



ELDA

Volume • 19 Issue • 72
SPRING 2024

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



From the President
Lori Fuller

Hello ELDA Community,

Spring is here!

The sun is out. Grasses are becoming green. Flowers are blooming. It's incredible to take walks and see little buds growing on trees again. This happens year after year during this time of the year. Did we do anything to make this happen? No, we did not make the grass grow greener, and the trees in our

yard grow leaves again because of anything we did. It was all God and God's grand design to have suitable soil, water, and sun.

Even more impressive, during the ELDA Conference this summer, we will have an opportunity to see what God has been doing long before you and I were born.

Yup, you read that right! Heartland Ephphatha Ministries (HEM) in South Dakota planning group has been busy preparing us to come in June. When we arrive, we will have the opportunity to see Mount Rushmore and the Crazy Horse Memorial. HEM shared that the Indigenous Lakota tribe called the Black Hills of South Dakota Paha Sapa. For the Lakota, these Hills are a sacred place. Paha Sapa means "the heart of everything that is", which is the theme for our conference this year. We will learn that God is the heart of a setting of sacred nature in Rapid City.

I'm excited to see what God has been doing, what God is doing, and what God is calling us to do next. Join us June 13-16th at Rapid City, South Dakota.

See you there!

Thanks be to God,

From the Director

Pastor Beth Lockard



Dear ELDA Friends--

God's grace and peace be with you as we end the Lenten season and embrace the Easter promise of

resurrection. Our life can seem like many little Lents and little Easters each year.

2024 for me began with my 87-year-old mother dying after five months of hospice care. I led her funeral in Portland, Oregon in the snow covered "family cemetery" of the church next to my grandparent's former farm. It was 20 degrees and we dodged snow and ice storms to get there and back. This funeral was followed by four more funerals in PA. Despite the sadness, each funeral event was supported by Jesus' promise to all believers that He IS the resurrection and the life!

February 25, Christ the King celebrated my 25th anniversary of ordination as an ELCA pastor. Christ the King also celebrated their 33 years of ministry to the Deaf Community of West Chester and Philadelphia. For me, this began February 25, 1965 when I became profoundly Deaf from spinal meningitis at the age of six. God changed my life and led me on a new path. Many of you have been a part of it. IF you want to watch a recorded livestream of this event, go to this link: [Calvary Lutheran Church - West Chester - YouTube](#). I encouraged CTK members to think of the number "25" as a way to give God their gifts of time, talents, and treasure in 2024. Some examples were: walking a neighbor's dog 25 times; tutoring a Deaf refugee for 25 hours in ASL; giving \$25 twice a year to ELDA, etc.

I have attached a report from the Board of Haiti

Deaf Academy. The news reports Haiti's gangs have overrun the capital city and surrounding area and broke into two large prisons to release thousands of prisoners. These men are looting, rioting, killing, and stealing supplies from banks, food storage, and medical facilities. HDA has 45 students and many staff. Please pray for a shield around these people and angels standing guard. We pray for intervention to help Haiti heal its country with God's resurrection power. The HDA Board claims this resurrection power in a hopeless situation.

Nigeria is also going through a rough time. Inflation has stayed at 30% and food prices up 35%. 30,000 Nigerian naira is equal to only \$19 US dollars. Women and school children are being kidnapped and held for ransom. This makes it very difficult for Pastor Ruth Ulea and LCCN to minister to their people. ELDA has been trying to keep Deaf student Samuel Dimas in the seminary and his wife and children in good care. Consider a money gift to help LCCN Deaf Ministry. We can wire this to Pastor Ruth. These are the "Lents" challenging us around the world.

Pennsylvania is changing from a Lenten brown to an Easter glow as flowers appear and trees bud. May this remind you of God's gift of life given to us from His death on the cross--a gift for each of us to have eternal life.

Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again, WILL!!

Pastor Beth Lockard
ELCA Director of Deaf Ministries

ELDA Conference

South Dakota

Hello, we can't wait to have you visit beautiful Rapid City, South Dakota. We are putting the finishing touches on the ELDA conference planning. Be aware of a few new notes:

We have

- Limited scholarships available (email jason.andra@gmail.com)
- Children are free (Under 18)
- Commuter rates available

Please reach out to our planning committee if you have any questions. The registration form is in the newsletter.



“God desires daily
commitments,
not yearly resolutions.”

CONGRATULATIONS

To Pastor Beth Lockard

On February 25, more than 100 well-wishers, from the Deaf communities served by Christ the King and their social ministry organization called DEAFKAN, gathered in thanksgiving and worship to honor and celebrate Pastor Beth Lockard's 25 years as mission developer, and pastor of this very vital congregation of the ELCA.

Astoundingly, Beth was not only the first Deaf woman pastor ordained in the ELCA in 1999, but also the first Deaf woman pastor ordained in the WORLD!

Pastor Joe Varsanyi, a hearing pastor serving and interpreting for the DEAF community since he was in college and seminary, preached, Pastor Beth presided.

Here is a little bit of Beth and Christ the King's story as told by Bishop Claire Burkat:

Christ the King church is nested in a renovated section of the host church Calvary serving as a chapel designed especially for Deaf worshipers. It usually seats 50, but for Beth's celebration the service was moved to the Calvary sanctuary to accommodate the large number of attendees. The seed of this church planting took root when the Pastor Roy Almquist was senior pastor of Calvary adjacent to the campus of Westchester University. Beth's husband Bill who is hearing, interpreted for Beth at the Calvary service for several months, before other Deaf people started to attend and sit in the "interpretation section". After a while they wanted their own service, devoid of music, but rich in visual expressive worship.

This is where I came into the story. As the SEPA synod Mission Director at the time, I helped raise money for Beth to attend seminary at LTSP and pay for an interpreter for the class lectures. Beth was already



an excellent student, a teacher of Deaf students with a master's degree in education. She served the mission part-time while attending seminary. By the time she graduated, Pastor Roy was elected Bishop of the SEPA Synod, and so he was the one to ordain her on February 25, 1999. She was 8 months pregnant with her third child Micah.

At the celebration worship service Micah signed the first lesson (Micah 6:8) in the service today. Bill and Beth's son Jesse also signed a lesson, and husband Bill offered Deaf and voice interpretation at various times in the service. One of the most sincere and lasting ministries of Christ the King is their monthly visits to Valley View Home in Elwyn Pa, a facility for the Deaf and Blind. For more than two decades, Members of CTK sign the scripture, the sermon, and the sacrament into the palms of the Deaf and Blind while Pastor Beth preaches and presides.

ELDA Easter Appeal

We invite you and your Deaf ministry to support ELDA mission and ministry as we seek to reach out and partner with the Deaf Community domestically (USA) and globally (the world). In the past, we have given to:

The Deaf Community in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, partnering with Louisiana School for the Deaf.

Sending building teams to El Florido, Mexico to build small houses

Assist Haiti Deaf Academy (they need our prayers now as gangs run wild and endanger many people).

Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria to help Pastor Ruth Ulea build their Deaf church, Deaf school, get a van to transport people, and assist Samuel Dimas with seminary tuition, books, and an interpreter. ELDA sent a team of six to visit in person.

Partnered with Red Bird Mission and the Deaf Methodists in the Appalachians in Kentucky to repair houses and distribute clothing.

Jamaica Christian School for the Deaf in Montego Bay for many summers of VBS with teams of volunteers and many boxes of school supplies!

Small scholarships for individuals studying for Deaf pastoral ministry through our Zechariah Fund.

As we make our Lenten sacrifices and spread the joy of Easter, we welcome you to join us. Your gifts may be sent to ELDA Treasurer Mark Koterwski at 5101 S. Marion Road, Apt. 309, Sioux Falls, SD 57106. This is God's work with our hands!

EASTER
APPEAL
2024



Ministry News

Bread of Life Deaf (BOLD) Minneapolis, MN

Greetings fellow Deaf Ministry partners! As you know from the last newsletter, BOLD decided on a new home base and we can officially announce that we will be moving to Minnehaha Communion Lutheran Church (MCLC) in Minneapolis. We will continue to independently operate as our own Deaf ministry, paying rent to MCLC. The church council accepted an offer from a buyer and now they are in the process of inspections, negotiations, and all that comes with selling a building of business. If all goes well, BOLD will be moving to MCLC by the end of May. BOLD will be having a farewell open house celebration at the BOLD building, 38th Avenue, on the weekend of June 7, 8, and 9. Please check our Facebook page or join our community email to get information about this. Our final worship at the 38th Avenue building will be on Sunday, June 9. Perhaps before you go to the ELDA conference, if you would like to stop by and be a part of our celebration to honor what has been almost 68 years of being the a deaf-owned, deaf-run building, we would love to have you!

We have lots of fun plans for this weekend-long celebration! During the ELDA conference, BOLD will be closing their sale and moving into a new chapter of BOLD's life and ministry at MCLC. Your prayers and continued support have been so helpful to us in this journey! We are thankful and appreciate every one of you! See you in South Dakota!

Submitted on behalf of BOLD by Janie Barlow, Office Communications Coordinator and Church Council member

Word of Life Deaf (WOLD) Lancaster, PA

This past January, WOLD hosted a Memorial service conducted by Rev. Beth Lockard and Rev. Joe Varsanyi. The memorial service was for Gordon Pickering, the son of Rev. Dr. Roger Picering (ECD). WOLD was happy to serve the needs of the family in this way. (The service can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/1qbzuumdPoA>).

WOLD & CTK had 3 pulpit-exchanges during Lent – Pr. Beth Lockard from CTK came to WOLD and preached, while Pr. Russ Rockwell went from WOLD to CTK. Our parishes started doing these pulpit exchanges in 2017. It has become an annual tradition that CTK & WOLD members enjoy very much.

WOLD finished Lent with an in-person and online Good Friday service.

On Feb. 20, WOLD turned 30. WOLD's anniversary is on Feb. 20 – which, 30 years ago, was the 1st Sunday in Lent. A celebration of our 30th anniversary was not held at that time, but we may celebrate it later in the year (when the weather is nicer and not as much is going on).

In the spring, WOLD will host a Funeral Planning workshop. Many Deaf people in the community are interested in this topic. WOLD will bring in a licensed funeral director to talk about the important things people need to know about funeral planning. Also in the spring, WOLD will host another "Lunch and a Movie" event.

Online Bible study continues Wednesday nights on Zoom. We are studying "Bible Stories to Know." During the study, we read the Deaf Bible translation of a passage, discuss it, then watch the ASL video of the same passage and discuss it again. We have studied over 100 "Bible Stories to Know." Recaps of what we studied are on WOLD's website. Go to wordoflifedeaf.org/bible-study, then choose "Old Testament" or "Gospels."

If you want to join the study, we meet 7:00 p.m. (Eastern) on Wednesday nights. WOLD's Bible study goes on summer break beginning May 29 (WOLD does not have

Bible study on Wednesdays between Memorial Day and Labor Day.).

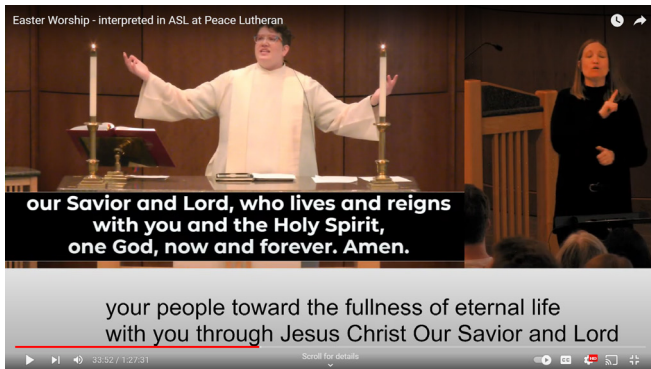
WOLD is not able to give a “head-count” yet of how many people are going to this summer’s ELDA Conference, but we do have a small number of people planning to go. We will see you there!

Heartland Ephphatha Ministries (HEM) Sioux Falls, SD

We sadly said goodbye to Delores Tjarks, she was the wife of longtime HEM Pastor Gene Tjarks. There was a wonderful service for her that you can watch here.

<https://youtube.com/live/z1knlrcaJLA?feature=share>

We also have finally launched our new streaming worship. Please see our worship streams on YouTube at [https://](https://youtube.com/@HeartlandEphphatha)



youtube.com/@HeartlandEphphatha

The stream includes a broadcast of the Peace Lutheran Church Worship as well as an ASL interpreter and live captions.



for

Sharing Hands North Hollywood, CA



In January, members of St. Matt’s, along with Bishop Brenda Boa from the Southwest California Synod, joined together for a special worship service. This heartwarming event, held in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, was beautifully organized by the Southwest California Synod and The African Descent Lutheran Association L.A. Chapter. The service served as a poignant reminder of the importance of unity and community in honoring Dr. King’s legacy.



February also marked the beginning of an exciting new initiative for Sharing Hands. We launched Sharing Hands Sunday Bread (formerly known as ASL Bible Study), bringing

members together again without ASL interpreters for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic began. We are excited to resume this important gathering, and going forward, we will host Sunday Bread once a month, fostering deeper connections and spiritual growth within our community.

Our community continues to demonstrate the spirit of service and togetherness. Members of Sharing Hands volunteered for our longstanding and enjoyable ministry by making PB&J sandwiches and bag lunches for drop-ins at our sister organization, NoHo Home Alliance, every month. Their dedication to serving those in need reflects the core values of our congregation.



Moreover, Sharing Hands members have been providing American Sign Language (ASL) classes twice every month since 2022. These classes offer a wonderful opportunity for individuals within our community to learn ASL and promote greater inclusivity and communication.

-Chris Luna, Sharing Hands Coordinator

Haiti Happenings Spring 2024



Haiti Deaf
Academy
haitideafacademy.com

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you whoever you go. Joshua 1:9

Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all. Psalm 34:19

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:7

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand. Isaiah 41:10

Promises of God. We fight a battle He has already won. We have an enemy who is full of fear and tries to instill fear in others. Our confidence lies beyond our circumstances, it lies within our God.

Many of you have been notified via a thank you note for your support, part of what we are experiencing in Haiti. Thank you for your responses and your prayers. I wish to share with you a note from our BOD president Stephanie Deeb. I would also ask you to keep our BOD in prayer during this time. They need the wisdom of God to navigate these waters.

Stephanie writes: "Haiti is in the midst of the largest political crisis since 2004 when Aristide was removed from office by the US govt. At this moment Ariel Henry, the acting, unelected, Prime Minister is

stuck in Puerto Rico and unable to return to Haiti, as the gangs led by oligarchs want him gone from office and have blocked the airports. You can read articles in the news to explain this situation better. Also, local gangs are attempting to overtake the smaller cities in our area. This past weekend the Cabaret Police station, bank and food depot were taken by a local gang. We feared they were on the way to our campus to take supplies. We are located off of the main road, but the gang will possibly travel through our area to enter the next city to take it as well. In an abundance of caution, We have taken steps to insure the safety of our staff and children. I hope you understand I cannot share in detail all the steps we have taken. Thanks to your support we have the supplies we need to feed and care for our students and staff. There are almost 2,000 people in the hills, many without the supplies or food resources we have, so thank you and praise God. Please pray for our staff, our students, the deaf, the many, many displaced people in Haiti. God has a plan for this nation. We will continue to do our part in His plan.

Please join us in prayer. Financial resources can only purchase food that is accessible to purchase. The country is in crisis. Pray with us that God would send forth harvesters into the fields of Haiti with the gospel of Christ. Transformation within is the only hope for national change.

Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. Mark 11:24

Believe with us and praise with us that for which we are yet to see but believe we will receive.

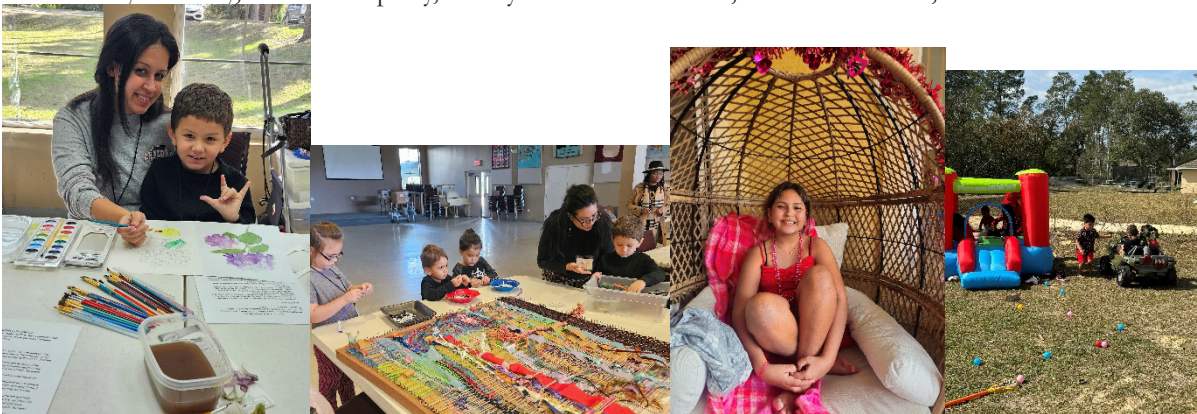
Blessings

Darwin Covington
Child Sponsorship Coordinator
Haiti Deaf Academy.

Community Art Day



One of the things Palms Deaf Church does is focus on events for Deaf/Hard of Hearing children once a month. We've gone to Community Art Day, Valentine's party, Candyland Acrobat show, CADE Museum, and more. Check out the pictures below:



But Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and don't try to stop them! People who are like these children belong to God's kingdom." Matthew 19:14

ELDA 2024 CONFERENCE



June 11-12, 2024

ELDA Board Meeting (TUE-WED)

June 13-16, 2024

ELDA Conference (THUR-SUN morning)

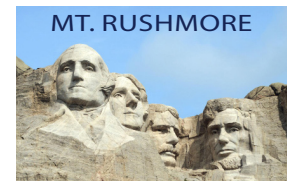
June 16-18, 2024

ELDA Pastors meeting (SUN-TUE)

Register now to reserve your spot in the beautiful Black Hills of South Dakota where we will explore what "Paha Sapa" means and how God is the heart of everything that is.

This conference is hosted by Heartland Ephphatha Ministries in South Dakota.

We can't wait to see you!



ELDA 2024 CONFERENCE

At Terra Sancta || June 2024 || Rapid City, SD

REGISTRATION FORM (EACH PERSON MUST FILL ONE OUT)

NAME _____ EMAIL _____

TEXT # _____

HOME ADDRESS _____

CHURCH OR ORGANIZATION _____ EMERGENCY CONTACT NAME AND NUMBER _____

INTERPRETER NEEDS VOICE (for Hearing) _____

TACTILE (for DeafBlind) _____ SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS _____

FLIGHT # AND ARRIVAL TIME _____ T-SHIRT SIZE _____

CONTACT INFO

605 310 9647

www.BeOpen.church

jason.andra@gmail.com

Heartland Ephphatha

Choose the option that fits you best. Make a check mark next to your choice!



Early Bird Pricing!

Prices are good until the deadline on May 10, 2024

Hotel Style Room
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hotel Style Rooms includes 2 queen beds, and a bathroom. Total of 2-4 people per room. Includes all meals. Only 24 rooms available, first come first served

Monastic Style Room
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monastic Style Room includes 2 twin beds, and a sink. Shared bathrooms are in the halls. Total of 1-2 people per room. Includes all meals.

Option A • Conference Attendee

(Thursday - Sunday Morning)

- | HOTEL STYLE | MONASTIC STYLE |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 in a room= \$350/person | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 in a room= \$325/person |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 in a room= \$325/person | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 in a room= \$275/person |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 in a room= \$300/person | |

Option B • Board Meeting + Conference

(Tuesday - Sunday Morning)

- | HOTEL STYLE | MONASTIC STYLE |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 in a room= \$550/person | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 in a room= \$475/person |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 in a room= \$525/person | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 in a room= \$425/person |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 in a room= \$500/person | |

Option C • Conference + Pastors Mtg

(Thursday - Tuesday Morning)

- | HOTEL STYLE | MONASTIC STYLE |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 in a room= \$700/person | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 in a room= \$625/person |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 in a room= \$675/person | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 in a room= \$575/person |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 in a room= \$650/person | |

Option D • Board Mtg + Conference + Pastors Mtg

(Tuesday - Tuesday Morning)

- | HOTEL STYLE | MONASTIC STYLE |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 in a room= \$750/person | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 in a room= \$700/person |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 in a room= \$725/person | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 in a room= \$650/person |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 in a room= \$700/person | |

List Roommate(s)
or be assigned a roommate

Directions:

1) Choose one option on the left for lodging.

2) Choose if you want to go on the sightseeing tour.

3) Write down roommates in box above, or leave blank to be assigned.

4) Add up costs and enter it below

Total Cost	
Room Cost	_____
Tour Fee	_____
TOTAL COST	_____

SEND CHECKS AND FORM TO:
HEARTLAND EPHPHATHA MINISTRIES (HEM)
5509 W. 41ST STREET
SIOUX FALLS, SD 57106

Sightseeing Tour
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coach bus tour to see our National Monument Mt. Rushmore and the Crazy Horse Memorial. Covers parking, and admission

Sightseeing Tour (Friday)

- Bus Tour = \$50/person

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 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.

ELDA BOARD MEMBERS DIRECTORY

Rev. Lori Fuller
ELDA President
Palms Deaf Church
303 Palm Coast Pkwy NE
Palm Coast, FL 32137
Lori@palmsdeaf.org

Jeannie Fischer
ELDA Vice President
Word of Life Deaf Lutheran
WOLD President
301 Weaverland Valley Rd.
East Earl, PA 17519

Linda Fairbanks
ELDA Secretary
ELDA Newsletter Editor
Lindafairbanks22@gmail.com
1083 280th Street
Mahnomon, MN 56557
218-325-4791 Home
218-251-5829 Text

Mark Koterwski
ELDA Treasurer
5101 S. Marion Rd. Apt. 309
Sioux Falls, SD 57106
Peace Lutheran w/ Heartland
Ephphatha Ministries
Mkoterwski@gmail.com
605-212-0947 Text

Janie Barlow
ELDA Spiritual Advisor
Bread of Life Deaf (BOLD)
Lutheran Church
BOLD Office Communications
Coordinator
BOLD Council Vice President
2901 38th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55406
BOLDOffice1@gmail.com
VP: 651-968-8166

The Rev. Beth Lockard, M.Ed.
(she/her)
Pastor and Executive Director
Christ the King Deaf Church/
DeafCAN! program
West Chester and Philadelphia, PA
ELCA Coordinator of Deaf
Ministries/ELDA Board Liaison
484-319-4256 VP, Voice
lockardbeth@gmail.com

Jason Andera
ELDA Newsletter Lay-out Editor
ELDA Webmaster
Heartland Ephphatha Ministries
Co-Director
Peace Lutheran Church
Sioux Falls, SD
jason.andera@gmail.com
605-310-9647 Text

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!