

**Please Note:**

This newsletter was written when BLDM was still known as Bethesda Auxiliary and the newsletter was posted to the AbleLight website. Going forward, the newsletter is the sole property of Bethesda Lutheran Disability Ministries and will be posted on our website (www.BethesdaLDM.org).

Shepherd's News – October 2023

From the President

Dear Auxiliary Friends and Donors,

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say Rejoice.” (Philippians 4:4) It is my prayer for you that you are truly rejoicing in the great gift from God of His Son, Jesus, Who died on a cross to save you from all your sins. What an awesome God! I will be using the word “rejoice” throughout my article for many of the other gifts we have received from God.

I am “rejoicing” that the Governing Board met for a zoom meeting on September 30, 2023. The Governing Board members are a Christian group of men and women and sharing with them is always a wonderful experience. Please join me in thanking God for this wonderful group of people.

“Rejoice” that Mona Fuerstenau has joined the Governing Board as the Information Coordinator for Oregon. Welcome, Mona! We look forward to having you be a part of our meetings.

“Rejoice” that Rev. Paul Ziegler, Parker Brown, and Nicole Storz were awarded \$3,000 scholarships for their continued studies in the area of intellectual and developmental disabilities.

“Rejoice” that Dan and Nancy Kunert, former Governing Board members; Rev. George Putnam, Oregon Unit and former Governing Board Pastoral Counselor; Dorothy Fadness, Oregon Unit; Gail Anderson, Oregon Unit; and Sue Hart, Colorado Unit were recipients of the 2023 Cross and Bell Awards.

Congratulations and best wishes to these recipients.

Nominations will be needed for 2024 for the Governing Board President, Vice-President, and Treasurer. Linda Koeller, Vice-President, will chair the committee to nominate a slate of candidates for these offices.

Reaching forward in faith and serving Christ in love,

Gail Nicolaus, President

**From our Pastoral Counselor: Rev. Dr.
Martin Koeller**

“I Hug You”

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.”

(Philippians 4:4)

There is nothing more endearing than the warm embrace of a loved one. This past week my wife, Linda, and I were privileged to have our son and his family stay with us. The house was filled with the energetic voices of 3 of our grandchildren. It was in this chorus of screams and laughter that I felt my four-year-old granddaughter's arms reach around me just above my knees. I looked down and caught her looking up at me, and she said: “Don't hug me grandpa!” After a brief pause, she continued, “I hug you, not you hug me...I love you grandpa!”

From childhood on we learned that God loves us and holds onto us (Is 49:16). There is nothing in this world that can separate us from God's love (Rom 8:35-39) or His care. The same holds true for our parents as they embraced us with their love. Our parents were not perfect. Neither are we. Sometimes our actions can test that love. Sometimes we need to be sorry and seek forgiveness. But that warm embrace and hug can bring us all back together again. How great it is to be hugged as well as to become the hugger.

God hugs us as He demonstrates His love for us: by watching over us (Ps 121:3); taking care of us; sending His Son to us to be our Savior. (John 3:16) He watches over us like a shepherd watches over his sheep (John 10). John the Baptist's disciples came to Jesus to ask: "Are you the one?" And Jesus responded: "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor." (Matt 11:4-5) God embraces us with His loving arms always around us.

HOW GREAT IT IS WHEN WE CAN HUG HIM BACK. It is a great joy to gather with other Christians to worship Him and praise His name. It is a great joy when we can serve Him by serving others. (Matthew 25:40) It is a great joy when we can witness to others about Jesus. And it is a great joy to follow Him in word and deed. In all these ways, we give hugs to God and say, "I love you".

Mark Kinney's Confirmation Day!

Pastor and Linda, after joining a new church in Missouri, were informed of the desire of a man with IDD to be taught and confirmed. They joyfully chose to teach Mark, 47, with Bethesda materials, and he was confirmed on October 22, 2023. Pastor and

Linda plan to continue Bible classes with him when he is home with his family every other weekend. It was a joy-filled day for him and his church family! This was Linda's 11th student and Pastor Koeller confirmed 8 of those who were members of our congregations.







Bethesda Auxiliary News from State Chapters

Oregon

Greetings Faithful Bethesda Auxiliary members from the Oregon unit.



Cross and Bell Award Recipients:

Rev. George Putnam's service to Bethesda Auxiliary and people living with intellectual and developmental disabilities is outstanding. Former Auxiliary President, Karen Carter, of Wisconsin nominated Pastor George saying: "How to encapsulate in a few sentences a man who in all things loves and serves the Lord. For many years he has been a partner to his wife, Terry, in her speaking trips all over Oregon setting up sale tables, sharing

the news of Jesus Christ with those with disabilities, and helping people understand the need for supporting those people.

When Pastor George served as Pastoral Advisor for the Auxiliary, he would spend a lot of time in analyzing and studying the Scriptures so that we would be enlightened and challenged with his devotions. Current Auxiliary President, Gail Nicolaus, thanked Pastor George “for all your ‘religious’ leadership. You always made me think and learn from Scripture.”

Pastor George has taken people through the Auxiliary’s “Building on the Rock” confirmation curriculum and has been blessed to confirm them. He is soon to start teaching with a new “student.” He is also “creator” of Rev. George’s Fruit Cordials which always “sell out” after being tasted, raising funds for Bethesda Auxiliary’s projects.



Rev. Wil Gehrke, former Cross and Bell awardee, presents the certificate and Wooden Cross and Bell award to Rev. George at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Tillamook, Oregon.

Gail Anderson was truly surprised when she was presented the **Cross and Bell** Award at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Sandy, Oregon, acknowledging her dedication to Bethesda Auxiliary ministry by being a major "fund-raiser"! Her creative Re-Rugs made from two-inch strips of colorful, re-cycled sheets, crocheted

together into 24 inch by 36 inch oval rugs are one- of a- kind and beautiful. Those purchasing them use them in the kitchen, bathroom, as you step into the front or back door, and even in front of pet doors. A hot pink rug was a play area for two toddler sisters. They wash and dry and sell like crazy. How about ordering some of these for Christmas gifts?! She also makes lap-sized quilts and potholders from unique fabrics. The money Gail has raised for the Auxiliary has made it possible for many projects to be funded and people living with IDD to be blessed. Congratulations Gail and thank you!



Gail Anderson with some of her creative Re-rugs.

Dorothy Fadness of Christ the Vine Lutheran Church in Clackamas, Oregon, was nominated for her countless years of serving as the Oregon Units archivist/historian. Her prayers and support for Bethesda Auxiliary and faithful collection and organization of its history will enable us and future generations to see the way the Lord has blessed this ministry and the people living with IDD that we serve in various ways.



Oregon unit's financial secretary and fellow congregation member, Eileen Fligg, presented the Cross and Bell award and certificate to Dorothy Fadness.

Living Savior Lutheran Church in Tualatin, OR has an active, on-going ministry to the four group homes in Tualatin, one situated on their property. Kathy Greene, her helpful husband, and great crew at Living Savior have been and are supported by the congregation, their previous pastor, Rev. Nathan Brandt, and current pastor, Rev. Kevin Fenster. This congregation includes their disability ministry in their annual budget. Praise the Lord! Kathy and her team, prepare a dinner each week and take it to the residents and staff of one of the homes. Once a month a visit

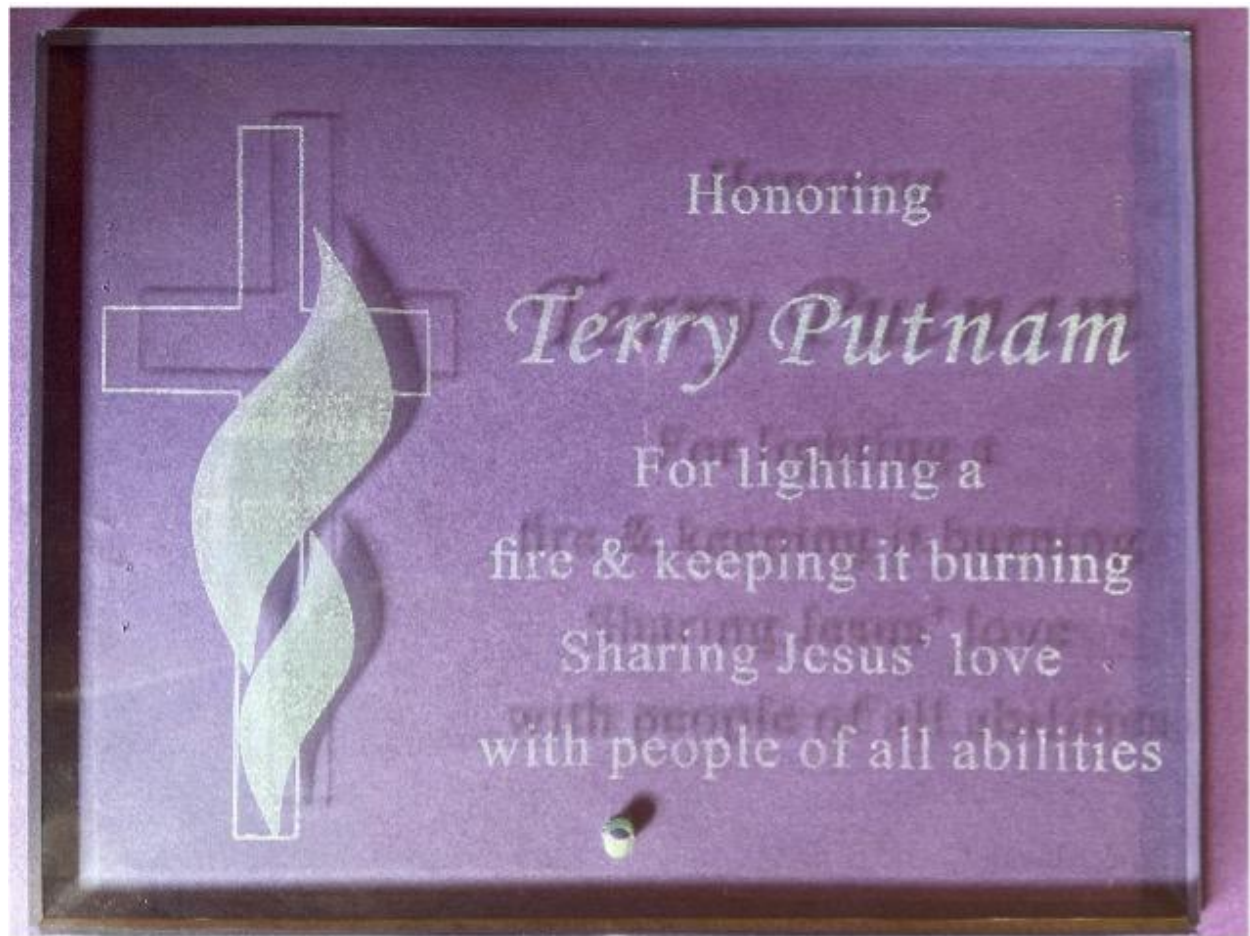
is made which includes dinner, devotions, singing, and prayer time. Kathye and team members know all the clients and staff well. Others in their congregation and community living with IDD are included in the many planned activities. Advent and Christmas rejoicing starts early, as fresh evergreen wreaths are taken to each home, as well as other Christian symbols reminding the people of the true meaning of Christmas. A Christmas gathering with creative telling of the Christmas story, games, singing, gifts, and refreshments all make for an exciting time of looking forward to the Savior's birth.

On April 30th, the Annual Spring Fling was held for the clients and staff. What a great time of visiting, activities and refreshments. Special speakers had been invited: Pastor "K" Kachmarek, retired chaplain of Good Shepherd Lutheran Home of the West (GSLH) and Bethesda Lutheran Communities (BLC) for many years, and Rev. Jim Pressnell, congregation member. Kathye and Mona Fuerstenau had invited close personal friends of Terry Putnam to honor her many years of service in chaplaincy to the people support by GSLH and BLC. Pastor "K" and Rev. Jim Pressnell both spoke about Terry's weekly Bible studies with the people living in the Tualatin group homes, as well as other group homes on the West Side of Portland. Terry knew many of the Tualatin residents in attendance. What a joyful "reunion" with special

friends, as the pandemic had prevented get-togethers for three years.

One such special friend was Will Lemer, who buzzed around in his wheelchair visiting with everyone. When Terry was giving a thank you to all, Will reached for the microphone and proceeded to give his special speech. Near the end of the afternoon, he again reached up to receive the microphone and bowed his head, giving the closing prayer. Our Lord knew the words Will was praying, but none in attendance knew Will's special language and the words he was saying. It was a highlight of the afternoon.

The friends from the four group homes and their staff had made special poster size cards of congratulations for Terry. Mona had started a special Scrapbook which included letters of congratulations from LCMS District officials, friends from GSLH and BLC days, and space for cards and pictures. Mona and Bethesda Auxiliary president, Gail Nicolaus, had a lovely, engraved glass plaque created.



Terry Putnam's beautiful plaque, given to her for her many dedicated years of service with

and for people with IDD. Thank you so much, Terry! You are a blessing!



This is Helen Huffman who celebrated her 99th birthday at Trinity Lutheran Church in Hillsboro, Oregon in October, 2023.

The church presented her with this lovely blue shawl. Helen was

active in the Oregon unit of Bethesda Auxiliary for decades. She passionately fundraised and held many unit offices. She also did weekly Bible studies at Trinity's adopted group home. Thank you, Helen, for your many years of lovingly serving people with IDD!



Idaho

Greetings Faithful Bethesda Auxiliary members from the Idaho unit.

Cross and Bell Award Recipients:



Idaho Cross and Bell recipients: Eileen Banholzer, Marilyn Kramer, and Janet Camin (presented to Pastor Camin in her absence)

The Idaho Unit held its first annual meeting since April, 2019, on May 20, 2023. St Paul's Lutheran, Jerome, hosted the meeting.

Guest speaker via speaker phone was Gail Nicolaus. She brought the group up to date on what we hear from AbleLight. She also discussed business conducted at the spring Bethesda Board meeting.

Cross and Bell awards were presented to Eileen Banholzer, Janet Camin (presented to Pastor Camin in her absence), and Marilyn Kramer.

Eileen was introduced to Good Shepherd as a teenager when her mother, Paula Lierman, was the first president of the Idaho Unit when it was chartered in 1956. She taught at a Lutheran School in Milwaukee for many years, returned to Idaho in the early 90's, and was soon an active, devoted member of the Idaho Unit, serving several terms as President, Co-President, or Vice President. She has been the Corresponding Secretary, on the By-Laws committee, and a contact person. Eileen was an asset to the success of our annual yard sale, putting in many hours gathering items and working cheerfully during the event. She is an active member of LWML and has served as Zone President. She still finds time for several community groups including Magic Valley Symphony as Reception Chairperson.

Janet has been a faithful servant of her Lord and of Bethesda Auxiliary for many years. Her service to the Idaho Unit has included Contact person and the By-Laws committee. Janet is currently the Recording Secretary and has been for several terms. She participated in our annual yard sale and willingly helps with other fundraisers and wherever she is needed. Janet also served as the 2nd Vice President of the Bethesda Auxiliary Executive Committee for several years. As the wife of a Pastor, Janet has always been active in church activities, including LWML, having served as President. A nurse by profession, Janet's compassion

and love of the Bethesda ministry is evident in her dedication to the Idaho Unit.

Marilyn is no stranger to Bethesda as she has been a loyal, devoted member for many years. She previously served as Publicity chairperson and Vice-President and the By-Laws committee. She has completed 3 terms as Idaho Unit President and has agreed to continue serving as Co-President. Marilyn is a dedicated worker and a conscientious and well-organized leader who puts forth much prayer, time, and effort to promote the Bethesda ministry. She is a willing and capable worker at our fundraisers and Unit activities and is a pleasure to work with. Marilyn received her Bachelor of Science in Education degree from Concordia, Seward, and as a faithful servant of her Lord, taught 16 years at Immanuel Lutheran School in Twin Falls. At Immanuel, she is a member of the Altar Guild, active LWML member, chairman of the Magic Valley Lutheran scholarship committee, and worked as a fill-in at the Child Development Center.

Election of officers for 1 year term were: Co-Presidents Eileen Banholzer and Marilyn Kramer; 2-year terms: Recording Secretary Janet Camin and Treasurer Arlene Jones. Sandra Ruebel is the newly appointed membership chairman. Pastor Camin installed the officers.

No pledge was adopted as it was agreed we would be pleased with all donations coming in. A baked goods and craft sale followed the meeting.

Colorado

Greetings Faithful Bethesda Auxiliary members from the Idaho unit.





Pictured above is Sue Hart who was nominated for the Cross and Bell award by Colorado Unit President, Kenetha Mann.

Sue received her award on Sunday, October 22, 2023. Kenetha wrote, "Sue Hart has been an amazing supporter of the Colorado Bethesda Auxiliary for many, many years. Sue was instrumental in the partnership that was developed between the Colorado Auxiliary Board and Bethesda Lutheran Communities."

Congratulations and best wishes to Sue Hart! She is a very treasured friend and very much appreciated for her work with people with IDD!

"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace." (1 Peter 4:10)

"Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12:32)

