



ILLUMINATIONS

SHARING THE GOSPEL ALWAYS | SPRING 2022

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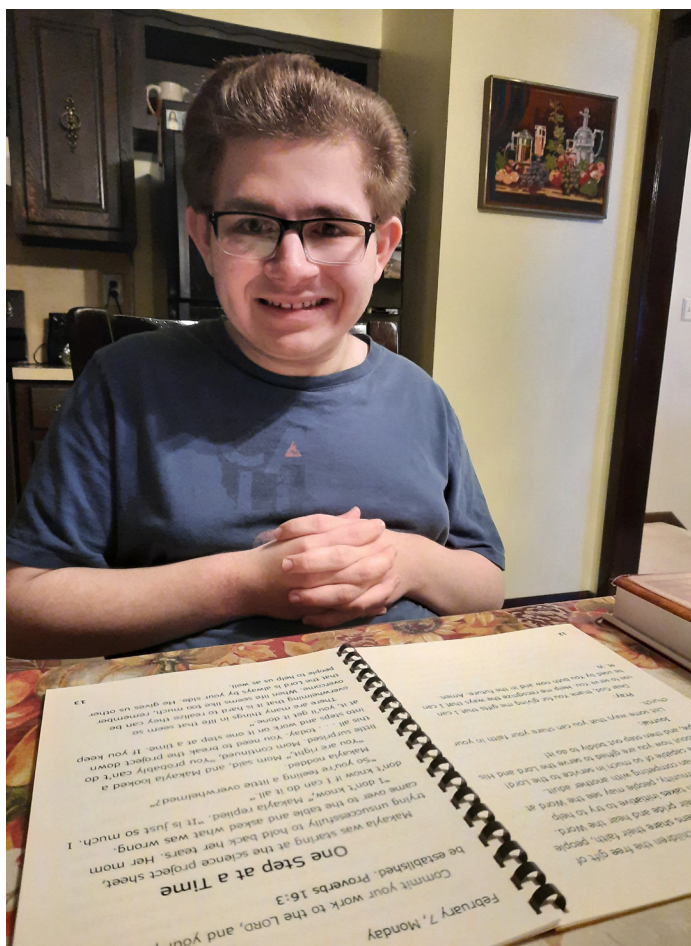
LADIES OF MISSION

SEARCHING FOR GOD

Marie knew about Lutheran Braille Workers and its ministry to people with Visual Impairment for years growing up. Little did she know that one day she would rely on the same ministry, not for herself, but for her son who needed Large Print resources. Recently, she shared her story:

"When I grew up, church was not something in my life. In fact, the first time I stepped into a church was when I was 13 years old when I went to youth group with a friend whose family invited and drove me. I knew about God, and I remembered how much faith mattered to my Grandpa George. That was my first connection to your ministry. He lost his sight later in life and I remember he got audio tapes from LBW which he would listen to every single night before sleeping. They brought him so much peace and comfort. But I didn't have faith...yet.

Going to Sunday School changed my life. I soon became baptized along with my brothers, one of whom was one year younger and the other who was ten years younger. My faith continued to grow and blossom throughout the years. I know for a fact that having Christ in my life has guided me through many joys and struggles. As any parent knows, this is especially true when children enter the picture.



My son Nick is an incredible young man. However, he has issues with his vision, which despite having glasses, require him to use Large Print resources. This was always a struggle for him growing up as it set him apart from other children. I learned very quickly how mean children can be to others as Nick faced so many challenges. Yet, he faced every obstacle with a smile and a heart which cannot be matched. But still, I knew he needed more to get through this time of his life. [\(cont. next page\)](#)



(cont. from page 1)

About eight years ago, Nick really began searching for understanding on his connection to God. Obtaining resources he could read was a challenge, but then I thought of Grandpa George and remembered your ministry. I went to your website and ordered some Large Print devotionals. What started with My Devotions developed into something greater, and in 2016 he began the process of reading the entire Bible beginning from Genesis 1! Every day he wakes up praying and now has his own table dedicated to his study of the Word of God. These practical materials, and the love of Christ found within, have helped train Nick, and allowed him to develop a faith which navigate life's challenges. They have given him teachings, guidance, and direction. Most importantly they have shown him that faith is what matters. Love matters.

Now, he is considering a career in church work, and shares his faith (and heart of love) with everybody he meets. Your resources meet him where he is, instead of always making him adjust to the rest of the world. I cannot imagine his life, or my life, without these books coming in the mail every month for free. They are his life now! Could you imagine how many youth lives would be changed if they could read a devotion every night? Thanks to all of you, Nick has this opportunity, and I can never thank you enough."

In Nick's own words, "Thank you to everyone for providing the devotional for all of these years as they really helped me grow in my faith over time."

Thank you for your support! You allow Large Print resources to be produced for people of all ages. Your support proves, Love Works!

THANK YOU

>>Thank you!

I am Babatunde Harry Osibote from Nigeria. I number among the millions blessed through the years by your ministry of producing and freely distributing Bibles and various other Christian literature in Braille to persons who are blind throughout the world. I began receiving reading materials, including the books of the NIV Bible in Grade 2 English Braille, from as far back as 1995, enjoying this generosity over a period of about five years. It is impossible for me to fully state how wholly this ministry has influenced my life in the direction of rightness! Thank you for yielding yourselves and your collective resources to being so mightily used by God to shine the light to those in darkness. The Lord richly reward you as you faithfully serve His people throughout the world.

Amen!

>>Thank you!

I emailed Pastor Julio to let him know about the Bibles he will receive, and he is very excited and blessed. It has been one complete year since we prayed for Bibles. I am so thankful for you all to bless God's people who are in desperate need to have Bibles for the ministry and for his people to read God's Word. Thank you for loving God's people and for this wonderful gift of knowing Jesus and more of who he is. You are touching lives and we are graced with his love for your heart to provide resources for them.

God Bless you!

Renaxx, Angola, Africa



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,



Lent is an important part of the church year. It is a time for reflection—reflection on our sins which put Jesus on the cross, reflection on how much we need the Holy Spirit in our life, reflection on the path God has

prepared for us, and reflection on where our lives will be in the future. This period culminates in the celebrations and joyous gatherings during Holy Week and Easter. Most importantly, it is during this time of Lent in which we get back to the core principles of Christianity, are able to recognize our own life and death, and praise God for the eternal life awaiting us in heaven thanks to the death and resurrection of Jesus.

For the 253 million men, women, and children throughout the world who are Blind or Visually Impaired, 95% of whom are unchurched (241 million people), they reflect on many of the same issues we do during Lent. Unfortunately for them, they do not have the answers we have, the joy we have, the hope we have in Christ. They pass through life, all too often waiting for love, especially the perfect love of God.

At Lutheran Braille Workers, we too are refocusing on our core principles and beliefs:

- We are committed to sharing the Gospel with all 253 million people in the world who are Blind or Visually Impaired in a format and language they can understand and access.

- Every single volume we produce and distribute will be free of charge to each recipient without question.
- We will continue to expand and improve on technology, processes, and equipment to be more efficient in production.
- We will work to bring even more volunteers into the life-changing ministry ahead of us so they too can share the Gospel in an incredible way, doing the Great Commission work we have been asked to do.
- We will add new partners in ministry, whether individuals, pastors, churches, or other organizations, in an effort to add new languages, titles, and formats to our catalog so every person in the world knows the love of God in their life!

In every single aspect of our commitment to the future, you will play a critical role in our success. Your prayers, your financial support, and your efforts to share this ministry with the people you know will drive our ability to fulfill the mission I believe God has called us to perform.

It is because of you so many people who are Blind or Visually Impaired know the love of Christ in their life. Your continued efforts and support will ensure even more people will know the ultimate message of Easter—Love Works!

In His Service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jay Zemke".

Jay Zemke, President

BLESSED

GOD'S BLESSINGS IN 2021

One of the core principles of Lutheran Braille Workers, and in fact a critical component of our mission statement, is that every single Bible will be delivered completely free of charge to our recipients. This has occurred for 78 years, and we do not plan on this ever changing. We pray God blesses our ministry with the volunteers and the financial support to make this happen, and He did in incredible ways in 2021.

We were able to expand our ministry with the addition of new titles thanks to partnership with long-time friends (Lutheran Hour Ministries) and new acquaintances (Mission Nation Publishing). There has been tremendous support from groups such as the LWML, both nationally and locally, as well as churches and Ministry Production Centers throughout the country. Foundations continue to provide us with significant support including the Stamps Foundation, Berakah Foundation, and the Lavelle Fund for the Blind. All of this support enabled us to add TWO new Braillo digital embossers last year, upgrade existing equipment, and improve our production capacity in ways which were unimaginable four years ago. God truly has a far greater vision than we can realize.

But the greatest increase of support came from all of you, our generous donors. You enabled us to eclipse \$2.4 million raised in donations during 2021, a smashing record for this ministry. Your generosity has allowed us to produce orders for



Sky Ervin, Production Supervisor, producing Spanish Bibles for South and Central America

Bible Societies in Central America, Africa, and South America, as well as to churches, schools, men, women, and children in every continent on the planet (except Antarctica). Your donations have allowed us to reach parts of the world previously though unreachable. Your gifts have brought the Word of God directly to the hands and ears of people who are Blind or Visually Impaired. There is still significant work to do, but through your blessings, God's blessings, we are growing and expanding the ministry to reach even more people with the Light of Christ! You are sharing the Gospel from your home. Thank you for your incredible support to the Great Commission ministry God has put in front of us!

PARSONAGE WITH NEW PURPOSE

This story begins back in 2006 at First Lutheran Church in Hot Springs, Arkansas. Pastor Mark Biebighauser was completing his vicarage and had his first exposure to a Lutheran Braille Workers Ministry Center. Fast forward to February 2020. An email was sent to the MN South LWML by a retired volunteer leader notifying them of the need for a congregation to take on the work of a closing Ministry Center. Pastor Mark got wind of this request and immediately was reminded of his time in Arkansas. He believed this could be a mission his congregation could rally behind. He fondly remembered the volunteers at First Lutheran, their fellowship, and the joy they had in the work they were doing.

Fast forward to August 2021. Lutheran Braille Workers' staff met with Pastor Mark and interested congregants to discuss what it takes to open a Ministry Center.



Trinity's parsonage, next door to the church will serve as the new Ministry Center space

December 23rd, President Jay Zemke and Julie Zemke, Director of Marketing and Outreach, met with Pastor Mark and the new leadership of Trinity Lutheran's Ministry Production Center. As the two were greeted, Pastor announced that the group would be heading over to the former parsonage. They wanted us to see the "space we have in mind." As we walked next door to the parsonage, Pastor explained that they've been searching for a new purpose for the parsonage. He went on to tell us that they had turned the basement into a space for the youth. As we walked in, he shared the news. They wanted to transform the main level of the parsonage into the new LBW Ministry Production Center. The excitement in the house that day was amazing! The volunteers were eager to learn and are committed to spreading the Gospel.

The parsonage of Trinity Lutheran now has a new purpose, sharing God's love with those who are Blind or Visually Impaired.



Pastor Mark Biebighauser and Sharon Smith, ready to share the Gospel from Medford, MN

LADIES OF MISSION



Ladies of the LWML participating in a servant event at National Convention 2021

The Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) has been an ally of Lutheran Braille Workers for 78 years, since the very beginning of this ministry. Through prayer, encouragement, volunteerism, and financial support, there is absolutely no question LBW would not be where it is without the incredible generosity of these amazing women. Literally hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of dollars of support have been provided by individual LWML members, LWML societies, zones, districts, and at the national level. The LWML can be directly connected to the production and distribution of over 1 million volumes of Braille, Large Print, and Audio throughout the world!

Over the past year, this support has continued to expand in spite of COVID-19. In addition to an incredible \$100,000 grant awarded at the National Convention to help bring even more Braille and Large Print resources to India, local LWML districts and zones continue to step-up in a huge way. Over \$85,000 has been received from LWML districts to support regional Ministry Production Centers, new Prison Large print production, and international distribution of



Braille and Large Print. There have also been incredible servant events in Kentucky, San Diego, and other locations where numerous books have been produced and shipped to eager recipients.

We celebrate this long-standing relationship with the LWML and look forward to even more work together in the future. We have submitted grant applications to 37 of the 40 LWML districts and pray they will not only make the ballot, but will inspire and engage the delegates to vote for them. We are planning on attending as many of the district conventions as possible, though staffing limitations and the number of district conventions at the same time make this difficult. Our own President, Jay Zemke, will be speaking at the LWML Oklahoma district convention in April!

Thank you to all of our generous and prayerful supporters of the LWML! You are sharing the Gospel to people who are Blind or Visually Impaired every day through your tremendous support.



LBW SUNDAYS

We are excited to announce the expansion of the resources offered to churches and groups who want to share information about the incredible Gospel-sharing ministry of Lutheran Braille Workers with others. If you are interested in hosting an LBW Sunday (or any other day of the week for that matter), we are here to support you! We offer bulletin inserts, one-page information sheets, brochures, Brailled alphabet/John 3:16 pages, Braille bookmarks, and other items to help you describe and invite others to see the impact of support throughout the world. In addition, we are happy to provide Large Print and Braille resources to encourage your group to reach into the church or community to see if people could use these free materials themselves! Finally, all of LBW's powerful videos are available on the website for you to use!

LBW Sundays are one of the most important ways we are able to share our resources with new audiences, as well as give people a chance to participate in this life-changing ministry to the 253 million people who are Blind or Visually Impaired. Your support is critical to this effort. To request these materials or to request a speaker from LBW for an LBW Sunday, please contact Julie Zemke at julie@LBWloveworks.org, or at 909-795-8977.



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Lutheran Braille Workers continues to be blessed by all of our supporters and the partnership with Thrivent Financial. To those of you who are using your Thrivent Choice Dollars, or Thrivent Action Team cards, to support the ministry, thank you! If you are not sure how to do this, or would like ideas on how you, your church, or your friends can use these Thrivent resources to bring the Word of God to people who are Blind or Visually Impaired, please contact your local Thrivent representative, or Deanna Cobb at our headquarters, with these questions. We are excited to announce that in 2021 we received \$31,454 in support through Thrivent resources. Will you help us reach our goal in 2022 of increasing this beyond \$50,000 for the year?

DONATE ONLINE!

Thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic, the world has grown far more comfortable with the use of QR codes at restaurants, stores, and through all forms of digital and physical media. Thanks to upgrades in technology, all it takes to access these codes is to open the camera on your phone and point! This has increased the speed in accessing information, but also allows new ways to support ministry. The accompanying QR code is a direct link to our website if you would like to make an immediate gift now. Point your camera's phone at the code, click on the link, and you will be taken to our giving page. You can make a gift through credit card, bank account, or PayPal.

Your support is greatly appreciated!



1. Open the camera on your phone
2. Hold your phone in front of the QR code
3. Touch on the link: LBWloveworks.org
4. Donate today!

SINCE THE INSTALLATION OF THE NEW PLATE EMBOSSING DEVICE (PUMA)

- >> **1,920** ESV Bible plates have been produced
- >> **812** plates produced for other materials
- >> **2,732** total plates have been produced on the PUMA

BRAILLE PRODUCTION

- >> **27,311** books were produced at our Ministry Production Centers in 2021
- >> **12,984** subscriptions were produced
- >> Total of **40,295** Braille books and subscriptions were sent to recipients in 2021

LARGE PRINT PRODUCTION

- >> **32,796** books were produced at our Ministry Production Centers in 2021
- >> **48,521** subscriptions were produced
- >> Total of **81,317** Large Print materials were sent to recipients in 2021



LBW

LUTHERAN BRAILLE WORKERS



LBW

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