of the biblical prophet s were social critics. Their initial roles were not to be envisage of the future but to be a voice for the present. 2 Kings 22:16-17 the world today is faced with hardship, injustice, climate change and other problems which threaten human existence. In the midst of the sufferings sometimes one asked, what will be the future of this generation? As a female pastor we are often faced with challenges in our ministry and work places as women we are the most marginalized in the society. We are often victimized, and we have to take our hope in Jesus Christ because in Him, we have fullness.

When we feel rejected, we remember that nothing can keep you from the love of God. We appreciate God's love through

love for the neighbor and though prayer as we daily live in Him.

Finally, our prayer is that the Lord will continue to strengthen all of you and bless you richly in soul, and continue to guide all of you and your family through the days ahead.

May the Lord give us all new commitments to serve Him with sincerity!

With lots of Love,

Ruth Ulea.

HELP US REACH THE GOAL



Ministry News-

DeafCAN! Opens Third Office in Harrisburg, PA

How many of you have heard of Bhutan? It is a small country in between China and India (see map). The King in Bhutan pushed out a group of people called Lhotsampas and they fled to the next door country of Nepal. The Deaf Bhutanese people lived in seven different refugee camps in Nepal and learned Nepali Sign Language (NSL). One refugee camp had more than 200 Deaf people who taught each other. They lived in these camps for 20 years before they



**Classroom with Deaf Bhutanese Community run by DeafCAN!
Bhawani Dangal, Deaf NSL interpreter, is standing.**

Map of Bhutan/Nepal.



were allowed to relocate. About 91,800 were relocated all around America. Their religions are Hinduism, Buddhism, and Kirat. Some are Christians. Most speak Nepali and some speak Dzongkha.

DeafCAN! is a human services program of Christ the King Deaf Church in West Chester. Some of the Deaf Bhutanese people were in our refugee/immigrant classes in Philadelphia where DeafCAN! has its second “office” at St. John’s Lutheran Church. Some of these people are served by the CSD (Communications Services for the Deaf) in Sioux Falls, SD where ELDA President Mark and Angela Koterwiski work. Both DeafCAN! and CSD and other organizations worked to help the Bhutanese Deaf Community learn ASL, English, American culture, citizenship information, and get jobs and other social services.

In July 2019, DeafCAN! presented at the first Deaf Refugee Conference at RIT/NTID. We met advocates and refugees/immigrants from all over the USA. At this conference, we met two Deaf Bhutanese/Nepali interpreters who were part of a group that had settled in NH. The male interpreter, Bhawani Dangal, informed us he and many Bhutanese people were moving to Harrisburg, PA which is in central PA, 1.5 hours west of West Chester. We soon learned a very LARGE group of 10,000--20,000 had moved to the Harrisburg/Lancaster area. Some moved from Mark’s CSD program in SD while others moved from all over the US. We now count 50+ Deaf Bhutanese and their hearing families. Many more continue to move there.

DeafCAN! hired Bhawani part time in August 2019 and hopes to get the funds to hire him



**Deaf Bhutanese guys showing their new shirts
The Deaf Community before the pandemic**

full time. He works with DeafCAN! Program Director, Bill Lockard, to locate, identify, and support the Deaf Community. Bhawani works as a Deaf interpreter with hearing interpreters so the deaf can access medical, employment, educational, and other services.

The Deaf Bhutanese Community met for six months until the pandemic hit. As DeafCAN! looked for a new “office” with a classroom and kitchen, they found Good Shepherd Lutheran in Harrisburg. During the pandemic, Bill and Bhawani went from house-to-house and met outside to explain COVID-19 and safety precautions. Masks and food were distributed. Classes started at Good Shepherd on Saturdays in July 2020. In September we had an “Open House” and served Bhutanese and American refreshments.

What happens next? We are letting God’s Spirit lead. We have written grant proposals and are educating service providers in Harrisburg which is our state capital. DeafCAN! is in discussion with Gallaudet University to host the second Deaf Refugee Conference. Our mission is to help everyone understand that Deaf people CAN be self sufficient leaders and tax payers in our country and deserve equal access to communication.

Ministry News-

News from our Churches/ministries, by Linda Fairbanks

To our ELDA Brothers and Sisters,

I would like to share a few things in regards to our ELDA newsletter. I hope you enjoy reading the newsletter. The recent and past newsletters are shared on the ELDA website, www.eldadeaf.org. Please, do share the newsletters with those church members who do not have internet access.

The ELDA newsletters are sent out every quarter and we follow the seasons; Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer. In each issue, we have reports from the President, the ELCA Coordinator, the Pastor Advisor, and the Treasurer and others as needed. We added a new feature, "God-Winks" stories.

Sometimes we have reports from LCCN-Nigeria, Haiti and Jamaica. We support Deaf Ministries in those countries. We welcome stories of human interest or from the Deaf churches/ministries to share with our readers. Your pictures are more than welcome! ELDA holds a conference every two years and sometimes ELDA sends a team to work in another country or even within the USA. We welcome photos/reports from the volunteers.

The deadlines to submit your photos, reports and stories are: September 15th, December 15th, March 15th and June 15th. The newsletter editor will contact each church/ministry or individual one month prior to the deadlines to remind you that your information is due. The editor will follow up with at least 2 more reminders. This is very important since we want the newsletter put together, and sent out in a timely matter. Thanks to Jason Andera for putting our newsletters together!

It makes the Editor's job so much easier when everything is done on time and I do not have to send out repeated notices. I also would like to see more reports, stories and photos from the churches/ministries. Our readers love to hear what others are doing. Right now, we do not have a name for our newsletter and I hope you have some ideas for a name. Please do email me at linda-fairbanks22@gmail.com with a name for the newsletter. Let's have some fun! Let your creative juices flow!

Stay safe! Stay healthy! Wear your masks!

Linda Fairbanks, ELDA Newsletter Editor

Ministry News-

Join Book Club with Lori Fuller



For those who love to read and may be interested in a Deaf Book Club... Come join us online using the Zoom platform on Monday nights at 7 pm EST, contact Lori Fuller at lorisl95@gmail.com, or call VP 727 223-6209. In our first book, we will be reading a book called, "Finding Zoe" by Brandi Rarus. We will be reading 2 or 3 chapters a week and discuss how specific parts that inspired us and where we see God working in their lives. When we finish this book, as a group we will pick what the next book we will read. Come join us!

GOD:) WINKS



On a recent Friday, our cable and internet stopped working where we live at our house in Minnesota. This meant we could not watch TV or use the computer. So I decided to make the best of it and grab a book to read instead while Gary worked in his workshop. Throughout the rest of the day on Friday and Saturday, we kept checking in every once in a while to see if our cable and internet came back on again. Sadly, it did not. Sunday morning came and right before our online church service at Bread of Life Deaf Church was to

start, we decided to try one more time to see if the cable was working. To our surprise, we found our TV to be working! So we quickly went to the computer to see if this meant our internet was also working. To our delight, it was! God is good. We were able to participate in the service online with our church family.

Praise God!
Mary Jo Duncan



ELDA Online

Remember our website is 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 Thanks!