

SHEPHERD'S NEWS



**BETHESDA LUTHERAN
DISABILITY MINISTRIES**

PASTORAL COUNSELOR'S MESSAGE

She Was the Greatest Ambassador

"Beloved, let us love one another." 1 John 4:7

From the moment we walked into church, we felt genuinely welcomed and loved. Her smile was radiant as she warmly said, "Hi," before hurrying off to greet others. She was part of the NATS (Not Afraid To Smile) Committee, and she truly embodied a joyful spirit of worship and fellowship.

Her warmth stood in striking contrast to others who entered without acknowledging those around them. Later, we learned she had been labeled IDD, yet her joyful presence made the church feel especially warm and inviting that morning. The service felt more meaningful, the sermon more personal, and the fellowship afterward more genuine.

We can all learn from her example. When the joy of Jesus fills our hearts, it naturally shines outward to others. None of us can say we lack the ability to be God's ambassadors.

So, let's all become members of the NATS Committee--sharing Christ's love through our greetings, our welcome, and our care for one another.

Rev. Dr. Martin Koeller

P.S. Don't forget—do it with a smile!



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*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? Romans 10:14 NKJV*

Bethesda Lutheran Disability Ministries (BLDM) continues to reach out across our nation to help congregations and individuals share Jesus with those living with disabilities. Paul asks in Romans, "And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?" I ask you, can you help us share Jesus with those who have not heard? BLDM has mentors available to share resources that are available online or schedule a conversation or a ZOOM meeting. Visit our website Bethesdalldm.org for information or contact us at contact@bethesdalldm.org

This is the year that LWML District members convene at conventions. We will be exhibiting at some of them; please stop and visit. We pray that grants we have submitted to LWML Districts will be approved. The funds will help us reach out to interested congregations, write and publish new materials as well as continue our scholarship project for college and post graduate students, Dominican Republic support, and other spiritual supports for people living with disabilities.

An awesome Bible Study by Terry Putnam, longtime advocate and supporter of people living with disabilities and BLDM, will be published in the summer issue of Lutheran Women's Quarterly publication. Theme is Blessings in Disguise.

Information on Disability Awareness Sunday, the last Sunday in July each year (July 26, 2026), sponsored by BLDM, will be mailed out in May. See page 2 for more information.

Many of you support us by offering kind words, prayers and donations. THANK YOU!

Karen Carter, President



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 bethesdaLDM.org

 contact@bethesdaLDM.org



Recognized Service Organization of
THE
LUTHERAN CHURCH
MISSOURI SYNOD

DISABILITY AWARENESS SUNDAY, JULY 26, 2026

Bethesda Lutheran Disability Ministries is very excited to announce our first Disability Awareness Sunday. We will be encouraging congregations to celebrate with us on Sunday, July 26. Our goal is encourage congregations to use this service to highlight the spiritual needs of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and focus on opportunities to welcome and serve the spiritual needs of people with disabilities in their congregations and community. We will provide a packet of information to all LCMS congregations, that will include a devotion, sermon notes, bible study, prayer and litany. Our goal is to send a physical copy to each congregation mid-May. These materials will also be posted online and we will send a reminder postcard with a QR code on July 1 with a final reminder.

We will also use this mailing to remind pastors and congregations of our role in assisting them with free materials, training and counseling to help them start or enhance their local disability ministry. All of our materials and resources can found online here: www.BethesdaLDM.org.

You can help: ask your pastor if he has received our materials and encourage him to participate in whatever way is appropriate for your congregation on July 26. If he hasn't, point him to our website or let us know and we will resend a packet to him. If you have a local program of disability ministry, remind the pastor and volunteers of the resources and services that we offer. If you aren't familiar with them, check them out yourself first. If you don't have any disability ministry at your congregation, talk to the pastor and see what can be done to be welcoming and focused on serving the spiritual needs of people with disabilities in your congregation and community. We ask all to continue to pray for our success and for people with disabilities all across the nation to be an important part of each congregation, worshiping and serving together with all of us.

NEW POSITIONS ON THE BOARD

The Governing Board recently approved a Marketing and Communication Advisor (Julie Timm) and a Governance Advisor (Nicole LeGalley). Both ladies previously served as members at large for BLDM and have extensive experience in their fields. We are all volunteers on the BLDM Governing Board (GB); we are always actively recruiting volunteers to serve on our board or short-term committees. BLDM GB meets in the spring and fall each year in ZOOM meetings. Committees meet as needed in ZOOM meetings.

OUR BLDM WEBSITE AND QR CODE

Visit our website at bethesdaLDM.org
or **scan** the code
OR **mail** donations to:
Cindy Buddenburg
Financial Secretary BLDM
206 Round Mountain Road
Conway AR 72034



BLDM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**THE APPLICATION
DEADLINE IS MAY 9, 2026
FOR BLDM \$3,000
COLLEGE AND POST-
GRADUATE
STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS
FOR 2026-2027**



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