



# ELDA

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



*Linda Fairbanks*  
*ELDA President*

## GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Linda Fairbanks*

*Be still  
and know  
that I am  
God*  
-PSALM 46:10

The summer sure has flown by quickly.

All the preparations that went into planning the ELDA Conference are now past. We had another good conference and we were thankful to have Pastor Ruth Ulea as our guest. The workshops were great and everyone had positive things to say about the conference speakers. We

were able to worship and enjoy fellowship with the United Methodist (UMCD) and Episcopal (ECD) participants, as well as our ELDA delegates. Thank you to Dorothy Sparks and her planning committee at Bread of Life Deaf Church, BOLD for hosting this conference, “Bringing God’s Love to the Deaf World”. Thanks to those of you who sent in pictures from the conference.

Since the conference, I have been busy with our garden which has been bountiful and with that came a lot of weeding, watering and nurturing the plants. My husband has been a great help with tilling the garden and the canning and freezing of all sorts of vegetables. It is nice to see our shelves fill up with jars of pickles, salsa and tomato sauce. Our freezer is getting full with frozen sweet corn. Watermelon, squash and pumpkins are nearly ready for harvest. It seems like a lot work; but when we sit back and reflect on all that yielded from our gardens; “we can be still and give thanks to our loving God”.

Congratulations to **Mark Koterwski!** He received the “ELDA Shining Light Award” for what he has done for ELDA, his home church and ministry, HEM. The late Elroy Trebiel received Honorable Mention for the “ELDA Shining Light Award”. Elroy had been involved in all 3 of the ELDA churches in PA. Also congratulations to the Jamaica Mission Team! Pastor Beth Lockard, PA and Dorothy Sparks, MN accepted the award, “ELDA City on the Hill” on behalf of all those who traveled to Jamaica Christian School for the Deaf (Montego Bay) to do mission work.

As I am typing up this report, three members of the ELDA Board, **Pastor Beth, Dorothy Sparks** and our treasurer, **Jeff Panek**, along with other members of the mission team are in Jamaica. They brought down different supplies and gifts to the JCSD. We should be getting new photos and a report for this newsletter when they arrive back home. We pray for a successful and productive trip. If any of you are interested in future mission trips, please contact Pastor Beth.

Congratulations to Pastor Russ Rockwell on the 25 years anniversary of his ordination!

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# PRESIDENT'S REPORT (CONT.)

Thanks to Luanne Bartens from WOLD for sending in a photo and short summary on Pastor Russ' anniversary. If you have any news or events from your churches or ministries, please send photos and a summary to me at [lindafairbanks22@gmail.com](mailto:lindafairbanks22@gmail.com) Thanks!

At the conference, both of the positions of ELDA Vice President and ELDA Treasurer were up for election. Jeannie Fischer from PA was reelected to the position of Vice President. Jeff Panek was reelected as ELDA Treasurer. Congratulations!

On behalf of the Board, we thank Mark Koterwski for his service as ELDA Immediate Past President! He stepped down after serving two years as Past President. The newly revised ELDA Bylaws were approved by our delegates at the conference, states: that the Immediate Past President will serve up to two years.

Our present ELDA Board is as follows: President Linda Fairbanks, MN, Vice President Jeannie Fischer, PA, Secretary Angela Koterwski, SD, Treasurer Jeff Panek, SD, Pastoral Advisor Dorothy Sparks, AIM (Associate in Ministry), MN, and Director of Deaf Ministries Pastor Beth Lockard, PA.

Enjoy the beauty of our fall colors and the bountiful harvest from your gardens! -Linda

## *ELDA Board*

*from left to right:*

*Dorothy Sparks, AIM (MN); Linda Fairbanks, President (MN); Jeff Panek, Treasurer (SD); Pastor Beth Lockard, (PA); Angela Koterwski, Secretary (SD), Jeannie Fischer, Vice President (PA)*





# NEWS AND NOTES



**WORD OF LIFE DEAF (PENNSYLVANIA)** After Labor Day, WOLD resumed its normal worship schedule of 1st, 3rd, & 4th Sundays: Worship at 9:30 a.m. followed by Sunday School. For Sunday School, we watch vlogs about church, God, faith, etc., and discuss. Our Wednesday night Bible Study also starts back up. Avg. worship attendance is 20; avg. Bible Study attendance is 16. WOLD plans to have a joint council meeting this Fall with St. Peter's (WOLD's host church). Later, in December, WOLD will celebrate the 10 year anniversary of moving to St. Peter's.

**HEARTLAND EPHPHATHA (SOUTH DAKOTA)** we are preparing for another Deaf Awareness Sunday on Sunday October 9, 2016. We will have a sign choir and special ASL Gospel readings as well as an introduction to our ASL classes that we offer.

**HOLY TRINITY in Muncie Indiana** . Susan Howell will interpret on Sunday mornings at the 10:30 service. All are welcome. For more information you may call the church office at (765) 282-0619 or email [holytrinitymuncie@gmail.com](mailto:holytrinitymuncie@gmail.com)



## LCCN DEAF CHURCH

The opening and dedication of the LCCN Deaf Church (In Nigeria) will be held on Sunday, November 13, 2016.

## PASTOR RUSS ROCKWELL

On Sept. 12th, WOLD hosted Pr. Russ' 25th anniversary ordination at Shady Maple Smorgasbord (a well-known restaurant in Lancaster County, PA), where Pr. Russ was surprised when Bishop Dunlop showed up. It was an enjoyable evening with great food, fellowship and guests sharing heartfelt stories about how much they appreciated Pr Russ.



# FROM THE DIRECTOR



Pastor Beth Lockard

Dear Friends of ELDA--

God's grace and peace be with you all! We have had a busy summer with several events.

First we hosted the visit of Pastor Ruth Ulea of Jimeta, Nigeria for six weeks. We reported her schedule in the last newsletter and she was welcomed with stays at Christ the King Deaf Church (PA), Word of Life Deaf Lutheran (PA), Bread of Life Deaf Lutheran (MN), Heartland Ephphatha Ministry (SD), and the ELDA/ELM conference. Your generosity to the HOPE Fund allowed ELDA to give her a LED projector and a new laptop for her ministry. We all piled her with gifts so that she had too much to carry home! We hope a cooler and suitcase full of gifts will be sent this fall with the Global Health Ministry shipment to Pr. Ruth's LCCN Synod. Pr. Ruth's new church building will be dedicated November 13. Her country continues to be on the U.S. list of high risk areas due to the Boko Haram terrorist group. I urge you all to keep our deaf friends in Nigeria in your prayers! We thank the Mill Neck Foundation, Mount Calvary Foundation, ELDA, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for their recent grants totaling \$5000 to help cover expenses of hosting this visit.

Hosting the ELDA/ELM Conference gathered many folks from many Episcopal, Lutheran, and Methodist ministries around the country. We learned from each other and together as we focused on global Deaf ministries. Our workshop leaders, Dr. Amy Wilson, Sarah Houge, and Pr. Ruth Ulea opened our eyes, hearts, and minds to the joys and challenges of Deaf people around the world. Mark Koterwski led a workshop on lay ministry with a focus on signing Bible readings in worship. Please contact me for a link to the Wilson/Houge workshop so you can share it with your church. A big thank you to BOLD who hosted this conference and celebrated their 60th

Anniversary.

Blessings to Pr. Russ Rockwell who just celebrated his 25th ordination anniversary. He was given a party by WOLD congregation. Christ the King will celebrate her 25th Anniversary of meeting, 15th anniversary of chartering, and the new merge with St. Philip's on September 25th. A worship service with their Bishop Claire Burkat and a catered luncheon is planned.

As I write this, our Jamaica mission team of 11 arrived home safely after being in the Zika virus region. We took down eight suitcases of donated supplies from many people and a laminating machine and photo printer donated by ELDA. Our theme was "Diving Into the Depth of God's Love" and we purchased T-shirts for the students and team members from another mission team working in Haiti. Please check out the pictures of the VBS we led and the building team's work. We rejoice that our relationships with the students and staff have grown over four years. We urge your prayers for our deaf friends in Jamaica also! Any additional financial donations will be used to get more supplies and library books down in December.

Summer is over but our mission and ministry continue. I am proud to be a member of ELDA!!

Pr. Beth Lockard  
ELCA Deaf Ministries Director  
lockardbeth@gmail.com





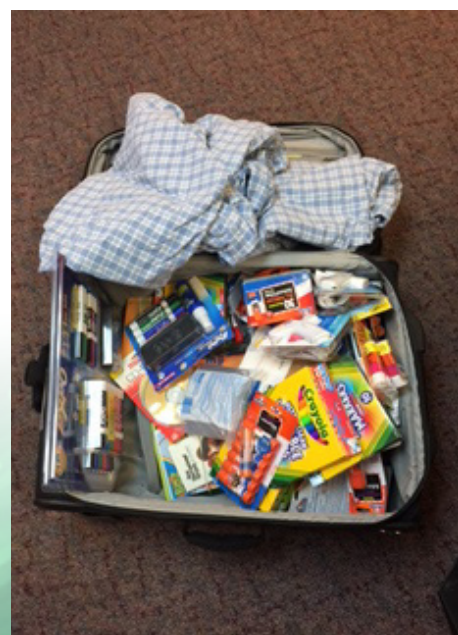
A busy street scene in Mandeville, Jamaica  
Pastor Sheldon Burkett (kneeling), one of the two deaf pastors in Jamaica



Sugar cane growing along the side of the road



The entrance for Jamaica Deaf Village



one of the suitcases we filled with supplies to JCSD

MORE PICTURES ON PAGE 6



# PICTURES FROM THE JAMAICAN MISSION TRIP



A sunset at the hotel.



Our VBS craft class



One of the impoverished homes in the mountains of Jamaica



JCSD student in front of our ocean scene



Team member Jacob LeVasseur with some JCSD students

Team member Dorothy Sparks leading a study of 1 Corinthians 13

Team members Dorothy Sparks (MN) and Lori Fuller (FL) cool off with ice cream at the hotel. Team member Jeff Panek (SD) leads a devotion with team members Beth Lockard, Nick LeVasseur, Bill Lockard, and Lori Fuller



Pictures show the building being constructed. The two middle rooms on the first level are the library and technology center funded by Mill Neck Lutheran Friends of the Deaf. Our building team painted the interior with two coats of paint, built two door frames into the cement walls, hung two doors, painted the doors, built three tables and some shelves for the library, and started building a wheelchair ramp for a new student.





# PASTOR RUTH ULEA VISITS THE UNITED STATES

## Pastor Ruth Ulea's Trip to Lancaster County, PA by Luanne Bartens

The WOLD Board heard about Pr. Ruth Ulea from Nigeria who was coming to America, and we were encouraged to host her for a week and show her around Lancaster County. We were told that she was full of energy. I wasn't



sure if we were able to show her everything in one week. Amazingly, through WOLD's wonderful teamwork, we took her to several Lancaster County Amish farms, through the Strasburg Train station, Amish buggies, Lake Tobias (Animal zoo in natural environment, riding in a half school bus), a Senior Citizen social gathering where she won a prize from playing Dingo, and Pr.



Russ' Bible study. We watched an ASL movie which Pr. Ruth marveled at because of all the deaf actors/actresses in it. By the end of the week, it seemed we had worn her out. :)

Her sign language is not all that different than ours, and we shared our dialects with each other. In our free time, we were able to relax and chat together. I was amazed by her wisdom and patience while we shared some personal problems/issues. I was mesmerized by her ability to think of strategic conflict resolutions in many subjects. We were touched to be part of her journey and to have her in our lives.

It was great to be able to see her again when we





met at the ELDA Conference. By the end of conference, I got to dress for the banquet in African style clothing that she gave me as a gift. It was enjoyable.

## Pastor Ruth Ulea's Trip Continues to Minnesota and South Dakota

Pastor Ruth also spent time in the midwest before her trip to the ELDA conference. She spent time in Minneapolis and South Dakota.



# THE ELDA THANKSGIVING APPEAL

Hello everyone! It is time once more for the ELDA Thanksgiving Appeal. Your donations to the Thanksgiving Appeal help the ELDA Board with its basic functions and any expenses.

You can send your check in any amount, made out to ELDA to:  
Jeff Panek ELDA Treasurer,  
625 S. Mary Drive,  
Tea, SD 57064.

We thank you for your support!  
You may contribute to the HOPE Fund any time of the year. Please, state on your check where you want your money to go.

For those of you who are involved in the Thrivent Choice, you can put your monies towards the ELDA Thrivent Choice. Be sure to contact your Thrivent agent, if you have any questions.  
Send your check, made out to ELDA TODAY. Again, thanks!  
Happy Thanksgiving,  
ELDA Treasurer, Jeff Panek





# MISSION STATEMENTS

## 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.*

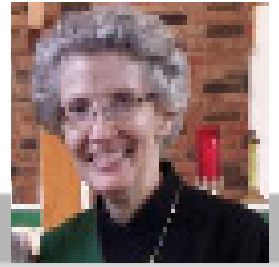
## ELM MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

*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.”*

# SPIRITUAL SIDE:

By Dorothy Sparks, Associate In Ministry



## The Best Is Yet to Come

*Read: Deuteronomy 34:1–12 | Bible in a Year: Psalms 57–59; Romans 4*

*The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. Deuteronomy 33:27*



Are the best days of your life behind or in front of you? Our outlook on life—and our answer to that question—can change with time. When we're younger, we look ahead, wanting to grow up. And once we've grown older, we yearn for the past, wanting to be young again. But when we walk with God, whatever our age, the best is yet to come!

Over the course of his long life, Moses witnessed the amazing things God did, and many of those amazing things happened when he was no longer a young man. Moses was 80 years old when he

confronted Pharaoh and saw God miraculously set His people free from slavery (Ex. 3–13). Moses saw the Red Sea part, saw manna fall from heaven, and even spoke with God “face to face” (14:21; 16:4; 33:11).

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## When we walk with God, the best is yet to come.

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Throughout his life, Moses lived expectantly, looking ahead to what God would do (Heb. 11:24–27). He was 120 years old in his final year of life on this earth, and even then he understood that his life with God was just getting started and that he would never see an end to God's greatness and love.

Regardless of our age, “the eternal God is [our] refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms” (Deut. 33:27) that faithfully carry us into His joy each day.

O Lord my God, I praise You for all You have done in the past. I look forward with thankfulness for all You will do in the future. And I thank You for today and all Your blessings.

## When we walk with God, the best is yet to come.

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# THE DEAF WORLD: HAITI

In Haiti, the average annual income is about \$350. About 37% of the population live in urban areas and their income averages \$409 per year. (From google)

Haiti has about 10 Deaf schools. The Deaf people in Haiti use American Sign Language. About 90 percent of the deaf people in Haiti are struggling to get a job. Many of them live in poverty. The Deaf Haitians thought that they are only Deaf people in the world. Until they met Deaf Americans, they were surprised to learn that the Deaf people live all over the world.

If you are working with a Deaf client or student who comes from other countries, you are encouraged to visit the Deaf School and people in the other country. Then you will understand better and become more sensitive to your Deaf client or students's needs.



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## RYAN FISCHER ACHIEVEMENT



Ryan Fischer, the son of our ELDA Vice President Jeannie Fischer and husband John Fischer, graduated from Desales University, Allentown, PA last May. He was accepted into Penn State Hershey Medical School in Hershey, PA and started there last July. Ryan's family attended his "white coat" ceremony at Penn State, in which Ryan received his white coat. Ryan wants to be a family medical doctor. He volunteers his time at the McDonald's House, visiting sick children. He worked hard to get into medical school. His family is so proud of him!

Ryan is the grandson of Pauline Johnston, who has been involved with ELDA for a long time. They are members of the Word of Life Deaf Church in Lancaster, PA. Jeannie and John have 3 sons; Ryan is the middle child. The other two sons are Curtis and Travis. Grandson, Garrett just turned 2 this month. Congratulations to Ryan and his family on his achievement! Please, keep Ryan Fischer in your prayers as he continues with his medical school studies!



# ELDA / ELM CONFERENCE



Group picture of worship at Bread of Life Deaf church on the last day of the conference.



Sarah Houge from MN and Dr Amy Wilson from Milneck Foundation, NY “Deaf Spirituality, Empowerment and Deaf Global Missions”



Pastor Ruth with her gift of a framed picture of the worship service at Bread of Life Deaf Church.



(left) Mark Koterwski was presented with with the “ELDA Shining Light Award”. (right) Dorothy Sparks and Pastor Beth Lockard accepted the “ELDA City on the Hill Award” on behalf of the Jamaica Mission team.







Group picture of the ELDA/ELM Conference in St. Paul MN.

# ELDA Online

Remember our website is [www.ELDADeaf.org](http://www.ELDADeaf.org)  
our facebook page is:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ELDADeaf/>

# NEWS

Please help our newsletter! Send me your pictures and stories about your ministry. We'd love to put it in our next newsletter.

## September, December, March and June

Read through this issue and let us know what you think. 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 President Linda Fairbanks, [lindafairbanks22@gmail.com](mailto:lindafairbanks22@gmail.com) and I will share with our Newsletter Editor. Thanks!