



The

Deaf Lutheran



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2024 ILDA convention report

by Janet Gehlbach, Editor

The 27th Biennial ILDA convention was held July 11-14, 2024 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Detroit-Dearborn in Detroit, Michigan and was hosted by Our Savior Lutheran Church of the Deaf, Beverly Hills, Michigan. The theme for the convention was “Defending the Faith” based on 1 Peter 3:15 “Always be ready to give a defense to everyone who ask you a reason for the hope that is in you.”

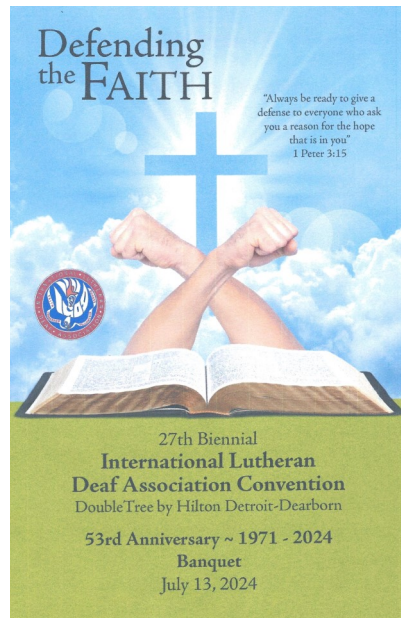
Convention co-chairs were Brian and Cynthia Smith-Byer. Their committee did a fantastic job planning for and running the convention. Waving hands to all!

Daily devotions were led by Rev. Tyler Walworth. Workshop presentations were given by Rev. Bryan Wolfmueller, Rev. Gregory Desrosiers, Rev. Edwin Bergstresser and David Bush. A workshop for deaconesses was presented by Rev. Tim Eckert.

An off-site tour was taken to visit historical Trinity Lutheran Church in Detroit where that church sponsored the Detroit Lutheran School for the Deaf for many years until the school closed in 1988.

A service project of making “I Love You” mittens was done by a few attendees and some children. The mittens will be given to a nursing home.

Childcare was provided and



children attending the convention visited the Detroit Zoo and Michigan Science Center and had activities at the hotel and the ability to go swimming.

Election of officers was held during the business meeting. Please see John Mason’s report on page 3 for the names of the new officers for 2024-2026.

One mission project was approved for Lutheran Deaf Mission Society—Kenya for \$3,000. Additional funds received after the 2021-2024 mission project goal was completed will be applied to the 2024-2026 mission project.

Lutheran Deaf Mission Society approved to give St. Martin Lutheran School for the

Deaf, \$2,500 for the purchase of five tablets to be used by those students during the school year.

During the banquet on Saturday evening, Rev. Daryl Gehlbach acknowledged pastor and church worker anniversaries with a power point presentation. There were several awards given out. The first one was the Right Hand Award given to David G. Brown and was presented to him by Janet Gehlbach, Right Hand Award Chairperson, for his service to his church. Rev. Edwin Bergstresser, Lutheran Deaf Mission Society Executive Director, presented “The Rev. William Ludwig Award” to Rev. Mark Seeger. The next awards were given as certificates of appreciation by the Great Lakes Region officers recognizing John Mason and Carol Seeger for their faithful service to ILDA as an officer and in the Great Lakes region.

Saturday night banquet speaker/entertainment was presented by Kathy Johnston, Tim Johnston and Michelle Osterhout. They performed a skit and signed songs. St. Martin Lutheran School for the Deaf presented “ASL Poetry by three students.

There were no song, skit or banner competitions at the convention this year.

Sunday morning Bible Study

was led by Rev. Edwin Bergstresser. He and his wife, Nancy, handed out a real flower to those in attendance as a reminder to us that we are like flowers that shine. Worship was led by Rev. Daryl Gehlbach and assisted by Brian Byer. Installation of officers was done by Rev. Edwin Bergstresser. At the end of the Sunday morning worship service, the ILDA banner was passed from Our Saviors Lutheran Church of the Deaf to the 2026 convention chairs, Nancy Bergstresser and Rev. John Rushton from the Great Lakes Region who will be hosting the next convention.

Sunday offering total was \$909.00 and was designated for the mission project goal.

2024-2026 President Brian Byer

Greetings to our brothers and sisters in Christ, our Savior. I just wanted to thank the members of ILDA for



accepting me as your president for 2024-2026. As President-Elect, I have learned a lot from outgoing President Carol Seeger. She provided me with valuable advice and experience.

I just wanted to thank her for her wonderful leadership with the Executive Council and the Board, and I will do my best to lead such a longstanding organization with a rich history of ILDA for the next two years. Also I want to say thank you to

**Thank
you!**

my host co-chair Cynthia Smith-Byer and our committee for their hard work to make the convention successful.

Hebrews 10:24-25 "We must also consider how to encourage each other to show love and to do good things. We should not stop gathering together with other believers, as some of you are doing. Instead, we must continue to encourage each other even more as we see the day of the Lord coming."

This verse inspires us for unity, collaboration, and mutual support during the convention and for our churches. As I wrap up as President-Elect, I wanted to thank everyone for their continued support to ILDA and look forward to leading into the next convention as the GLRC (Great Lakes Regional Conference) committee is now planning for the 2026 ILDA convention in Florence, KY. Blessings to you all! My contact info is: byer2000@gmail.com or VP 586-239-0022 or 586-580-4725

2021-2024 President Carol Seeger

Greetings to our brothers and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen!

With my whole heart, I want to thank the host chairs, Brian and Cynthia Smith-Byer, and the committee for making the ILDA 2024 convention a smashing



success! In spite of a few obstacles occurring with two unexpected hospitalizations, including myself from a fall, etc, this convention ran real smoothly with God's help.

In addition, as a president, it has been a real pleasure to serve with the Executive Council

“Defending the FAITH”

members for three years since 2021, most of all, serving the Lord! I wish to add that I thank Brian Byer as President-Elect and his willingness to stand in for me when needed, Denise Pulfer as ILDA Secretary, John Mason as ILDA Treasurer, and Rev. Daryl Gehlbach as ILDA Pastoral Advisor. Also, I thank Rev. Edwin Bergstresser as a representative of the Lutheran Deaf Mission Society (LDMS), Janet Gehlbach as Right Hand Chair, Carolyn Snyder-Mason as Missions Project Chair.

Lastly, I wish to congratulate the newly elected ILDA officers for 2024-2026. *[Editor's note: the 2024-2026 officers are listed on page 3 in John Mason's Nominations report].* May God so richly bless you all to do your best job and meet challenges to keep ILDA going!

I hope to see you all in 2026 in the Cincinnati, Ohio/Hebron, Kentucky/Florence, Kentucky area for the 28th Biennial ILDA convention.

Now, I am closing with Psalm 103:19: "The Lord has set up His throne in heaven. His kingdom rules over all!" Blessings to you all!

**Mark your calendars!
Plan to attend the next
ILDA convention
scheduled for
June 11-14, 2026
in the Florence, KY
area**

Pastoral Advisor Rev. Daryl Gehlbach



Another ILDA convention has come and gone. We gathered, we learned, we celebrated under the theme “Defending the Faith.” We have come away blessed and renewed. So, now what?

We live in a world and society that constantly challenges us for trusting in Jesus Christ. We are mocked by the enemies of Christ who simply want us to shut up and go away. Yet, our silence is not an option. There are too many people, deaf and hearing, who are dying without faith in Christ. They face eternity in hell.

God our Savior desires all people become saved and learn to know the truth. Which truth? God’s truth, of course. Yes, there is the truth of God’s Law, condemning all people for their sins. However, there is a more powerful truth – the Gospel. This precious Gospel is the power of God unto salvation.

In the Gospel we learn of God’s great love for mankind. He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to seek and save the lost people. How? He took upon Himself our sins, suffered God’s wrath, and died to earn salvation for us. He suffered the full weight of hell so that we don’t have to. As proof, Jesus conquered death and the grave. His cross and empty tomb become a beacon of hope for mankind.

And this is the hope laid up for us – a glorious inheritance, eternal life with God. This hope is for all people, that everyone believing in Jesus shall not perish but have everlasting life. This is the message we bring to our neighbor. This is the light we shine before the world through our words and actions. This is

the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We never need to fear the world. Why? He has covered us in His armor and given us the sword of the Spirit, God’s Word. With the Spirit’s help we can stand firm against our enemies, never wavering, never doubting. Since we have such a hope, we are bold to proclaim the one thing needful, the message of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Treasurer John Mason



Hello everyone! I just got back home from the ILDA 27th Biennial Convention. I just want you to know what I did. I gave reports to the Executive Council, Board Meeting and General Meeting. More information about the treasury will be published in the next issue of the Deaf Lutheran.

For those who were there at the convention, thank you for re-electing me as treasurer for a second term.

The new revised 2025-2027 membership form will be mailed in the fall of 2024. Your current membership will expire May 31, 2025. Thank you and God bless!



2021-2024 Nominations Chairman John Mason

Greetings in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ! At the ILDA 27th Biennial Convention, the elected officers for 2024-2026 are:

Brian Byer, Michigan, first term President

Tim Kearney, Illinois, first term President-Elect

Deaconess Becky Catchpole, Michigan, first term Secretary

John Mason, Maryland, second term Treasurer

Rev. Daryl Gehlbach, Minnesota, second term Pastoral Advisor

Thank you and God bless!



Convention hosts Brian and Cynthia Smith-Byer



2024-26 ILDA officers



Convention booths



**“Defending
the
FAITH”**



Church workers attending the convention



Service project making “I Love You” mittens



2024 ILDA Committee



Rev. Tyler Walworth
Devotions



Rev. Bryan Wolfmueller
Workshop



Rev. Gregory Desrosiers
Workshop



Rev. Edwin Bergstresser
Workshop



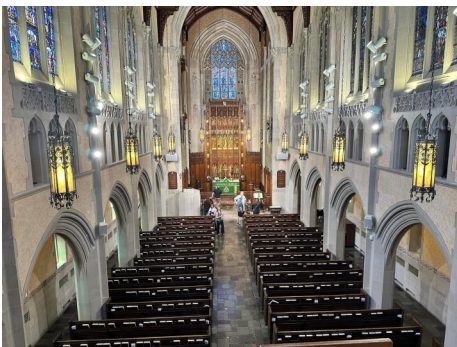
David Bush
Workshop



Great Lakes Region presenting an award to John Mason and Carol Seeger



David Brown and Janet Gehlbach



Trinity Lutheran Church



Children's activities at the Detroit Zoo and Michigan Science Center



False fire alarm, everyone out!



Interpreters Lynda Nix, Rev. Tim Eckert and Rev. Ron Friedrich

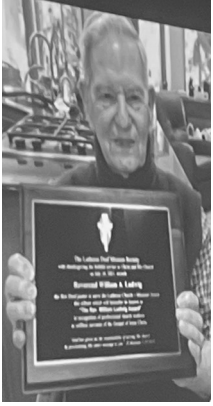
More convention photos will be printed in the Fall 2024 or Winter 2025 issue



Saturday night banquet entertainment was the Johnston family: Michelle Osterhaut, Kathy Johnston and Tim Johnston

Lutheran Deaf Mission Society (LDMS) establishes new award

LDMS established a new award to be given in recognition of professional church workers as selfless servants of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The new award is being given in honor of Rev.



William Ludwig and hereafter is known as “The Rev. William Ludwig Award.” At the 2021 Chicago ILDA convention Ludwig was the first recipient as the first Deaf pastor to serve the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Rev. Ron Friedrich presented the award to Ludwig via a zoom call as he was unable to attend the convention. The award was mailed to Ludwig’s daughter and during the zoom call she gave her father the award. Ludwig was very shocked and surprised to receive the award. Congratulations Rev. Ludwig!

At the 2024 Dearborn, Michigan ILDA convention the same award was given to Rev. Mark Seeger for his long time service to Deaf youth ministry in Texas. Congratulations Rev. Seeger!



Rev. Mark Seeger and Rev. Edwin Bergstresser



Rev. William Ludwig, Rev. Mark Seeger and Rev. Edwin Bergstresser

ILDA Officers	
International Officers (2024-2026)	
President —	Brian Byer
President-Elect —	Tim Kearney
Secretary —	Becky Catchpole
Treasurer —	John Mason
Pr. Advisor —	Rev. Daryl Gehlbach
Central Region (2018-20)	
President —	Albert Moore
V. President —	vacant
Secretary —	vacant
Treasurer —	Tim Kearney
Pr. Advisor —	Rev. Bud Palmer
Midwest Region (2018-20)	
President —	Sara Hale
V. President —	vacant
Secretary —	vacant
Treasurer —	vacant
Pr. Advisor —	Rev. Paul Tessaro
Great Lakes Region (2023-2025)	
President —	Nancy Bergstresser
President-Elect —	Jeff Padon
Secretary —	Karen Beiter
Treasurer —	Larry Blout
Pr. Advisor —	Rev. John Rushton
Historian —	Diane Francisco

Ephphatha Lutheran Mission Society is offering a Church Interpreter Training Academy (CITA) workshop on the campus of Concordia Theological Seminary, 6600 N. Clinton Ave. in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Dates are scheduled for August 5-10, 2024. This workshop

is for all skill levels of ASL: Interpreting Scripture, Interpreting Worship, Interpreting Church Music, Liturgy and Hymns and also Deaf Culture. \$400 plus \$50 non-refundable deposit at registration includes all meals, dorm room at \$30 a night. To register and for more info please contact Rev. Thomas Dunseth at (616) 634-1100 or send email to citaelms@protonmail.com.



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From the Deaf Lutheran Editor

If you have any photos or articles of interest to print in the newsletter please let me know! Deadlines for the next issues are:

- Fall issue.....October 15, 2024
- Winter issue.....January 15, 2025
- Spring issue.....April 15, 2025

Please send photos or news articles to: JGehlbach@aol.com or mail to:

Janet Gehlbach
305 Liberty St. NE
Fridley, MN 55432

Thanks so much!

In Memoriam



Sidney Johnston

B: 1/12/1937
D: 3/22/2023

Sidney was an active member of Our Saviors Deaf Lutheran Church.

Rev. Darrell Matthews

B: 5/27/1936
D: 5/7/2024

Rev. Matthews served deaf congregations in Minnesota, Colorado and Kansas.



Robert Leland Jr.

B: 8/25/1935
D: 6/5/2024

Robert was a member of Christ Lutheran Church for the Deaf in Cleveland, Ohio.

The Deaf Lutheran
Janet Gehlbach, Editor
305 Liberty St. NE
Fridley, MN 55432

Summer Issue 2024

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“DO IT!”



Mission Projects Update

The Mission Projects for 2021-2024 reached its goal of \$14,000.00! There was an additional \$800+ more in donations received that will be applied to the 2024-2026 Mission Project goals. There was only one request for funds at the convention in Dearborn, Michigan. This request was from Lutheran Deaf Mission Society—Kenya for \$3,000.00 and was approved during the convention business meeting. An update will be printed in the Fall issue of the Deaf Lutheran. Thank you for your support!