



# The DEAF LUTHERAN



Official Publication of the International Lutheran Deaf Association & the Board for Missions of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

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## ROBIN'S STORY -- A HAPPY ENDING

By Susan Perlman

Submitted by Stephen H. Luke  
St. Augustine, Fla.

The phone call was for Moishe Rosen. It was an emergency. Since he has just left town, I was asked to take the call. It came from a pastor in the Tulsa area who was a long-time friend and supporter of our JEWS FOR JESUS ministry. He needed some immediate advice. His secretary, Donna, closest to the problem, explained the situation.

"I don't know what to do at this point," she began. "You've probably had some experience in this kind of problem. There's an eighteen-year Jewish girl, Robin, who has been a believer for about a year now. She has hesitated to tell her parents about her faith in Christ because she feared an angry reaction. She's just weeks away from her high

school graduation and wants to go to Bible college. When she brought an application from the Bible school to her parents for their signature, they became very upset and restricted her contact with other Christians"

Donna mentioned one other factor: Robin was deaf. She had been deaf from birth. I advised Donna, who knew sign language, tell Robin that it was important for her to de-escalate the tension at home. If she could hold out until graduation, decisions could be made afterwards.

Robin tried, but the situation worsened. In order to keep Robin away from contact with other Christians, her father took away her TTY machine. This deaf phoning and teletype machine was Robin's communication lifeline. He also stopped her car privileges. Then Robin was informed that she would be going to a Jewish week-end "camp" for the deaf in Boston, Mass. When we checked into it, we learned that the leader of the camp had a reputation for anti-missionary activity. We suspected that this group would try to "do a job" on Robin to separate her from her

ROBIN'S STORY

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### Preparations Underway for Great Commission Convocation in St. Louis Oct. 25-28

Preparations are rapidly being completed for the Synod's second "Great Commission Convocation" already known familiarly as CCC II, scheduled for St. Louis' downtown Convention Center Oct. 25-28.

Speakers have been lined up and personnel secured to lead the six plenary sessions, singing celebrations, and 131 workshops. At least 10,000 are expected to attend the sessions, with a high of 15,000 anticipated for the Saturday evening rally, when Dr. Oswald C.J. Hoffman will speak.

An added feature this year is a Youth Program option at special rates, designed for young people from grade 9 through age 22.



**JEANETTE OSBORN**, recently named Resident Manager of the Year for HUD Senior Housing nationwide, shows her many awards. From left to right: Jim Osborn, her husband; Jeanette; Virginia Cox, president of the Pilgrim Tower Council; Rev. August Hauptman, pastor of Pilgrim Lutheran Church for the Deaf, and Rev. Richard Bennett, California Lutheran Homes.

## ROBIN'S STORY -- A HAPPY ENDING

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Christian faith.

Robin told her parents that she would rather not go to Boston, but they replied that she had no choice in the matter. Her father ordered her to conform to his wishes or to leave his house. Sadly, she left home and moved in with Christian friends. Two days later, Robin's father filed a petition in the Tulsa court for Robin to be declared incompetent and in need of a guardian. He also went to the local newspaper and told them that Robin had been brainwashed by a "Baptist cult."

At that point I was sent to Tulsa to do whatever was necessary to help Robin. I arrived on weekend, a difficult time to locate an attorney to plan Robin's defense, and I had less than 48 hours before her scheduled court appearance. The legal referral services were all closed. Most of the lawyers I tried to reach were not available. I finally contacted the wife of one Christian attorney, John Mark Young. She said she would let him know that I had called and would get back to me.

Meanwhile, I went to meet Robin. She was a typical teen-ager, bubbling over with life. Although she was upset over her parents' actions, she stood resolute and strong in her commitment to Christ. Not knowing sign language, I communicated with Robin through a translator and notes. I told her about my call to a lawyer who might be willing to represent her. She wanted to meet him, and I promised to arrange it as soon as possible.

The next morning, Sunday, I called Robin's father. I explained that I worked with Jews for Jesus and that we were concerned about his petition. I told him that we were willing to help in reconciling the family, and that it was important for him to drop the legal action. I told him that no one could win in such a situation. He would be alienating his daughter and creating a wedge that would not be easily overcome. He was adamant in his position.

Robin, Donna and I finally met the attorney, Mr. Young, at 9:00 that evening. He and Robin "talked" until 2:00 a.m. She decided to engage him represent her. Five days later, the trial began.

Robin's father had hired one of the best trial lawyers in all of Oklahoma to present his case in court. Everyone thought it would be a one-day procedure, but the trial lasted

for a week. News of what was happening was reported every day in the papers, radio and televised news. Despite the tremendous stress of the situation, Robin held up throughout the ordeal. Her courage and love for the Lord were a testimony for everyone.

Nevertheless, Judge Robert Frank ruled that Robin was "incompetent" based on a vague standard called "judgmental immaturity." He would appoint a guardian. Shocked at the verdict, we prayed that the guardian would not be someone from Robin's family, who opposed her faith in Christ.

In the meantime, we needed help to move public opinion on Robin's behalf. Back at our San Francisco headquarters, we drafted a statement to be placed as paid advertising in the Tulsa newspapers. It began:

"IF YOU ARE 18 YEARS OLD, JEWISH AND DEAF, DOES IT MEANS YOU ARE MENTALLY INCOMPETENT BECAUSE YOU WANT TO BELIEVE IN JESUS?"

It went on to tell the whole story. It also asked for prayers, letters to the judge and financial help for Robin's legal fees to be sent to her church. Many letters were also written, particularly to those in Oklahoma, to ask for prayer and support for Robin through her ordeal. Many responded, yet it seemed at every turn Robin's cause was thwarted. The judge was not sympathetic; the newspaper editorials were even less sympathetic. Robin's parents regarded her Christian friends as enemies. But through it all Robin stood fast in her faith.

Judge Frank appointed Robin's sister and brother-in-law as her permanent guardians. They told her she could not go to Bible college. Instead, she was enrolled in a local university. Throughout this time, Robin stayed in touch with us. Her letters were filled with the hope and joy of one who, although she was not free to live as she choose, was free indeed, free in Christ.

During this time, Robin's attorney, Mr. Young, along with his father, a state senator and born again believer, labored on to appeal the court decision. Their motion for a new trial was denied. Then they took the case all the way to the Oklahoma supreme court. There it stayed until Nov. 29, when an eight-to-one decision was handed down in Robin's favor! The opinion, written by Chief Justice Don Barnes stated:

"The parents of an 18-year-old congenitally

deaf woman brought this action to declare their daughter incompetent to manage her person and estate, and therefore in need of supervision. After a lengthy trial, Special Judge Robert D. Frank found Ms. Polin to be 'judgmentally immature' and capable of being manipulated by 'artful and designing persons' and therefore incompetent. . . . This overbroad construction results in a chilling infringement of Ms. Polin's fundamental constitutional right to free exercise of her religious beliefs and the decision is therefore REVERSED with directions to vacate order appointing guardian and dismiss."

The opinion went further to state some reasons for the supreme court's decision, commenting: Robin possesses above average intelligence. Robin is a registered voter, a licensed driver and has demonstrated her ability to travel independently. She has held part time jobs during summer vacations like many high school students . . . between March of 1982 and April of 1983 Robin made the decision to adopt the Christian faith as her own, and sought to combine this faith with her ethnic heritage. Robin's needs differ because of her disability, but Robin understands her special needs and has been trained to cope with her communication difficulties. . . . The trial court's creation of a vague standard such as "judgmental immaturity" cannot be permitted as camouflage for the single effect of its decision, the denial of Robin Polin's right to her religious beliefs."

We are rejoicing over this victory for Robin and for the cause of Christ. The significance of this case goes far beyond the boundaries of Oklahoma law. Had Judge Frank's decision stood, it would have meant that families could gain control over the lives of their adult children who choose to differ with them over matter of religion. Whereas it may not appear as a great threat to the general public, this kind of problem certainly has been real to many Jewish people who have professed faith in Christ against the wishes of unbelieving relatives.

We know that you will want to be praying for Robin as she enrolls in Tennessee Temple university early in 1984. She feels that God wants her to be a missionary to the Jewish deaf. With His help, and with the continued commitment and motivation she has exhibited in the past, we're confident that she will reach her goal and be a blessing to many.

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O Lord, we praise You, bless You and adore You. In thanksgiving bow before You. --Luther

## **A SENIOR CITIZEN COMMENTS . . .**

By Clarence F. Schulz

Our Savior's Lutheran church  
Detroit, Mich.

Some of you readers may remember me as the former chairman of the first ILDA convention at Chicago in 1971. Perhaps others as the assistant editor with Archie D. Marshall. I would like to comment on the present day trends in deaf congregations. Today, all of our churches are under the jurisdiction of the various districts, whereas, they were formerly administered by the board for missions in St. Louis. This is good; a good connection. In this way, the deaf churches get better attention to their needs and financial support, despite the varied methods and regulations.

It is certainly commendable, however, that the ILDA still continues to work for greater opportunities for the deaf to voice their views in work of mission endeavors with unity, enthusiasm and looking ahead for greater expansion. The progress is slow, but steady. It is the deaf Lutherans' way to show Christ's glory in their efforts.

Perhaps the chief problem is evangelism. How far do we go is still a question. Despite some workshops and a rally, there seems to be some hesitation and frustration. It is true that other churches are luring our members away (proselytizing). Here in metropolitan Detroit and its suburbs, there are more than 30 different churches, not all Christian. Christ warns us to beware of wolves in sheep's clothing.

With time running short, we go on with firm faith, courage and hope and with the blessing of our Saviour in our efforts to win more deaf for Christ.

## **LUTHER'S LAST WORDS**

Two days before he died in 1546, Martin Luther wrote, partly in German and partly in Latin, "Wir sind bettler, hoc est verum"--"We are beggars, this is true." Thereby he expressed what might be called the leitmotif of his life and work--his complete dependence on God for every aspect of his existence, both physical and spiritual. It was this awareness that filled him with undying gratitude to God and made him the great champion of grace.

Luther was born Nov. 10, 1483 and died Feb. 18, 1546, not yet 63 years of age.



# ILDA PAGE

## MIDWEST REGIONAL CONFERENCE MEETS AT DES MOINES MAY 18-20, NEW OFFICERS ELECTED

By Dolly L. Keliher, Reporter  
1423 Swope Ave.,  
Colorado Springs, Col. 80909

The Midwest Regional Conference of the ILDA met in convention at Camp Sunnyside, Des Moines, Iowa on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, May 18-20 during somewhat dismal weather, despite having "ordered" sunshine for the 3-day meeting. All states in the region had visitors attending except North Dakota and the Canadian Province of Ontario.



Rev. David Mueller, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, delivers a few remarks as Lester Ahls, acting secretary, looks on.

Conspicuously absent was the conference president, Harry C. Searles of Colorado Springs, who with his family, was unable to attend due to the death of his mother at Kansas City.

Highlighting the meeting were skits and drama presentations and banner competition and a program by the SON-SHINER SIGNERS of Bethlehem Lutheran church, Omaha, Neb.

New officers for 1984-86 are: Donald L. Kissell, president, Des Moines, Iowa; Ronald Nester, vice president, Hiawatha, Kan.; Frances Burgess, Omaha, Neb., secretary; Dolly L. Keliher, treasurer, Colorado Springs, Colo., and Rev. David Mueller, pastoral adviser, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

The members voted to meet in Omaha in 1985 and the 1986 conference meeting will be held in the Denver area.

The business sessions gave attention to

the need to support our parent organization, the ILDA; to encourage younger people to come to meetings and with the conference providing incentive in this direction with free privileges. Among other items discussed, Denver announced it would bid for the 1989 convention after Cedar Rapids.

Camp Sunnyside, which is owned by the Easter Seal Society of Iowa was the beneficiary of the Sunday church offering, at which about 100 people were in attendance.



Saturday evening banquet--Left to right: Marion Van Manen, chairperson; Lester Ahls, toastmaster; Ronald Nester, president-elect and wife, Ruth; Dorothy Sparks and Karen Dammeyer, Son-Shine Signers, Omaha, Neb.

### Grasshoppers Are Delicious . . . .

A nun was telling some children about John the Baptist and said that at one time he had lived in ther wilderness and ate wild honey and some locusts for food.

One child wanted to know what locusts were. The nun explained that locusts were something like grasshoppers.

"He ate grasshoppers?" one girl said, aghast. "What's wrong with that?" demanded a boy. "My grandmother drinks them."

Have you tried a grasshopper cocktail? it has a minty flavor and is delicious.

Charleston, W.Va. Gazette

# WHITE HOUSE REPLIES TO SON-SHINE SIGNERS

By Karen Dammeyer, Co-Director  
Bethlehem Lutheran church  
Omaha, Neb.

The SON-SHINE SIGNERS from Bethlehem Lutheran church, Omaha, Neb. sent their new

## 1984 EASTERN REGION-ILDA CONFERENCE MEET AT GALLAUDET COLLEGE JUNE 8-10

By Diane Munoz

The 1984 ER-ILDA Conference was a wonderful occurrence for all of us and the visitors. It was a very nice experience sharing the theme,

"Peace Through Christ," with all in spite of the heat wave. There were 76 people registered for the full weekend. Ninety-two people were at the banquet on Saturday, June 9. The guest speaker was Simon Carmel. Rex Casterline performed two songs

in graceful sign language. Friday evening was for the opening devotional service and social gathering.

A surprise plaque was awarded to Rev. C. R. Gerhold for his 40 years of serving Christ Deaf and ER-ILDA. On Saturday morning the short worship service was lead by Rev. George Natonick. The meeting followed and lasted until 12:15. After the luncheon, those who did not take the bus tour went on their own leisure time. About 50 people went on the bus tour and visited the Capitol with the deaf guide, Marla Hatrak, then Priscilla Grant, daughter of Mary Burgess, past secretary of ER-ILDA, took over for the rest of the tour.

At the banquet, we enjoyed listening to Simon Carmel telling about deaf folklore. Many tales amused us very much. The menu we chose for the banquet was called "Devon Buffet" and was very good. The surprise about the master of ceremonies, Don Peterson, was that he could be a comedian.

The first prize of the banner contest went to the Lutheran Church of the Deaf, Hartford, Conn. Second prize went to Hickory, N.C. Third went to St. Matthew, Elmhurst, N.Y.

On Sunday morning we had Bible study on the theme, "Peace Through Christ." The worship service followed that. Then people scattered home by car, bus and train. We look forward to the next conference in Baltimore in 1986.

video tape, "SONSHINE" to President Ronald Reagan and his family. Several months later, the President sent them a letter of thanks.

If you or your church want to borrow this tape, please contact SON-SHINE SIGNERS, Bethlehem Deaf Lutheran church, 5074 Lake Street, Omaha, Neb. 68104 (402) 558-5672 TTY/voice.



SON-SHINE SIGNERS--Top row, left to right: Verla Hamilton and Kara Bachman; middle row: Dorothy Sparks (deaf); bottom row, left to right: Lola Anderson and Karen Dammeyer.

\* \* \*

THE WHITE HOUSE  
Washington

March 23, 1984

Dear Miss Dammeyer:

Thank you and the members of the Son-Shine Signers for sending the videotape of the fine work you are doing. Our nation's well-being is enhanced whenever people help each other. You have my great admiration and I want to wish you continued success in your efforts as you enrich the lives of your fellowmen.

Sincerely  
/S/ RONALD REAGAN

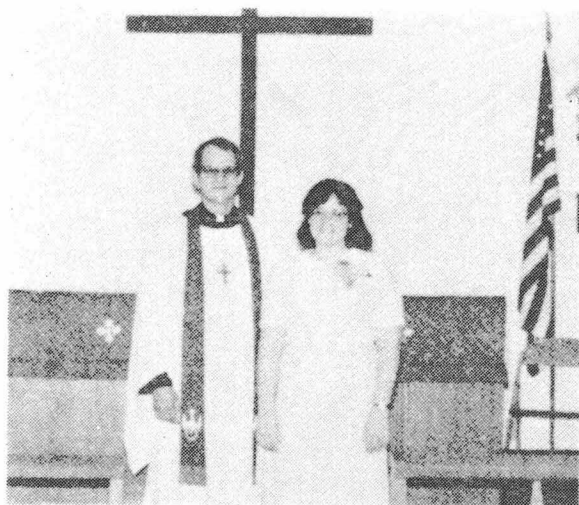
Miss Karen Dammeyer  
Co-Director  
Son-Shiner Signers  
Bethlehem Deaf Lutheran church  
5074 Lake Street  
Omaha, Neb. 68104

## CONFIRMATION AT BETHEL

### Rev. Gary L. Lawson Installed at Christ Lutheran Church, Cleveland, on April 15

Christ Lutheran Church for the Deaf, Cleveland, Ohio was the scene of the service of ordination and installation of Rev. Gary Lee Lawson on Palm Sunday, April 15.

The son of Mr. and Mrs William R Lawson, he was born Sept. 21, 1951 at Hopewell, Va., where he was also baptized and confirmed at Nazareth Lutheran church.



Rev. and Mrs. Gary Lawson

He received a bachelors of science degree from Old Dominion university in 1979 and entered Concordia, Fort Wayne, the same year. He vicared at Zion Lutheran church, Petoskey, Mich., and in April 1984, he received his masters degree in divinity from Fort Wayne seminary.

Pastor Lawson is married to the former Carlene Meadows of Beckley, W.Va. Mrs. Lawson is a graduate of Indiana university with a bachelor of science degree in business marketing.

## ARE YOU

- . . . Angry with someone?  
Read Matthew 18, Ephesians 4 and James 4
- . . . Too busy?  
Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-15
- . . . Worried?  
Read Psalm 46 and Matthew 6



Bethel Lutheran church, Denver, which has not had a sizable confirmation class in quite a while, sent in a photograph of its latest confirmands taken in May of this year. Pastor Ray A. Leimkuehler is shown with five young people, front, left to right; Roger Elstad, Norma Bowers, Shannon Phinney; back, left to right: Pamela Elstad, Pastor Leimkuehler and Barry Nelson.



THE SERVICE of ordination and installation of Gary Lawson on April 15, 1984. Top row, left to right: Rev. Shirrel Petzoldt of Good Shepherd, Toledo, Ohio; Rev. Donald Leber of Holy Cross Lutheran, Columbus, Ohio; Rev. Clark Bailey of Our Savior, Detroit, Mich.; middle row, left to right: Rev. John Zimmerman of St. John Lutheran, Cleveland, Ohio; Rev. David Belasic, first vice president Ohio District; Rev. Richard Gaul, executive director Ohio District, LCMS; Rev. Nichols Zipay, vacancy pastor; front row, left to right: Rev. John C. Landskroener, circuit counselor; Rev. Gary Lawson of Christ Lutheran church, Cleveland, Ohio; Rev. Myron Prok of Holy Cross Lutheran church, Cleveland, Ohio.

# THE DALLAS COWBOYS AND THE CHURCH

By Rev. William A. Ludwig  
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church  
Seattle, Wash.

"A new religion comes to Dallas," Howard Cossell observed over nationwide television that "the Cowboys are more than a football team in Dallas, they are a religion." Unaccustomed as I am to agreeing with Howard, I found myself carefully weighing his remarks. Preacher Cossell elaborated further while viewing the largest Sunday attendance in Texas: "Look at the loyalty of those people! Look at the signs they have made." Associates Karras and Clifford Gifford nodded in agreement. "Truly," he said, "The Cowboys are a religion in Dallas.

But Howard Cossell is wrong. Professional football has become a religion all over the country. A person's God is that which he loves the most and serves the best. Many do love their football teams more than they love God. Some fans may spend \$100 a week-end going to games (motel, two tickets @ \$15, meals, gas, parking, etc.) If you suggested these same people giving \$100 to the Lord and His church, they would be SHOCKED or have a heart attack. Or if you suggested that some church members give \$100 to the Lord, you would be criticized or even slandered.

Several years ago over 50,000 fans sat in freezing weather for 3½ hours in the Packers stadium in Green Bay, Wis. to watch a game. My, they must love and revere their teams. You see, they are willing to spend unlimited monies, take an entire day or week-end, and endure all kinds of hardships for their gods. Wish God had that kind of devotion from those people.

People all over the country do love their football, college and/or professional, with an aura of reverence that approaches worship. There are some good and healthy qualities about athletics but one must put his priorities where they belong. Let us compare our favorite teams with the church and perhaps gain a point of perspective and determine our priority:

How about faithful attendance; praise for the workers; the number of empty seats; enthusiasm for the cause; cheerful support with money; the bearing of the weather on attendance and sitting up front so as to be as close to the 'action' as possible as well as arranging the service for those who cannot be there? In all of the above, one will find

the answer to be "Yes" in the case of football! And the church? One can only answer with a 'questionmark.'

Who visits me when I am ill? Who helps me with my family problems? Do they point me to Christ and God? Who tries to keep people out of hell? Who helps the poor and feed the hungry? How about transportation to church on Sunday morning? And comforting me when I have lost someone dear? Is it football that provides these important things? Of course not, it is the church!

People are devoted to entertainment, and yet it is the Lord and His church that meet our deepest needs. Let us give priority to Jesus Christ and His blood-bought church.

## HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God almighty!  
Early in the morning our song shall rise to  
Thee

Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!  
God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore Thee  
Casting down their golden crown around the  
glassy sea;  
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before  
Thee,  
Which wert and art and evermore shall be.

Holy, holy, holy! Tho' the darkness hide  
Thee,  
Tho' the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not  
see,  
Only Thou art holy; there is none beside Thee  
Perfect in pow'r, in love and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God almighty!  
All Thy works shall praise Thy name in earth  
and sky and sea,

Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!  
God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity!

## SCHOOL PRAYER

There will always be prayers in the public schools as long as they give final exams.

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The old Adam in us doesn't care a snap for God's stewardship promises. He wouldn't give a dime for the lot of them. But the spirit of Christ in us builds up stewardship convictions and courage.

# PRINCE OF PEACE CELEBRATES 25 YEARS

By Vinette Doree  
12133 Drake St. N.W.  
Coon Rapids, Minn. 55433

May 6, 1984 was a day of celebration as about 100 people gathered for worship led by Rev. William Lange in the morning and enjoyed a cornish game hen dinner at noon.

Rev. George Kraus, the first pastor 25 years ago, preached the morning sermon as our guest speaker. He and his wife drove from Fort Wayne, Ind. to be with us.

Twenty-five years ago a new church building was built at the present location when two older deaf congregations combined to form Prince of Peace Lutheran Church for the Deaf.

In the afternoon President Kenneth Elmgren read some congratulatory letters. Then Rev.

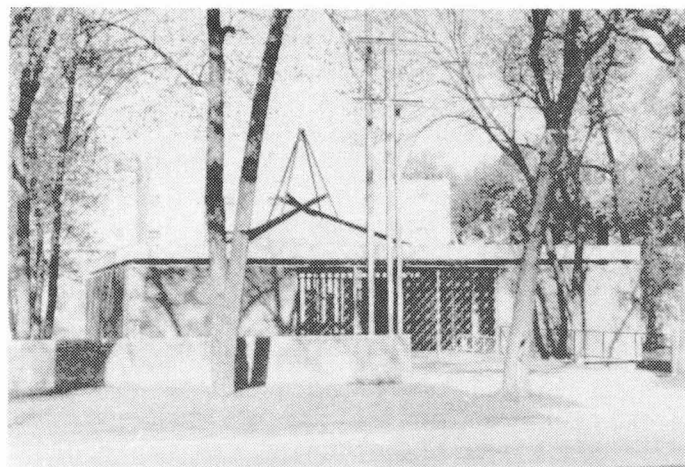
Kraus told us of his missionary work among the deaf in Brazil and elsewhere in South America.

There were slides shown which showed progress of the church through the years. We had coffee and refreshments before it was time to leave. That was a memorable day for many of us!

Earlier, on April 29, a large crowd of people gathered to bid farewell to our beloved pastor, Rev. William Lange and his wife, Ellen, whom we were fortunate to have with us for nine years. A potluck dinner with many delicious dishes and a beautifully decorated cake was enjoyed by everyone. Rev. Lange accepted a call to serve two congregations in Illinois, one deaf and one hearing. They are residing in Topeka, Ill.



REV. AND MRS. GEORGE KRAUS AND  
REV. AND MRS. WILLIAM LANGE



PRINCE OF PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH FOR THE DEAF

## The DEAF LUTHERAN

September-October

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