

SHEPHERD'S NEWS



BETHESDA LUTHERAN
DISABILITY MINISTRIES

PASTORAL COUNSELOR'S MESSAGE

Do You Hear What I Hear?

The beloved Christmas song, "Do You Hear What I Hear?" moves from a whisper in the wind to a king's proclamation of hope for the world that comes through the birth of the Christ Child. At every step, someone listens and passes on the message of what God is doing.

In our churches, it is important that we ask, "Do you see...", "Do you hear...", "Do you know..." what great things God has done? Sometimes we need to slow down enough to notice the voices of our "little lambs" share the angel's voice, "For unto you is born this night in the city of David, a Savior Who is Christ, the Lord!" In the Christmas proclamation so simple and enduring, it's beautiful that people of all abilities and disabilities both physical and spiritual can understand and know His message of love and salvation.

"Do you see what I see?" "and in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And an angel said to them, 'Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.'" (Luke 2:8-12)

"Do you hear what I hear?" "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!'" (Luke 2: 13-14)

(cont'd, page 2)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Bethesda Lutheran Disability Ministries (BLDM) Governing Board met virtually in September. New officers were installed: Linda Koeller, MO, as Recording Secretary; Kirsten Whitsitt, IN, as Financial Secretary; Joan Anderson, WV, as Corresponding Secretary; and Diane Simon, WI, as Newsletter Editor. Julie Timm, FL, is a new member at large and Carmen Nagel is the new Oregon Information Coordinator. Their commitment to our mission is appreciated.

Grant applications are being submitted to the LWML Districts for their 2026 Conventions. Thank you to Nicole LeGalley and Reuben Schmitz for their time and energy writing them. We pray that BLDM will be selected to be on some District ballots.

Our library of downloadable spiritual life resources on our website (BethesdalDM.org) continues to expand along with links to other organizations in disability ministry. We also have Wonderfully Made publications available; these were written by Bethesda Lutheran Communities Spiritual Life Team with printing paid for by BLDM under our former name, Bethesda Auxiliary. An order form is on the website; all publications and shipping are free.

College and Post-Graduate scholarships (\$3,000) were awarded to the following students: Chris Atlee, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO; Sydney Eisberg, Concordia University, Irvine, CA; Sydney Morgan, Concordia University, Mequon, WI; and Angela Post, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN, Deaconess Program.

Romans 10:14 NKJV *How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? **And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?** And how shall they hear without a preacher?*

(cont'd, page 2)



BETHESDA LUTHERAN
DISABILITY MINISTRIES

[/blDMfb](https://www.facebook.com/blDMfb)

bethesdalDM.org

contact@bethesdalDM.org



Recognized Service Organization of
THE
LUTHERAN CHURCH
MISSOURI SYNOD

NEWS FROM THE VP

We are using Givebutter as our CRM (constituent relationship management), a database to keep a record of our donors and any gifts made by them. In the past 13 months since we started using it, we have recorded \$8,273.42 from 54 donors in both online and mailed gifts. This includes 2 donors making monthly, recurring gifts; I encourage people to consider becoming monthly donors and encouraging others to do the same.

Early in November, we mailed a letter and emailed a survey to all congregations in the LCMS to both share information about our services and to discover congregations interested in working more closely with us to establish or strengthen programs of spiritual outreach to and with people who have intellectual and developmental disabilities. To date, we have received 20 surveys (and anticipate this number to increase) and have begun connecting with others who want to work and partner with us.

The survey noted above was the priority of the Steering Committee. Next up will be analyzing the survey responses and following up with congregations and volunteers who are interested in working with BLDM. Other priorities include additional surveys, as we continue to gather more information, developing closer working relationships with other organizations and encouraging congregations to celebrate a disability awareness Sunday.

Reuben Schmitz, Vice-President



GIVING CAMPAIGN

Give a gift to help make churches a place where everyone belongs. At Christmas, we remember the manger, a place where everyone was welcome to meet Jesus. Yet today, many people with intellectual and developmental disabilities still struggle to feel included in church life.

Bethesda Lutheran Disability Ministries equips pastors and congregations with training, resources, and encouragement so they can create worship and fellowship where all abilities belong. This Christmas, give \$25, \$50, \$100, or more to help walk alongside pastors and church workers with tools that make inclusion easier. Donate here to make inclusion possible:

<https://givebutter.com/Jc8ryg>

OUR NEW BLDM WEBSITE AND QR CODE

Visit our website at bethesdaLDM.org or scan the code



PASTOR'S MESSAGE

(Cont'd from page 1)

"Do you know what I know?" "When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.' And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child." (Luke 2:15-17)

Thank you, Lord, that Your message of our salvation is so simple even our little children can see, hear, know and proclaim Your love for them!

REV. MARTIN KOELLER, PASTORAL COUNSELOR

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

(Cont'd from page 1)

Our mission has always been to share Jesus and His love with people living with disabilities. We look to those of you who have always supported our mission and new supporters to continue this mission. Please prayerfully consider a donation. Donations can be given online by going to our website - BethesdaLDM.org. Your gift will help churches become places where people of all abilities will hear God's Word, and feel included, supported, and truly valued.

As we journey, once again, to Bethlehem, may your days be filled with joy and peace as we prepare for the coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

KAREN CARTER, PRESIDENT

SYNOD WEBSITE

Check out the LCMS Synod web page for additional resources and information: <https://www.lcms.org/social-issues/disability>. Please copy the link and review our article in the Reporter under Other Resources.



**BETHESDA LUTHERAN
DISABILITY MINISTRIES**

[/bldmfb](https://www.facebook.com/bldmfb)

bethesdaLDM.org

contact@bethesdaLDM.org



Recognized Service Organization of
THE
LUTHERAN CHURCH
MISSOURI SYNOD