

ILLUMINATIONS

LUTHERAN BRAILLE WORKERS

SHARING THE GOSPEL ALWAYS

WINTER 2021

>>PAGE 3

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

>>PAGE 4

MINISTRY PARTNERSHIPS

>>PAGE 6

VOLUNTEER CALL

THE GREATEST GIFT YOU COULD GIVE ME

"I wanted to write your organization a letter to thank you for the many resources you have sent to me throughout my life. My journey to know Christ as my Savior has been very long and difficult, and without your kindness I don't know how it would have happened.

I was born with sight into a Muslim family, and at age five, lost both of my parents and my vision in a car accident. I moved around to many different family members who raised me, but rarely did I experience love. Many of my aunts and uncles blamed me for my parents' death, or said seeing me was too painful. It got to the point I wished that God had taken my life instead of just my vision. As a child I could not understand why everybody was blaming me for something I did not control.

When I reached high school, I had a very dear friend whose family invited me to live with them. They were Lutheran, and they were the most amazing people I've ever known. In many ways, they were angels sent by God. They invited me to church but never forced me to go. They accommodated my religious beliefs with regards to food and my prayer. But most importantly, they never made me feel guilty for what happened to my parents or how I lost my sight. They encouraged me to gain technical skills, look for



work, and to read and prepare for college. Love is what I learned in that household, and now I know, it was the love of Jesus shining through them.

I first went with them for a festival, and everybody was so wonderful. I asked if I could start to go to church with them more often. Eventually I realized this was the one true faith, and I became baptized and confirmed in church. The Braille Bible and Braille Catechism I received from Lutheran Braille Workers were critical to the development of my faith. Being able to read about Jesus for myself changed my life.

I am now much older with a wife and children, and a career. My story and the story of my faith are shared with every single person I know in an effort to witness to them. I also know many other people who are Blind who have benefited from your resources. I cannot thank you enough for the love you showed me and others who are Blind!

Thank you!" **Rashad S., Dearborn, MI**



LBW

PO Box 5000

Yucaipa, CA 92399

800-925-6092

LBWloveworks.org

THANKFUL NOTES

THANK YOU

A SMALL CORNER OF THE WORLD

Greetings! Praise the Lord!

I am very happy to inform you that I have received the Braille Malayalam Bible which I ordered some months ago. I was surprised when I opened up the box and was overwhelmed with great joy because I never expected that you will send the Bible especially to the small corner of the world where I currently located.

I also attached a photograph whom I handed over the Bible and she was very happy after receiving it.

Thank you so much for the support and May Lord Jesus bless you abundantly to continue your ministry.

Thanks and Regards

Sarath Mohan, India



THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

"Greetings to you in the glorious name of Jesus Christ. I was born into a Hindu family. Now, however, I have accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Savior for six years. I want to improve my English and Biblical knowledge. Please send me some Bible books in Large Print. Because the Lord is my Shepherd, I have everything I need."

S.J.E., Tamil Nadu, South India

BRINGING GREAT JOY TO THE ELDERLY

"On behalf of Katharina, I wanted to thank you for sending her so many resources in Large Print. She loves reading all of them very much. She tells me how much she reads every item over and over until the next month's shipment arrives. I am personally glad Katharina can still read the Word of God, which gives her great joy. The Lord bless you and your work."

C.P., Fremont, CA



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

He is Risen! He is risen indeed, alleluia!

This may seem a strange greeting during Advent and is normally reserved for Easter. But we celebrate the birth of Christ knowing He came to earth to die for our sins and rose from the grave to break the chains of sin and death. This is the true meaning of Christmas, and it is a joy we hold onto throughout Advent and the Christmas seasons.

However, there are approximately 241 million people in the world who are Blind or Visually Impaired who do not know why Christmas is celebrated. They think of it with regards to morality (behave or Santa won't deliver toys), or sharing goodwill, or exchanging gifts with loved ones. For many who live in poorer countries, they will spend the day without family in orphanages or schools for the Blind, not even thinking about Christmas. This is why the ministry of Lutheran Braille Workers exists: so every person who is Blind or Visually Impaired, knows the love of Christ in their own life every day of the year, including Christmas and Easter!

2021 was another challenging year in many ways. COVID was still around and affected so much: the ability of our volunteers to come together, mail service, supply chains, and the ability to function normally. It would be easy to become discouraged at the numerous struggles and obstacles which came at this organization.

Yet, God blessed this ministry in amazing ways. One of the most incredible ways God supported this ministry was through you, our amazing donors, volunteers, and prayer supporters. Your generosity has allowed Lutheran Braille Workers to grow and expand in historic ways.

New titles, new countries, new partnerships with other ministries, new technology, new machines, so many new and exciting developments, because of the inspirational support you have provided. We are finishing 2021 on a high note in spirit, service, and financially.



But we are not done yet. We are not satisfied with the growth we've experienced because there are still tens of millions of people who are Blind or Visually Impaired who need to know the love of Christ in their own lives. There is still so much ahead of us at Lutheran Braille Workers, and I am asking for your help.

Will you please continue to bless and support this unique ministry with your prayers, your service, and with your financial support? Will you please make a gift and allow us to head into the new year on an even higher note, looking to the future of spreading the Gospel in even more ways? Will you show your love for this ministry and for sharing the Word of God?

There are so many exciting opportunities ahead of Lutheran Braille Workers in 2022, and I pray the contents of this newsletter continue to inspire you and help you realize the impact you've made in the lives of so many people. May God bless you and your family during these holiday times, and may the Holy Spirit continue to move your heart with a love for serving people who are Visually Impaired so they too know why Jesus was born, and what He did for all of us at Easter.

In His Service,

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

Jay Zemke, President

PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER MINISTRIES

MISSION NATION PUBLISHING:



Recently, Lutheran Braille Workers was excited to announce a brand-new partnership with Mission Nation Publishing

(MNP). MNP is a Christian publisher based in Naples, Florida, which shares amazing stories of missionaries, and people from other parts of the world who have come to faith in amazing ways only to witness to others in difficult situations. The partnership opens up an exciting library of titles for our recipients, beginning with *The Despicable Missionary*, continuing with *The Tenacious Missionary*, and other titles in the future. We are grateful for this exciting opportunity and look forward to adding more titles for years to come!

LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES:



In an exciting development, Lutheran Braille Workers and Lutheran Hour Ministries reaffirmed

the partnership and 65+ year old relationship between these two organizations. In a signed agreement, Lutheran Hour Ministries continues to provide LBW access to all of their resources including the Project Connect series, *A Journey Home* Bible study for prisoners, and The Lutheran Hour sermons for production in Braille, Specialized Large Print, and Audio formats. In addition, both organizations are working together to identify even more ways to share the Gospel with people who are Blind or Visually Impaired throughout the world. We are grateful for our long-time Lutheran partners in ministry!

LCMS INTERNATIONAL MINISTRY:

Over the past few months, LBW has engaged in numerous conversations, presentations, and meetings with representatives of the LCMS executive staff as well as regional directors and pastors from around the world, to better support the efforts of bringing God's Word to people in other countries. In addition to identifying new ways for LBW and the LCMS to support each other through resources, knowledge, and connections in order to bring new languages, titles, and services to bear in different parts of the world! We are grateful for the support of the LCMS and the opportunity to joyfully serve as one church body together!



PRISON FELLOWSHIP AND LCMS PRISON MINISTRY:

This fall, Lutheran Braille Workers provided a list of our prison-specific Bibles and Bible studies, as well as a list of all of the Braille resources, to Prison Fellowship, one of the largest prison ministries in the United States. This list was shared with thousands of volunteers and chaplains around the country and is a huge step to sharing the love of Christ to even more men and women who are incarcerated behind bars.

In addition, LBW participated in a presentation to pastors and prison chaplains of the LCMS in November, sharing the numerous resources currently available to prison ministry, as well as the exciting number of new prison-specific Bible studies which will be making their way into production in the coming year.



THE POWER OF YOUR ESTATE

One of the strongest sources of income which has blessed Lutheran Braille Workers this year has been through the estates of those men and women who have gone to their heavenly homes. Their love for serving people who are Blind or Visually Impaired and for sharing the Gospel was prevalent during their life, but has made a huge difference after their passing. For many supporters of LBW, the gift which comes through an estate is often 50, 100, or even 250 times the size of the gifts they make each year in their lifetime. This is an amazing blessing to many.

If you would like assistance with planning or reviewing your estate, LBW is here to support you. We have numerous resources which are available for free to you, including a partnership with the LCMS Foundation. Simply e-mail Daniel Jenkins at **Daniel@LBWloveworks.org** to learn more about this free opportunity to learn about the power of estate planning in your life, and in the future of your loved ones and ministries you care about!





A GROWING NEED FOR VOLUNTEERS AT CONVENTIONS

2022 promises to be a busy and exciting year in many ways, especially with the return of LWML District Conventions and the coming National Youth Gathering in Houston, Texas. There are also conventions for the American Council of the Blind (ACB), National Federation of the Blind (NFB), deaconesses, church workers, pastors, and other organizations. As LBW continues to strengthen its relationship with all of these amazing partners and supporters, we are actively seeking any individuals or couples who have a heart and passion for the ministry of Lutheran Braille Workers and wish to help represent us at events. This volunteerism and service is a critical component to the growth of LBW's ministry as we reach new audiences, expand into new parts of the country, and help others know what amazing things are happening with this organization. If you are interested in learning more about this opportunity, please contact Julie Zemke at Julie@LBWloveworks.org, or call our headquarters at 909-795-8977.

>>UPCOMING LWML DISTRICT CONVENTIONS 2022

>>APRIL
Oklahoma
Edmond, OK

Atlantic
Suffern, NY

Montana
Helen, MT

Utah-Idaho
Burley, ID

Central Illinois
Springfield, IL

New England
Taunton, MA

SELC
Parma, OH

>>JUNE
South Dakota
Yankton, SD

Missouri
St. Louis, MO

Pacific Southwest
Tempe, AZ

Rocky Mountain
Albuquerque, NM

Iowa East
Cedar Falls, IA

CNH
Sparks, NV

Eastern
East Syracuse, NY

Mid-South
Clarksville, TN

Iowa
West Milford, IA

Minnesota South
Willmar, MN

North Wisconsin
Green Bay, WI

Texas
Houston, TX

Ohio
Napoleon, OH

Indiana
Fort Wayne, IN

South Wisconsin
Grafton, WI

Minnesota North
Moorhead, MN

Wyoming
Gering, NE

Oregon
Salem, OR

North Dakota
Fargo, ND

>>JULY
Michigan
Gaylord, MI

Washington-Alaska
Wentachee, WA

Nebraska North
Columbus, NE

>>AUGUST
New Jersey
Morristown, NJ

>>SEPTEMBER
Carolinas
Conover, NC

Nebraska
South Kearney, NE

Southern Illinois
Evansville, IL

Chesapeake
Gaithersburg, MD

Northern Illinois
TBD

Florida-Georgia
Tampa, FL

National LCMS
Youth Gathering
July 9-13
Houston, Texas

CONNECTIONS FROM THE PAST

Recently, while attending the Pacific Southwest Pastor's Conference in Phoenix, Arizona, an attendee shared an amazing story of the long-lasting impact of Braille Bibles in the lives of so many throughout the world. Pastor Ken shared how his parents had been long time volunteers producing Braille at a church in Southern California. Ken's parents loved this ministry and would go every single week to produce multiple books of the Bible which went all over the United States and throughout the world. This continued until they simply could not physically participate any longer, a decision which broke their hearts.



Almost thirty years after his parents stopped producing Braille as volunteers, Pastor Ken found himself on a mission trip to India. One of the stops on this tour was at a school for the Blind which served orphaned children who had been given up from their families due to visual impairment. As they toured the school's library, Ken saw a book of the Bible in Braille which looked familiar. After picking it up and realizing it was produced by Lutheran Braille Workers, he began flipping through the pages until he reached the inside back cover where there was a stamp indicating the

book had been produced by his parents' Ministry Production Center almost forty years prior, right when they were volunteering. "It was a humbling and amazing moment, realizing my parents had helped touch these pages and assemble this book decades ago. Here it was still serving children who are Blind in India. God blessed me and made me feel connected with my mom and dad once again."

This is yet another story we receive of how books of Braille and Large Print are used for decades. Your support matters today, tomorrow, and for years and years to come. What an amazing revelation of how God's love is shared and the connections which are made around the world.

NEW COMPUTER SYSTEM:

LBW is in the process of integrating a new computer system which will handle every aspect of the ministry. While this is an exciting evolution in expediting efficiency in our organization, there may be a few small issues which arise. This may include receiving extra mailings, or some delays in orders reaching you. If this occurs, we ask for your patience. Please contact our headquarters to let us know and we will continue to address and fix these errors moving forward!

SUPPLY CHAIN ISSUES:

Like every other industry in the United States, LBW has been impacted by the supply chain bottlenecks and shortages. One of the major issues facing our ministry is the disruption of paper supplies with a significant order of paper sitting off the coast of California on supply ships. Please pray that these issues are resolved soon and the ministry is able to return to peak efficiency quickly!

UPDATE ON THE NEW VAN!

Thank you again to everybody who supported the purchase of our new van, including the generous support of The Stamps Foundation out of Orange County, California. This new van has already been utilized to bring materials for volunteers to assemble, transport resources for different servant events, and transport staff to conferences and conventions where pastors and other church workers were able to gain and utilize these resources. This beautiful van has already had a huge impact in a few short months and we look forward to seeing how God will continue to use this machine for many years to come!



DELIVERING GOD'S WORD THROUGH SERVANT EVENTS



Our new van allowed us to transport the needed supplies and equipment for two servant events in the past month. We traveled to Concordia University Irvine and participated in their campus-wide Concordia Cares event where students made over 50 Mustard Seed devotions. We also traveled to Mt. Olive Lutheran Church in Poway, CA for a servant event with the ladies of the LWML Heartland Zone 22. It was a day blessed with fellowship and creating Braille Advent and Christmas Hymns for our recipients.



LBW

LUTHERAN BRAILLE WORKERS



LBW

PO Box 5000

| Yucaipa, CA 92399

| 800-925-6092

| LBWloveworks.org