



The Deaf Lutheran



Official Publication of the International Lutheran Deaf Association and the Lutheran Deaf Mission Society
Fall 2025 **St. Louis, MO** **Vol. 114, No. 4**

Rev. Daryl Gehlbach, Pastoral Advisor



"Jesus went about doing good."

These few words of Peter in Acts (10:38) tell the whole life story of Jesus. He healed the sick, the lame, the blind, the deaf, the possessed, the lepers. He raised the dead. He generously fed the

hungry, having compassion on the multitudes. He lovingly took the little children into His arms and blessed them. He patiently taught those who sought the truth, and lovingly welcomed repentant sinners.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus teaches us that every person is our neighbor, and we must help them in their time of need. He calls us to be faithful stewards of all we possess and not squander the time, talents, and treasures the Lord gives us. Consider the blunt warning He gives those on His left hand at the Judgment: If we did not use His blessings to feed and clothe the least of His brethren, then we did not serve Him.

The Apostles continue this same teaching. *"If God so loved us, we should also love one another"* (1 John 4:11). *"Let us not become weary of doing good. ... As we have opportunities, let us do good to all people"* (Galatians 6:9-10). *"Do good, be rich in good works, ready and generous to share"* (1 Timothy 6:18).

So then, be good; but do not be good for nothing. Be good for something. Be good. Do good.

There are many missions at home and abroad. There are many poor and suffering people around us needing help. The Lord provides us with many opportunities for serving Him and helping others. He provides us with the resources. Let us be ready and generous to share.

May it be said of us as it was of the Lord: *"They went around doing good."*

Brian Byer, ILDA President



Conflicts are common, but it's important to handle disagreements respectfully and peacefully, following Christian principles. God calls us to respond with love, humility, and patience, avoiding harsh words that escalate anger (Proverbs 15:1).

Rather than aiming to win arguments, focus on understanding and reconciliation. Let your words and actions reflect kindness and the light of Christ, even when you disagree.

As we are seeing cooler weather, leaves changing color, watching football games, and

school in full swing, fall brings many activities. As seasons shift, let's remember that life moves forward, yet God's Word remains constant: "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever" (Isaiah 40:8). This season, take comfort in His enduring promises.

Call for hosts—2028 ILDA convention

The ILDA Board is seeking individuals, churches or ILDA regions interested in hosting the 2028 convention. To express interest, please submit a letter of intent to the ILDA President. The letter should include: (continued on Page 3)

John Mason, Treasurer

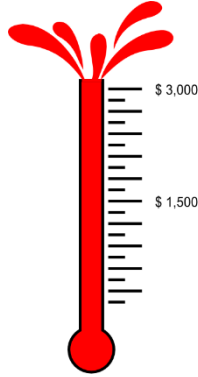


As of now, we have 51 ILDA members and 48 have renewed their membership with three new members.

Three EIIT/DIT students received funds from the Zacharias Scholarship Fund for

the Fall Semester at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO. Pray and support them to continue their studies.

Mission Project donations have met the goal of \$3,000 for the LDMS—Kenya mission request. As of October 1st, extra donations of \$644 (and accumulating) will be decided by the ILDA Executive Council prior to the 2026 ILDA



convention in Florence, KY. Like I said in the summer issue of the Deaf Lutheran, either the additional amounts will be given to the Kenya mission or carried over to the 2026-2028 mission projects, assuming we will have a 2028 ILDA convention.

Donations for the ILDA 2024-2026 Mission Projects can be sent to: John Mason, ILDA Treasurer, 6721 Deep Run Parkway, Elkridge, MD 21075-6557. Make your check or money order payable to "ILDA" and put "Mission Projects 2024-2026" in the memo line. Your prayers and donations help ILDA to continue our work in spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the United States and foreign countries. God Bless!

WANTED.....Host for the 2028 ILDA convention
Please read the President's article for more information. **Deadline is March 1, 2026**



Melissa Kearney (far left in both photos) is pictured with EIIT students who received their vicarage/deaconess internship placement documents at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO on August 22, 2025. Melissa is enrolled in the EIIT deaconess program.

In Memoriam



Rev. Rodney R. Rynearson

6/1/1935 - 7/25/2025

Rev. Rynearson served deaf congregations on the West and East Coasts before becoming Executive Director of the Lutheran School for the Deaf in Detroit, Michigan. He served as Counselor for Blind and Deaf Missions in St. Louis and traveled worldwide promoting mission work. He was the founder of Lutheran Deaf Mission Society (LDMS), and Deaf Institute of Theology (DIT).



Dawn (Polzin) Werth

12/23/1964 – 9/19/2025

Dawn was a member of Our Savior Deaf Church, Madison, WI, and the co-chair for the 2015 ILDA convention. She was also a DIT deaconess.



Jackie Van Manen

3/30/1945 – 9/29/2025

Jackie was the wife of Marian Van Manen (lay minister and first elected ILDA President). She was a member of Calvary Lutheran Deaf Church, Des Moines, IA.



Barbara Zimmerman

7/13/1944 – 10/6/2025

Barbara was active in the Midwest Region and ILDA. She and her husband, Bill, helped establish Word of God Deaf Church, Cedar Rapids, IA. Barbara and Bill received Right Hand Awards from ILDA.

International Officers (2024-2026)

President—Brian Byer
President-Elect—Tim Kearney
Secretary—Becky Catchpole
Treasurer—John Mason
Pr. Advisor—Rev. Daryl Gehlbach

Central Region (2018-2020)

President—vacant
Vice President—vacant
Secretary—vacant
Treasurer—vacant
Pr. Advisor—Rev. Bud Palmer

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

Midwest Region (2018-2020)

President—Sara Hale
Vice President—vacant
Secretary—vacant
Treasurer—vacant
Pr. Advisor—Rev. Paul Tessaro

President's article (continued from Page 1)

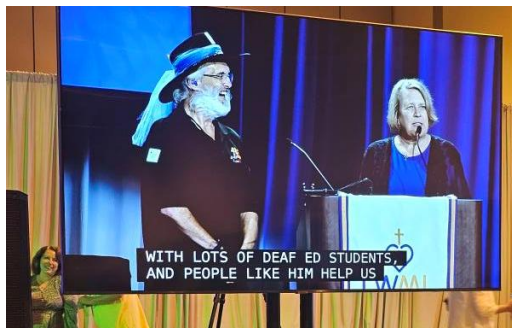
Letter should include:

- Name or group name
- Proposed location
- Brief reasons for wishing to host the 2028 ILDA convention

• **Send your letter to the ILDA President by March 1, 2026**

Brian Byer, ILDA President
19192 Cheyenne St.
Clinton Township, MI 48036
Questions? VP 586-239-0022
or 586-580-4725

2025 LWML Convention, June 26-29, 2025, Omaha, Nebraska



Great Lakes Region Conference, July 11-13, 2025, Rochester, NY



2025-2027 GLRC Officers:

L. to R: Rev. Andy Petajan (Pastoral Advisor), Karen Beiter (Secretary), Larry Blout (Treasurer), Jeff Padon (President-Elect), Nancy Bergstresser (President)

Jesus Signs Immersion Workshop, St. Charles, MO, July 7-11, 2025



Jesus Signs Immersion Workshop, Olathe, KS, Sept. 19-21, 2025



Thank you for your support!

The Deaf Lutheran Subscription (Print Edition)

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☐ Two-year subscription -- \$20.00
☐ Additional donation -- \$ _____

Please select: ____ Renew ____ New

Make your check or money order payable
to "ILDA" and
put **Deaf Lutheran** in the memo line.



All subscriptions should be sent to the
address below. Thanks!

John Mason
6721 Deep Run Parkway
Elkridge, MD 21075

Attach mailing label or fill in:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

Email _____

Phone/VP/Fax _____

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:
Winter issue...January 15, 2026
Spring issue.....April 15, 2026
Summer issue.....July 15, 2026

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

Janet Gehlbach
 305 Liberty St. NE
 Fridley, MN 55432

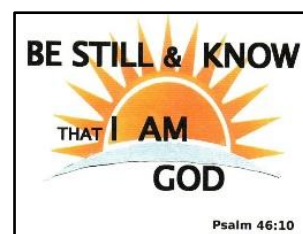
Thanks!

2026 ILDA convention information

Please check the www.deafjesus.org
website and search for "ILDA
conventions". There you will find all the
information needed for the next
convention to be held in Florence, KY,
June 11-14, 2026

This issue of the Deaf Lutheran has an
insert with the registration form and a fact
sheet.

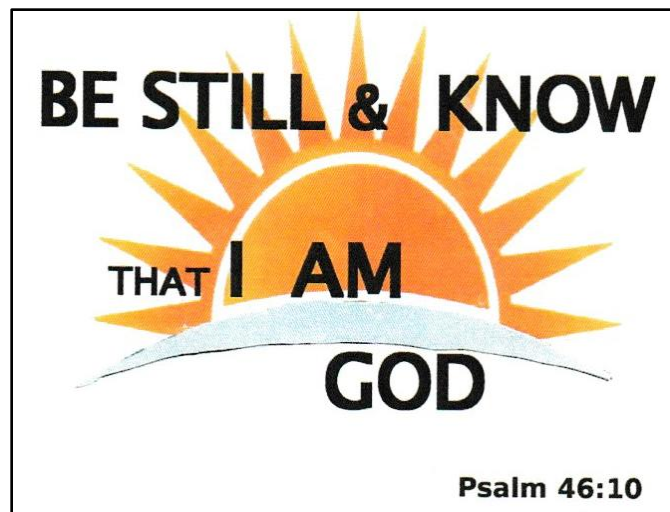
See you all in 2026!



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

RETURN ADDRESS REQUESTED

Fall Issue 2025



**2026 ILDA Convention
June 11-14, 2026
Hilton Cincinnati Airport Hotel
7373 Turfway Rd., Florence, KY 41042**



International Lutheran Deaf Association

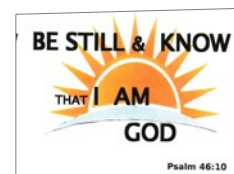
28th Biennial Convention June 11-14, 2026

Hilton Cincinnati Airport

7373 Turfway Rd

Florence, KY 41042 (859) 371-4400

File: 9/25/25



Convention Registration: Please print clearly

ONE form per person:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Check one: VP Voice Text

Email address: _____

Congregation Name: _____

Congregation's City/State: _____

Check all that apply:

☐ Deaf ☐ Hearing

☐ Deaf/Blind

☐ need gluten free foods

☐ need dairy free foods

☐ Other dietary restrictions.

☐ Child Care _____ Age 0-2

_____ Age 3-8

_____ Age 9-16

ILDA MEMBER

2025-2027 ILDA Member card # _____

Registration fee \$20

Postmarked dates:

Now - February 28, 2026 \$200

March 1 - April 30, 2026 \$220

May 1 - May 15, 2026 \$250

(All meals - Buffet included: Saturday Breakfast, Lunch, Banquet and Sunday Breakfast)

Notice: Friday meals will be on your own. There are a few walking distance restaurants nearby.

Saturday lunch, choose one:

☐ KY Crave Burger

☐ KY Crave Club (wheatberry bread, Ham, turkey, cheddar cheese, bacon, lettuce, tomato, pickle & bistro sauce)

Banquet Saturday Evening:

Banquet food choice: (choose one)

Main entree: ☐ Grilled Sirloin

☐ Herb Roasted Chicken Cordon Bleu

Dessert choice: (choose one)

☐ Chocolate Fudge Cake

☐ Southern Carrot Cake

Total Payment: _____

NON-MEMBER

Registration fee \$20

Postmarked dates:

Now - February 28, 2026 \$210

March 1 - April 30, 2026 \$230

May 1 - May 15, 2026 \$260

(All meals - Buffet included: Saturday Breakfast, Lunch, Banquet and Sunday Breakfast)

Notice: Friday meals will be on your own. There are a few walking distance restaurants nearby.

Saturday lunch, choose one:

☐ KY Crave Burger

☐ KY Crave Club (wheatberry bread, Ham, turkey, cheddar cheese, bacon, lettuce, tomato, pickle & bistro sauce)

Banquet Saturday Evening:

Banquet food choice: (choose one)

Main entree: ☐ Grilled Sirloin

☐ Herb Roasted Chicken Cordon Bleu

Dessert choice: (choose one)

☐ Chocolate Fudge Cake

☐ Southern Carrot Cake

Total Payment: _____

Registration Deadline: May 15, 2026 (form postmarked on or before this date)

All checks made out to "ILDA 2026" only with Memo: ILDA Convention

Payment: Personal check, bank cashier's check or money order make payable to: "ILDA 2026" and in the memo line, please put "ILDA Convention" and send to: Jeff Padon, 7910 Severn Tree Blvd, Severn, MD 21144.

Any questions? Please contact: Jeff Padon, email: jeffpadon@gmail.com

Refund Policy: There will be no refunds after May 29, 2026, unless a doctor's note or a copy of a death certificate is provided. On or prior to May 29, any cancellations will result in a \$50 fee that will be deducted from your registration cost. Please acknowledge by sign and date on this registration form on the bottom section that you agree to this.

Signature required: _____ Date: _____

FACT Sheet for the 2026 ILDA Convention

June 11-14, 2026

Registration

Please note there are two choices for registration: ILDA members and non-members. ILDA members must put their 2025-2027 membership number on the registration form. Non-members will have to pay increased costs. All convention registration forms received will follow the postmark date on the envelope for the cost. If you wish to only attend the banquet, there is a separate line item for that. **No registrations accepted after May 15th due to food count total requirements by the hotel and possible post office delivery delays.**

The combo ticket includes all meals- (Saturday breakfast to Sunday breakfast, Saturday lunch and Saturday Banquet). Required registration fee is **NOT** included in the combo prices.

There will be no money collected for ILDA membership dues on this 2026 convention registration form. You will need to fill out the separate ILDA membership form and send it with your payment to John Mason, Jr prior to the ILDA 2026 convention. The new ILDA membership year is 06/01/2025—5/31/2027.

Payment

You can pay your registration by personal check, bank cashier's check or money order with "**ILDA 2026**", Memo: **ILDA 2026**. Send it to Jeff Padon at the address on the bottom of the registration form.

Donations

Your help will be appreciated to cover expenses. Make a check to "**ILDA 2026**", Memo: **2026 ILDA Donation**.

Room cost

Room with 2 Queen beds: \$159.00 + 12.36% tax = \$178.65 per night

Room with 1 King bed: \$159.00 + 12.36% tax = \$178.65 per night

Room block deadline is May 13, 2026.

There are 2 ways to make reservations:

1) www.hilton.com

Or

2) Call the Hilton reservation line at 1-800-Hiltons and b) note that you would like to reserve a room in a group block at the Hilton Cincinnati Airport (7373 Turfway Rd, Florence, KY) c) ask for the group rate for International Lutheran Deaf Association or reference the group "**91L**".

Childcare

If you plan to bring your child(ren) to the 2026 ILDA convention, please contact Nancy Bergstresser, VP (614-980-0505).

Refund policy

No refunds after May 29, 2026 unless a doctor's note or copy of a death certificate is provided. On or prior to May 29 any cancellations will result in a \$50 cancellation fee that will be deducted from your registration cost. Please sign and date the registration form on the bottom section that you agree to this.

Tours

Noah Ark Encounter or

Underground Railroad Museum + Cincinnati downtown.

More information