



The DEAF LUTHERAN



Official Publication of the International Lutheran Deaf Association & the Lutheran Deaf Mission Society

Spring 2018

St. Louis, MO

Vol. 107, No. 2

From the ILDA President Gregory S. Werth



Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

I know it is about time, eh... I should get this President's letter written up for this

issue. First of all, I would like to profoundly apologize for the last two issues that I was not able to write a President's letter due to several things that had been going on in my life. Sadly, my mom took a turn in her life that she had to be moved to a senior citizen apartment and I had to downsize everything she had in the house, which caused me to fly down to Texas several times and deal with several things that you probably went thru with your parents at their golden times. I was also burdened with nasty flu-like coughs and colds four times this past six months, arghh... Needless to say, again I apologize to ya'll of you brothers and sisters in Christ. There that be said and is done.

I would like to introduce myself, my name is Gregory S. Werth, is currently your new president of International Lutherans Deaf Association. I welcome all of ya'll members as a big thank you for voting for me to become a president. Let me tell you a little bit about myself, I was born and

raised in Germantown, WI, and after graduating college, I moved to Texas to start a new business ventures. I started a few companies and sold or closed the companies after I retired for 35 years in doing business in various types of Information Technology venture. Then I met Dawn Polzin thru Facebook whom I knew from when we were young kids. I am proud to say I married Dawn on our December birthday in 2014 by Pastor John Reinke, privately, and then had a huge wedding celebration in the fall of 2015. We do not have kids but we do have three wonderful cute, smart cats that are like our kids.

I was baptized by my family's German pastor in my grandparents' home in 1965 and attended Mount Olive Lutheran Church in Milwaukee and confirmed at Lutheran Church of the Living Christ in Germantown, WI. I have attended a few different churches in Texas but my business ventures kept me on the go abroad and being out of town quite often. I finally settled down in Madison, WI, with my wife. Yes, I know I'm NUTS going back to Wisconsin from Texas but now am proudly a member of Our Savior Deaf Lutheran Church in Madison, WI. Also I'm a Trustee and involved with the Buildings & Grounds committee at my church for three years.

I will honorably in Christ serve ya'll in making this ILDA strong again in the long term which will involve making some changes to the regional chapters to allow more growth after a strong possibility of restructuring the new regions nationwide.

Now to the business side of ILDA, I would like to give a big THANKS to the Peace Deaf Lutheran Church of Indianapolis, IN, for being a generous host to our 2017 ILDA Convention which was held in July 2017 in Indianapolis, IN. It was largely a successful convention from all walks on this earth with our brothers and sisters in Christ convening and learning about Martin Luther's History of the Reformation, History of ILDA, and the trip to "The Ark Encounter" at the Creation Museum in Kentucky.

Our next Executive Board meeting will be held in July 2018, in Kansas, in which we will roll up our sleeves and get right into it and get things rolling for several things that are in need of our attention and make this ILDA more proudly standing for our members who are deaf, hard of hearing or hearing strong faithful Lutherans.

In closing, this is from the book of Psalm 37:23-24 (NIRV) and it says "The LORD makes secure the footsteps of the person who delights in him, Even if that person

trips, he won't fall. The LORD's hand takes good care of him." I would like to personally for ya'll to reminisce this awesome verse to those ya'll want to thrive for a better life will always challenge you in ways you never thought about. There will be days when you stumble, but God will always be there to catch you and lift you back up.
May God Bless Ya'll.

**From the Pastoral Advisor
Rev. Tyler Walworth**



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus

Christ.

It brings great joy to me to write to you again, as I remember you in my thoughts and prayers. The celebration of our dear Lord Jesus rising from the dead is over, yet it continues forever as it is signed in our churches and echoed in the heavenly realms. He is risen. Alleluia!

Unfortunately, our American culture is growing darker by the day. Many Christians today think the only way to grow the church is to accept what our culture says about gender, marriage and birth. The world wants Christians to be quiet or accept the lie of Satan. But the light of Christ cannot be hidden. It simply shines all the brighter in the darkness. God made man and woman. Only a man and a woman can be married. All life is real and precious from conception. Yet, Jesus came to be the savior of those lost in sin. The light of Jesus is not meant to destroy

those led astray, but to lead them to repentance and eternal life in Him!

Consider now how much those who are lost in the darkness need the light of Christ! This is especially true in the Deaf community. Yet, you can only shine the light if you receive the light. This light of Jesus is given in the church by His Word, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Study His Bible whether in English or Sign Language. Go to church and receive Jesus' gift of forgiveness and life. Remember your baptism, which makes you a child of the Father. All of these are how the light of Christ is placed into you and shines into the world. May the Lord draw to Himself all of those who are led astray.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.



All copies of the *Deaf Lutheran* newsletter since 1909 are now available

online to read! Many thanks to Rev. Ron Friedrich and Rev. Daryl Gehlbach for their work in getting these copies ready. Now that all issues of the *Deaf Lutheran* are on the ILDA website, they are preserved forever with no chance of getting lost! Check out the ILDA website:

www.deafjesus.org/ilda/DeafLutheran/DLhome.html.

All copies of the ILDA minutes/reports/convention summaries, etc. for the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s are now also online for you to read! Janet Gehlbach worked hard to locate copies of these papers since she became ILDA Secretary in 2015 at the Madison, WI convention. Pastor Bill Ludwig and Jackie VanManen were a big help in filling in a lot of the gaps. In the

next month or so, hopefully, Janet will be scanning the rest of the minutes/reports, etc. for the year 2000s and 2010s and those will also be made available online to read. Our ILDA History is being preserved online which is a huge blessing as we don't have to worry about lost papers or minutes anymore!

WANTED

Host congregation for the 2021 ILDA Convention. Please send your bid or letter of interest to ILDA President Gregory Werth, worthlesswiz@yahoo.com

NEW OR RENEWAL ILDA MEMBERSHIPS

can be sent to:
David G. Brown
ILDA Treasurer
Holy Cross Deaf Lutheran Church
360 Morse Rd.
Columbus, OH 43214
brown.dg330@gmail.com

Check the ILDA website for a copy of the membership form.
<http://www.deafjesus.org/ilda/membersinfo.html>

WANTED

If you have copies of the 1973 (Kansas City), 1977 (Spokane), 1979 (Memphis), 1985 (Milwaukee) or 1991 (Toledo) ILDA convention minutes, PLEASE contact Janet Gehlbach, ILDA Secretary, at JGehlbach@aol.com. Thank you!

Petajan serves as Vicar



On January 7, 2018, Deaf Institute of Theology (DIT) student Andrew Petajan was installed as

Vicar of Christ Lutheran Church of the Deaf in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Vicar Petajan attended the Wisconsin School for the Deaf in Delavan, where he was taught and confirmed by Rev. Steve Schlund. Vicar Petajan graduated from Gallaudet University in 1998, and then he earned his Masters Degree in economics from the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee. Since then he has worked as economist for the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics in Washington, DC.

Vicar Petajan will soon begin his third year of studies at Concordia Seminary (St. Louis, MO) Deaf Institute of Theology in preparation for his future ministry as a Deaf pastor. His supervising pastor/mentor is Rev. Ron Friedrich.

Why is Andy Petajan studying to become a pastor? He said, "There are not enough Deaf pastors in America. In 1998 Pastor George Natonick counted only nine Deaf pastors in the United States. More Deaf Lutheran churches have closed or downsized due to lack of effective Deaf leadership. I don't want to see more situations like that anymore. Only two percent of Deaf people know about Jesus as our Savior." After Pastor Friedrich asked him to lead worship and prepare his own sermon, Mr. Petajan felt it was time to apply to the DIT program.

Besides his work for the United States Government and his work for the church, Vicar Petajan is an avid sailor during the summer, and during the winter he loves to ski.

Update on Macau/Hong Kong (by David Bush)

Currently, I work with the deaf children at the Lutheran School for the Deaf (LSD), Holy Cross Lutheran School and Lo Ming Choi Lutheran College, all of which are in Hong Kong where we reside. I am also working with some deaf people in Macau and doing a Bible study for some Christian leaders in Macau. Barbara is working side by side with me.

Sign language in each country varies. Barbara and I are learning signs for Hong Kong and Macau which are similar. The sign for "cop" in the United States is the sign for "Christ" here in Hong Kong. But the one sign that is signed the same all over the world is "Jesus." He was the one who was crucified for all the world's people that their sins would be forgiven.

David and Barbara Bush want to thank the Lutheran Church Hong Kong Synod for their significant support as well as support given by the ILDA mission projects. It is greatly appreciated.

You can contact me by email: david.bush@lcmsintl.org.

Update from Rev. Ryan McDermott serving in West and Central Africa

The Deaf ministry in the Accra area is focused on two years – Adamorobe and House of Grace. House of Grace School for the Deaf in Accra, Ghana is a private deaf school on the western edge of Greater Accra Region. It is run by a Finnish mission society. It is

easier to communicate with the students at House of Grace than with the people in Adamorobe, but it is harder to keep the attention of the children. The parents have to pay separately to have their children transported to the school on the Sundays when our mission has services there, so it is encouraging to see those who come. Rev. Steven Schumacher was able to baptize a number of students there.



McDermott with students at House of Grace School.

Adamorobe is a rural village on the outskirts of the city. Because of a genetic trait, there are many Deaf people born there. The people in Adamorobe are poor, even by African standards. Many struggle to get their daily necessities. There has been a long history of missionaries coming to Adamorobe, going back to Andrew Jackson Foster in the 1950s who brought American Sign Language to Africa.

We are thankful for the support of ILDA, which helps to keep us living and working in Africa, so that we can help to form more people for Deaf ministry, so that all people have the chance to receive God's gift of salvation in Jesus Christ.

To contact Rev. McDermott send email to: ryan.mcdermott@lcmsintl.org.



Christ Lutheran Church , Cleveland, OH, donated a stained glass window to Holy Cross Deaf Lutheran Church, Columbus OH. L to R: Nancy Bergstresser, Rev. Edwin Bergstresser, David G. Brown, Sharon Brown, Leonard Williams and Rev. Chip Lawson.

Trinity Lutheran Church of the Deaf, Pittsburgh, PA, celebrated their 55th Anniversary on April 21-22, 2018. On Saturday afternoon a performance by SIGN (Sign in God’s Name) was given and a dinner was held at 5 p.m. On Sunday there were several sermons, a light lunch and then everyone went home. Approximately 50 people attended the celebration. Many thanks to Brian Sita for the photos. It was an inspirational weekend and they hope to have another service in five years or so.

Mary Mowl was presented a plaque that was given in loving memory of Don Mowl, a member since 6/29/1944 and served as chief deacon for 50 years under seven different pastors. He served as President, President-Elect, Secretary, Financial Secretary, Historian, Editor and Photographer as well as a delegate to the Great Lakes Region conferences of ILDA. He also served as a representative for deaf people who needed help.



L. to R: Brian Sita, Mary Mowl and Joe Dermis.



Rev. Edwin Bergstresser leading the Bible Study.



People eating at the Sunday lunch.



Diana Rice graduates from Concordia University-Chicago deaconess program
 Diana Rice from Michigan has graduated from the deaconess program at Concordia University-Chicago on May 4, 2018.

Congratulations Diana on your graduation! Pictured above with Diana Rice is Rev. Thomas Dunseth from the Mill Neck Foundation for Deaf Ministry, Mill Neck, NY.

Rev. Steven Schumacher successfully defended his dissertation at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN, in April. His dissertation topic was "Positioning an International Partner Lutheran Church Seminary for Accreditation: A Critical Analysis of a Proposed Procedure for The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana Lutheran Seminary, Ghana, West Africa." Congratulations Rev. Dr. Steven Schumacher!



Fleece blankets were made by students of the Wisconsin School for the Deaf, assisted by Pat Hyncar, Betty Jo Lucero, Cathy Edler and Rebecca Catchpole.



New officers of the Central Region are: I. to r.:
Rev. Bud Palmer (Pastor Advisor), Mike Ford (Vice President), Rebecca Catchpole (Secretary), Albert Moore (President), and Tim Kearney (Treasurer).
 Congratulations everyone!

Bible Study Guides

At deafjesus.org/deafpah you will find video courses on "How to Study the Bible, OT and NT History, Everyday Life in Bible Times."

At christdeaf.org/academy you will find: "A Bible Tour of familiar Bible stories, Intro to the Old Testament, Intro to the New Testament." Check it out!



Calvary, Des Moines, IA, celebrated their 70th Anniversary on October 22, 2017. Pictured are I. to r.: Jon Holland (Elder), Rev. Gregory Desrosiers (Vancouver, BC Canada, guest preacher) and Deacon Patrick Sell.



Calvary ladies who served the catered lunch: I. to r.: Jackie VanManen, Dorene Sell, Dora McHugh, Kathleen Kautzky and Jean Van Wyk.

In Memoriam Winona Alter



B: 11/26/1930

D: 10/2/2017

Winona was the Chairperson of the 2001 ILDA Convention in Indianapolis, IN.

Higher Things Conference

Higher Things (HT) will have all four conferences sites deaf-friendly. All worship and catechesis events will be interpreted in ASL. Various Deaf activities will also be planned. HT is focused on youth and their Lutheran identity but it is a great experience for all confirmed Lutherans. Day passes and scholarships are available. Dare to be Lutheran....it's still all about Jesus.

The schedule is as follows:
July 3-6, 2018 – Carleton College, Northfield, MN
July 10-13, 2018 – Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL
July 24-27, 2018 – The University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS
July 31 – Aug 3, 2018 – Pacific Lutheran Univ., Tacoma, WA

Download more information about the conferences at:
<http://higherthings.org/conferences/sanctified2018>

Deaf Youth Service

Youth involved in the 2018 service project will be traveling to Minneapolis, Minnesota! They will be there July 17-24, 2018. For more information contact Rev. Seeger at:
MarkDYMT@aol.com.



ILDA Officers

International Officers (2017-19)

President – Gregory Werth
Pres.-Elect – John Mason
Secretary – Janet Gehlbach
Treasurer – David G. Brown
Pr. Advisor – Rev. Tyler Walworth

Central Region (2018-20)

President – Albert Moore
V. President – Mike Ford
Secretary – Rebecca Catchpole
Treasurer – Tim Kearney
Pr. Advisor – Rev. Bud Palmer

Midwest Region (2016-18)

President – Sara Hale
V. President – Dorene Sell
Secretary – Nola Gray
Treasurer – Barbara Zimmerman
Pr. Advisor – Rev. Paul Tessaro

Northwest Region (2016-18)

President – Richard Sharp
President Elect – Patricia Jenkins
Secretary – vacant
Treasurer – vacant
Pr. Advisor – Rev. David Nielsen

Great Lakes Region (2016-18)

President – Larry D. Ginter
Pres. Elect – Nancy Bergstresser
Secretary – Diane Francisco
Treasurer – Karen Beiter
Pr. Advisor – Rev. Gary Lawson

SAVE THE DATES

Church Interpreter Training Institute (CITI)

June 25 – July 6, 2018

Fort Wayne, IN

For more information:

lutheranfriendsofthedeaf.org/citi

Great Lakes Region Conference

July 13-15, 2018

Good Shepherd Deaf Lutheran Church, Toledo, OH

Midwest Region Conference

July 27-29, 2018

Hosted by Prince of Peace Lutheran Church for the Deaf, Spring Lake Park, MN. The conference will be held in Austin, MN at the Holiday Inn. For more information contact Janet Gehlbach, jgehlbach@aol.com or VP 612-424-4747.

2019 ILDA Convention

July 18-21, 2019

Hosted by KansaSEED at the Capitol Plaza Hotel in Topeka, KS. Registration form and hotel information was printed in the Fall (November) 2018 issue of the *Deaf Lutheran*. You can go online and print copies if you wish.

Check out these websites:

www.deafjesus.org

www.jesusdeaf.org

www.jesusdeaf.org/learn

www.tinyurl.com/LDMSYouTube

www.facebook.com/lutherandea

www.deafjesus.org/ilda

The deafjesus.org/ilda website has photos of the ILDA officers and you can print a copy of the ILDA Constitution and Handbook.

Deadline for the next Summer issue of the *Deaf Lutheran* is July 15, 2018

Please send photos, articles and items of interest to:

Rev. Daryl & Janet Gehlbach

305 Liberty St. NE

Fridley, MN 55432

Voice: 612-386-4824

Videophone: 612-424-4747

dgehlbach@aol.com

jgehlbach@aol.com

The DEAF LUTHERAN

Janet Gehlbach, DL Co-Editor
305 Liberty St. NE
Fridley, MN 55432

Spring Issue 2018

RETURN ADDRESS REQUESTED

Mission Projects for 2017-2019

Deaf Youth Service Project	\$ 8,000
Missionary Support	
Rev. Ryan McDermott	\$ 2,000
Rev. Steven Schumacher.....	\$ 2,000
David Bush	\$ 2,000
India	\$ 8,000
Kenya	\$ 8,000
World Lutheran Deaf Outreach	<u>\$ 4,000</u>
TOTAL	\$ 34,000



Donations for the ILDA 2017-2019 Mission Projects can be sent to ILDA Treasurer, David G. Brown, c/o Holy Cross Deaf Lutheran Church, 360 Morse Rd., Columbus, OH 43214. Make your check payable to "ILDA" and put "Mission Projects 2017-2019" in the memo line. Your prayers and donations help ILDA to continue our work in spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the U.S. and foreign countries.