

SHEPHERD'S NEWS



**BETHESDA LUTHERAN
DISABILITY MINISTRIES**

PASTORAL COUNSELOR'S MESSAGE

Can I Borrow Your Shoes?

They say if you want to really get to know a person, you need to "walk a mile in their shoes". I had the privilege of being a camp counselor at the Lion's Camp in Rosholt, Wisconsin, one summer. Each week, the camp welcomed a new group with different physical or developmental disabilities. The day before the campers with blindness arrived, we as counselors spent the entire day wearing blindfolds so we could understand what they would be experiencing (and practiced how to describe a tree or the blue sky to a blind person). The day before the campers who were deaf arrived, we were not permitted to talk for the entire day. And the day before those with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) arrived, we were asked to experience a day with great joy and excitement and to show appreciation for everything—even down to the food we were served! I learned a lot that summer by walking in their shoes and experiencing the world as they experience it.

Even our Lord, as we read in Hebrews, understood this concept. Hebrews 2:9: *"but we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor."*

Hebrews 4:10 tells us: *"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin."*

As we gather in our churches on Sunday morning to worship our Lord, how beautiful it is when we can experience everything in its fullness. Think for a moment if YOU had poor eyesight, poor hearing, or had trouble with mobility. Does YOUR church address these needs? Is YOUR church sensitive to those with IDD and have ways to include them? Sunday morning is our opportunity to be a church family as we

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

With this issue of Shepherd's News, we embark on a new journey for our organization with a new name, Bethesda Lutheran Disability Ministries (BLDM), formerly Good Shepherd Auxiliary and Bethesda Auxiliary. Our mission/vision remain the same: sharing the love of Jesus with people living with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

The Governing Board and committees of BLDM have been working since April 2024 to plan a new path: to encourage, assist, and empower a network of individuals, congregations, and volunteers to share the Gospel with people living with disabilities.

We are creating, through our website (BethesdaLDM.org), a library of downloadable spiritual life resources, most of them free. Our goal is to be the place where anyone can visit to find materials for disability ministry for their family, community, and church.

We invite you to join us in our expanded ministry by praying and volunteering. Online giving is available through our website.

We are so blessed to be His children. Join us as we make every effort to share His love with people living with disabilities.

Let us sing joyful praises for His continued love and faithfulness,

Karen Carter, President

share God's love and as we share our love. Don't be afraid to greet everybody and smile. It's a wonderful way to show that we care about each other. Don't be afraid to walk in the shoes of others. Your next new friend might only be a "step" away!

God bless you,
Rev. Dr. Martin Koeller



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 bethesdaLDM.org

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Recognized Service Organization of
THE
LUTHERAN CHURCH
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CURRENT PROJECTS:

- Good Shepherd Lutheran Home (Hogares Luteranos el Buen Pastor) Dominican Republic
- College and post graduate scholarships for students pursuing work with people living with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD)
- Grants for elementary and secondary schools completing a special curriculum for IDD awareness
- Grants for summer experiences at an LCMS Colorado camp for AbleLight people living with disabilities
- Website and Facebook

BECOME A VOLUNTEER TODAY!

- Pray for our disability ministry
- Join BLDM as an Information Coordinator
- Join BLDM Board of Directors
- Help welcome people with IDD into your congregation. We can help you host a fun event, Bible Class or church service. Volunteer roles can be adapted to suit the unique needs and dynamics of your congregation. We can help you on this amazing journey of sharing God's love with people of all abilities in your congregation by providing a Volunteer Mentor.

MEET US IN OMAHA!

Come visit us at our new Bethesda Lutheran Disability Ministries Exhibit, Booth 130, at the LWML Convention, June 26-29 in Omaha, NE

SPECIAL THANK YOU

We appreciate the hard work of Britt Carter, who designed the BLDM logo, Karen Himes, who has managed our social media content, and Jonathan Koeller, who designed and built the BLDM website.

OUR NEW BLDM WEBSITE AND QR CODE

Visit our website at bethesdaLDM.org or scan the code



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