



ILLUMINATIONS

SHARING THE GOSPEL ALWAYS | SUMMER 2020

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SUPPORTING THOSE ISOLATED AND ALONE

We recently received a letter from somebody who orders our Large Print materials for her mother.

"My mother, Ruby*, has Alzheimer's and lives in a memory care facility. Since the statewide lockdown began, I, along with other family members, her Pastor, and friends, have been unable to visit her in person and I can only reach her by phone. Although mom cannot remember visitations under normal conditions, her confusion has been exasperated by the lack of regular physical contact with other people. When I speak to her, she is scared, confused, and tearfully begs me to "come get her." As much as I try to calm her fears and provide reassurance, I know these efforts are useless once the phone call ends. Ultimately, we are both left crying and feeling helpless. The caregivers work hard to keep her calm, but they have been burdened with additional procedures and restrictions that must be followed.

However, I suggested my mother's caregiver try to read the

- CONTINUED ON PAGE 4 -

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

This has been an incredible year already, and we're only halfway complete! I don't recall ever experiencing anything like this before, but thanks be to God, we're still moving forward.

I wanted to provide you an assessment of what Lutheran Braille Workers has been doing over the past three months, as well as our vision for the remainder of the year. We are committed to providing God's Word in Braille, Specialized Large Print, and Audio to as many people who are Visually Impaired as possible.

Ultimately our first priority has been the safety of our staff and our volunteers. When the scope of the COVID-19 pandemic became clear, we ultimately were forced to close our Ministry Production Centers and the doors to our headquarters. But while this may have slowed us down, these drastic steps did not end the ministry!

First, God blessed this ministry with an incredible mission which has inspired a passion in countless thousands of volunteers and donors. Because of this passion, our volunteers remained committed to working with us to resume production as soon as possible while keeping us in constant prayer. Our donors continue to provide amazing financial support allowing our ministry to be healthy and forward-thinking in the face of today's challenges. In fact, we received numerous calls, e-mails, and letters from both our volunteers



expressing their desire to return to work, as well as individuals giving gifts above and beyond what they normally made, wanting to ensure our staff were being provided for, and our organization stayed strong. To all of our volunteers and donors, I thank you for your love.

Second, I am blessed to lead such an amazing staff at Lutheran Braille Workers. Every single employee in this office has remained committed to figuring out how to work from home, keep production going as much as possible, and maintain the lines of communications with our volunteers, donors, and most importantly, our recipients. Not one person thought of themselves first, but rather about the people we serve and the loneliness or fear our readers might be experiencing. Our staff has also taken this time to implement software, financial system, and equipment upgrades which will only streamline production and distribution moving forward. I hope you



are as proud of the staff members of Lutheran Braille Workers, and their heart for the communities we support, as I am every day.

Third, Lutheran Braille Workers applied for and received a Payroll Protection Program (PPP) Loan which removed some of the fiscal pressure from our planning and operations. This loan will eventually become a grant which is an incredible relief for this ministry. Most importantly it is allowing the gifts you are generously providing to be used for the ongoing

production of the Bible and Christian materials at our headquarters and centers.

Now, we have successfully reopened a number of our production centers, as well as part of our home office. The numbers of titles being offered in Large Print and Audio continues to grow, which is very exciting. The Bible is already making its way into the hands of our grateful recipients. LBW is slowly on its way to safely resuming normal operations throughout the remainder of the year.

The Gospel-sharing work of Lutheran Braille Workers continues. While there remains some uncertainty regarding the future, we look forward in faith, knowing God will continue to bless this ministry with our volunteers, staff, and incredible donors like you. Please pray for our ministry and know that all of us at Lutheran Braille Workers are praying for you and your loved ones.

In His Service,

Jay Zemke, President

**"REJOICE ALWAYS, PRAY WITHOUT
CEASING, GIVE THANKS IN ALL
CIRCUMSTANCES;"**

(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18a)

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SUPPORTING THOSE ISOLATED AND ALONE -CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1-

the large print devotionals and familiar hymns provided by LBW to my mother. The caregiver found reading these materials to mom on a daily basis has been extremely helpful, calming, and important. Since my mother grew up reading her Bible daily, she is able to respond positively to these familiar words. These daily readings even stimulate brief conversations with the caregiver which in turn helps my mom's overall health and well-being.

I know companies have been shut down and are having a difficult time reopening, but I am praying LBW will find a way to keep helping senior citizens, especially those with dementia, by providing Bibles and Christian devotions to them.

I have written this letter to let you know how important your materials are to the elderly right now. These materials are such a comfort to me as well as to mom and her caregiver.

Thank you for all you do and may God bless you with the ability to continue your loving work!"

Cindy*, Texas

*Names changed at request of participants

YOUR SUPPORT IS SPREADING JESUS' LOVE

After receiving the thank-you letter from Cindy (Front cover of the newsletter), a representative from Lutheran Braille Workers followed-up with the owner of the memory care facility in which Ruby was living. The owner, Caroline, shared with us even more amazing information:

"I began reading the devotions to Ruby to help calm her down during this time period. It is difficult for most of my residents as they do not understand why they are not being visited by family members or why their routine has been altered. Change is hard for patients suffering memory-loss issues.

Another lady heard me reading the devotions and asked to join as her father was a pastor. Soon others became interested and now, I read the devotions to all of my patients every day. For those few moments, they are finding peace and comfort in God's Word. Having the devotions in Large Print also allows them to take the books and read for themselves.

I'm grateful for Lutheran Braille Workers and really appreciate these materials. I hope you can continue to send more because with this pandemic, I need every bit of assistance I can get. Thank you!"

**"FOR THE GRACE OF GOD HAS
APPEARED, BRINGING SALVATION
FOR ALL PEOPLE..."** (Titus 2:11)





PRESIDENT TRAVELS TO RED BUD

In March, President Jay Zemke had the opportunity to visit two supporting churches and a Ministry Production Center team in Red Bud, Illinois. Jay spent the day attending services at Saint Johns and Trinity Lutheran Churches in Red Bud, before meeting with volunteers from Ministry Production Center 29 at St. John Lutheran Church in Baldwin, Illinois.. It was an enjoyable day and a great opportunity to see how the teams work and interact. Thank you to the volunteers for their dedicated service!

PRAYERS FROM OUR READERS AND SUPPORTERS

Dear Lutheran Braille Workers,

It has been tough not being able to go to church and do Braille. But I can't imagine how much harder it is on the people waiting for our materials. Hearing that devotions and other materials are still going out is comforting. I've never given before, but I want this gift to support the employees who are still doing

amazing work. You are blessing lives of the people who get these books. *Charlene, Missouri*

Dear Lutheran Braille Workers,

You are a blessing in the lives of the many patients in our facility. They are scared because of the virus affecting elderly people more than others. They can't see their family and they are isolated. Having the Large Print hymns and devotions have given them something to read and has brought a semblance of stability and reassurance. I can't believe you are able to send these out for free. Thank you for what you're doing. *Nancy, Michigan*

Dear Lutheran Braille Workers,

I am sure this virus has affected you all, but please know I appreciate receiving the devotions from you. Having the Bible in Braille means a lot to me as I continue to hear all of the scary news in the world. May God bless you all as you do this important work. I'm praying for you daily. *Rick, Arkansas*

GOOD NEWS

PPP LOAN PROVIDES FINANCIAL STABILITY

In May, Lutheran Braille Workers applied for and received a Paycheck Protection Program Loan which provides for eight weeks of salary and bill expenses for qualifying organizations. This allowed LBW to continue to keep all of its staff members working from home while the office was closed! In addition, by carefully documenting the expenses, Lutheran Braille Workers will be able to turn this loan into a grant at the end of the terms, which is incredible for this ministry. We are grateful for all of the hard work which went into applying for this loan, as well as God blessing us with a bank which said yes!

SAFETY MEASURES FOR REOPENING

Our greatest concern during this entire time is the safety of our volunteers and staff. As such, we have implemented best practices guidelines at both headquarters and for all our Ministry Production Centers as they reopen. Ultimately, all locations are required to follow local and state laws and guidelines first. Some of the other guidelines include:

- Practicing social distancing and reducing group sizes to fewer than 10 people is a top priority.
- Masks will be worn if your state, county, or

church requires them. We will have masks available for those centers that request them.

- Handwashing and the use of hand sanitizer is of the utmost importance to stay safe.

Our staff is working hard to navigate these daily changes in our new normal. We are diligently monitoring the situation and will continue to work with each leader to ensure the safety of everyone as we open Ministry Production Centers.



Thank you SO much for sending the Braille New Testament to my blind son, Jeff. It has brought him to Christ, an amazing blessing in his life and for our family. He is now a member of a great local church and church community group. He also reads his Braille Bible every Wednesday as a volunteer at a local hospice, comforting dying patients.



GOOD NEWS

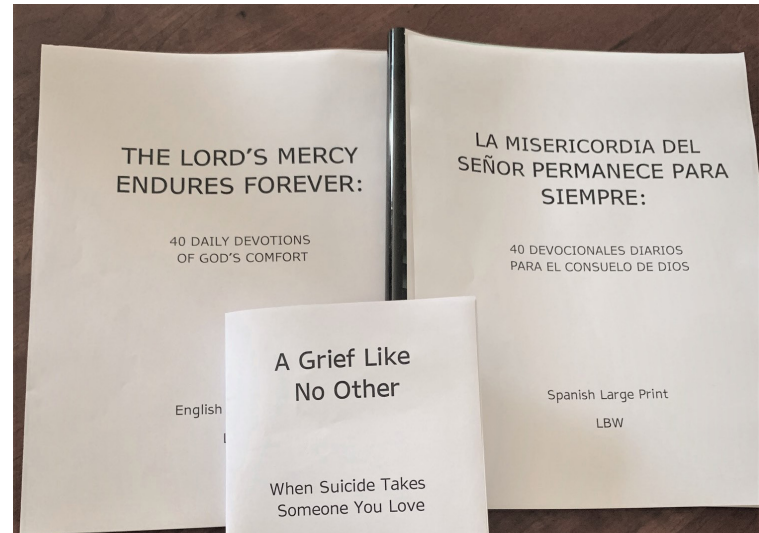
NEW TITLES AND UPDATING PROJECTS (AWAITING MORE TITLES)

Lutheran Braille Workers continues to produce new titles in Specialized Large Print while staff are working from home. Recently several new titles were formatted and are in the process of being produced for future distribution.

These titles include:

40 Daily Devotionals (in support of the LCMS Disaster Relief program) in English and Spanish; Project Connect booklets: Achieving Good Communication (Spanish), Clutter (Spanish), Empty Nest (Spanish), Parenting with Purpose (Spanish), Responsible Parenthood (Spanish), Single Mothers (Spanish), The Truth About Angels (Spanish), Quarterly Publications: LWML Quarterly, Lutheran Witness

In addition, the narrations of the Old and New Testaments in ESV were completed by the volunteers from Concordia University Irvine. We are grateful for the ongoing efforts during quarantine to ensure more titles are available for the Blind and Visually Impaired.



THINGS TO DO WHILE STAYING AT HOME:

Call three friends to see how they are doing

Learn a new hobby or skill

Begin a new Bible Study or read a new book

Consider taking a class to expand your horizons. During quarantine, our president Jay completed "Christianity Through Its Scriptures" through Harvard University.

I'm Interested in Providing a Bible(s) for a Person Who is Blind or Vision Impaired

- ☐ \$100 which could provide 20 audio cartridges for the Visually Impaired
☐ \$200 which could fund a complete Bible in Braille or Large Print
☐ \$1000 which could produce five complete Bibles in Braille or Large Print
☐ A gift in the amount of \$_____

Please contact me with information on:

☐ Volunteer Opportunities ☐ Free Assistance with Estate Planning

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State & Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____



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Can you read this? (Puzzle #3 of 5)

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Please keep your newsletters through 2020 to solve the entire puzzle. Turn in the completed puzzle answer and receive a prize. Details will follow in a future newsletter.