



ILLUMINATION

Sharing the Gospel Always

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Changing a Child's Life

You helped to open a door to the world and change a child's life.

Earlier this year, I was preparing to make a service trip to a Christian orphanage in Ecuador called For His Children (Para Sus Ninos) - Ecuador. Before this trip, I received a request from the orphanage to bring some books in Spanish Braille for a 12-year-old boy, Tomas. Mail service into Ecuador for large packages is not reliable.

Tomas has an extremely sad family story. He and his twin brother, both blind, will most likely spend the rest of their lives at the orphanage. Fortunately, it is an amazing, faith-filled place which has the capability and caregivers, called Tias, to care for all children. A caring teacher in the Special Ed school in their town taught Tomas Spanish Braille. (Tomas' twin brother has cognitive issues that prevent him from being able to process at the same level.) Tomas is bright and hard-working, and he learned quickly. Sadly, he had only one book to read in Spanish Braille, the story of Louis Braille. Tomas read this book over and over and over again!

Over several weeks, I made many phone calls and searched the internet looking for Spanish Braille. Books in Spanish Braille, especially for young people of Tomas' age, are very difficult to get one's hands on as an individual since they are largely in libraries and schools. But then I called Lutheran Braille Workers. Soon after, I received five books of the Bible in Spanish Braille to take to Tomas!

The day Tomas received these books was one to remember forever. He clutched and hugged the books, and started reading the Book of Mark aloud right away. He said, "I've been waiting so long for more things to read! Now I can read to the other kids." Then he said, **"I'm taking this Bible book into my room so I can read it at night when I get scared."** Tomas seemed confused as to why all the adults in the room were crying, but we assured him that they were happy tears, and lots of hugs were shared.



Diana, Tomas
and One of the
Tia's at For His
Children - Ecuador

Now a friend in Ecuador and I are determined to find more Spanish Braille books for Tomas and the orphanage. There are other sight-impaired children and young adults there. Not all of them may be able to learn Braille, but they will have Tomas to read to them for years to come. Together, we opened a door to the world for this young boy.

Tomas, his Tias, teachers, friends and I are so very, very grateful and blessed by the incredible work you all do and your generosity in sharing it with me - who called one day from afar with a story that might have sounded like a bit of a lark! Thank you, thank you, thank you for helping to change Tomas' life!

With many blessings,
~ Diana Carroll

As the end of the year approaches, we are especially grateful for the ability to bring light into the lives of those who experience the world differently. Would you join us to continue bringing joy to people like Tomas?

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

~ James 1:17



Letter from the Board Chairman

Dear Lutheran Braille Workers Community,

"When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ***"Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."*** Luke 2:15

With a little help from online research, I learned that the Greek word for "see" is "idein," which involves not just physical sight, but also understanding and perception. The shepherds not only went to "see," they needed to confirm and comprehend the reality of the divine event. Their response is not solely about visual sight, it is the first step in the pursuit of faith seeking understanding.

As the LBW Community, we share the same goals and objectives as the shepherds. We seek not only to "see," but to enhance and expand understanding and perception. This is the ***"WHY"*** of LBW, this is why LBW exists – that all people in the world who are Blind or Visually Impaired have free access to the message of salvation through Jesus Christ."

It is only through your continuing prayers, financial support, and partnership that LBW is able to do ***"WHAT"*** we do. In our 80+ years of ministry, Lutheran Braille Workers has . . .

- Produced over 15 million volumes of Bibles, study guides, and other Christian materials.
- Distributed these in 40 languages, to people in 164 countries around the world.
- Offered access to God's Word in Braille, Large Print, and Audio format.
- Never Charged a recipient to receive these materials; we freely share God's Word!

Thank you for your past, present, and we pray, future support. We invite you to join us, and the shepherds, as we seek a deeper understanding and perception of the saving grace only available through the birth of the Child born that first Christmas night. ***Let us go, see, understand, and share this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about!***

May our good and gracious Lord bless you and your families in all your efforts to serve Him!



Merry Christmas!

Glenn Mahnken

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Chair, LBW Board of Directors

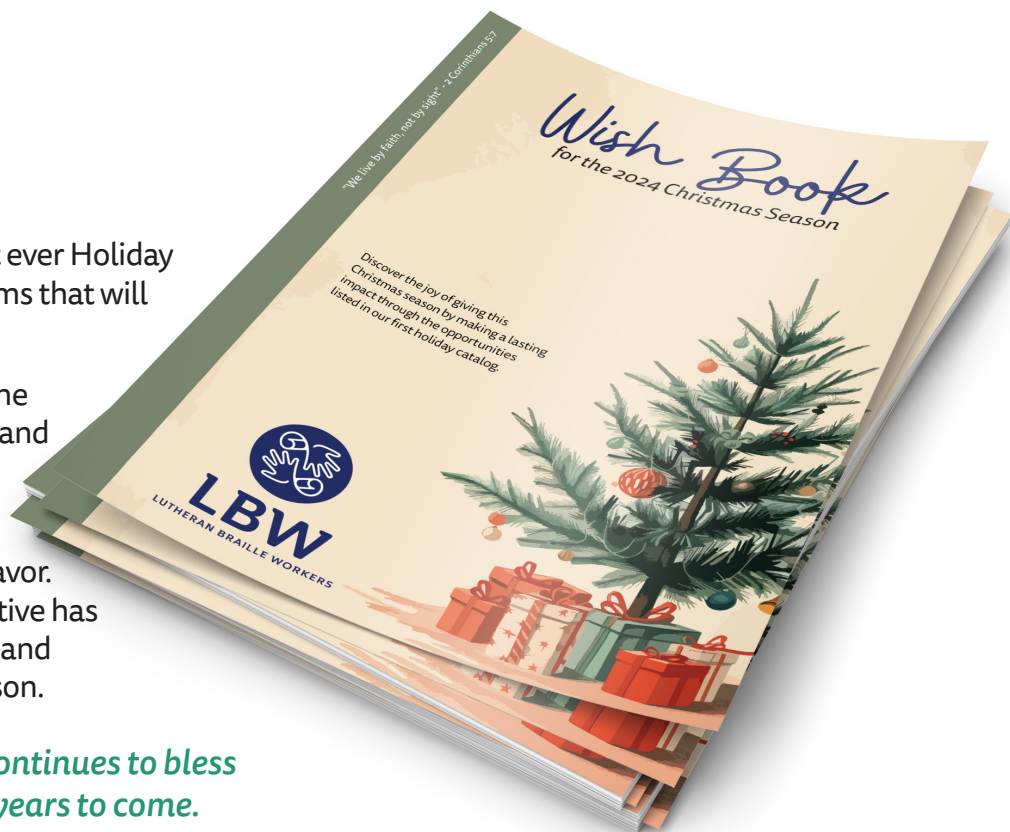
Holiday Wish Book

In December, LBW produced its first ever Holiday Wish Book catalog of giving with items that will help to support our ministry.

Financial contributions, no matter the size, has the potential to bring hope and joy to someone in need.

Thank you for your support and positive feedback for this new endeavor. We are thrilled to see how this initiative has inspired so many to give generously and thoughtfully during the holiday season.

We pray this tradition of giving continues to bless both the givers and receivers for years to come.

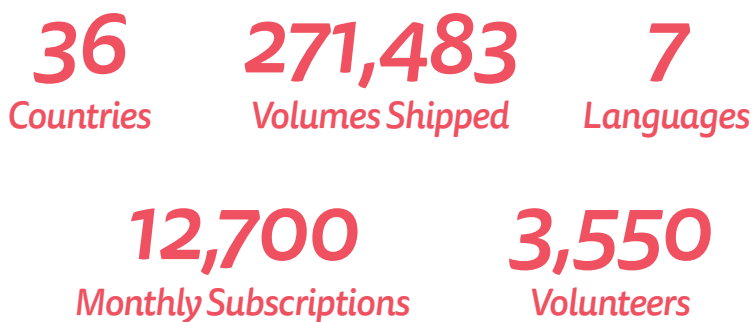


Fellowship and Community

Friendship and Gathering

Devotion and Worship

2023 Ministry Impact



While these numbers are impressive, the most important fact is that people are learning about Jesus.

Thank you for bringing God's Word to so many people around the world!



Embossing and Printing

Assemble and Punch Holes

Package and Pray

Fall Conferences

Brooke Pernice, LBW's Director of Outreach, has been busy this fall attending five conferences in Kentucky, where she shared the mission of LBW with those in Christian ministry and individuals working with people who have visual impairments. At each event, Brooke oversaw an exhibitor table and distributed LBW materials.



Her fall kicked off in Nashville with two conferences. At the SING 24 Getty Music Worship Conference (Sept. 3-5), Brooke connected with over 50 people from various organizations, discussing future collaborations with educational institutions, homeschool groups, worship ministries, and more. At the USA Canada Lions Leadership Forum (Sept. 5-7), Brooke distributed 40+ Braille and Large Print books, along with 300 order forms, while discussing potential LBW partnerships for events across the US and Canada.

In November, Brooke attended the Global Missions Health Conference (Nov. 7-9) in Louisville, where she made connections with medical mission groups. The same month, she participated in the International Conference for Mission (Nov. 14-16), sharing how to serve those with visual impairments. She wrapped up her Kentucky tour at the Kentucky Council of the Blind's annual conference (Nov. 21-23), distributing materials and engaging with individuals about future orders.

LCMS Conventions

Lutheran Braille Workers attended two LCMS district conventions in the Midwest during the same weekend, October 14-16. Board Member Pam Bishop represented LBW at the LCMS Ohio Church Workers Conference in Dublin, Ohio (just outside of Columbus). Pam had the opportunity to share the mission and ministry of LBW with pastors, church workers, and school staff. She also met Dr. Kevin Wilson, the president of the district, who expressed strong support for LBW, both nationally and for the Ministry Production Centers in Ohio.



Meanwhile, Director of Ministry Relations and Strategic Partnerships, Rachel Potts, attended the LCMS Michigan All Pastors' Conference in Traverse City, Michigan. Rachel represented LBW to over 1,000 pastors, deacons, vicars, and their wives. The conference theme was "Fully Reconciled Through Christ." Rachel was also blessed to reconnect with two other LBW Michiganders, current LBW Board member Priscilla Newton and past Board member Ruth Martin (see photo).





LWML Group Visits

Lutheran Braille Workers had the joy of visiting two wonderful LWML groups this fall! In early October, Rachel Potts, LBW's Director of Ministry Relations and Strategic Partnerships, made a special trip to the Dorcas Society at Trinity Lutheran Church in Traverse City, Michigan. This was a homecoming for Rachel, as Trinity is the church she attended from preschool through high school and where she graduated from elementary school. She received a warm welcome from the active group, where she had the chance to chat with Dorcas Society members, Trinity's pastors, and several staff. The event happened to coincide with their Christmas cookie baking day, so several women were bustling back and forth between the two activities. Among the attendees were some of Rachel's former Sunday School teachers! The biggest surprise, however, was meeting a former LBW volunteer who had worked for many years as a Braille transcriptionist.

LBW was also invited to the LWML Sioux Falls Zone fall rally in South Dakota. Rachel was the keynote speaker, and her two daughters joined her to help with the Braille servant event. The women of the Sioux Falls Zone had a fantastic time making Braille Mustard Seed devotion books, and they had the chance to try their hand at writing in Braille using Perkins Brailers and slate and styluses. The zone was incredibly generous, making a substantial donation to LBW, along with several individual members contributing as well. *What an inspiring weekend!*

Visiting Headquarters



Crean High School in Irvine, California, was the location of a huge LBW servant on November 13. More than 50 students gathered together to make Braille Mustard Seed Devotions and Large Print books. LBW is grateful for the students' work and grateful to partner Crean in their mission - to proclaim Jesus Christ. *Thank you, Crean!*



The Adonai Christian Co-op Homeschool group of Claremont visited LBW headquarters in Yucaipa on October 7. They toured the building and learned more about the ministry. The students were particularly excited to discover how Braille is created, and they had the opportunity to produce Braille books. They contributed by creating 12 Braille Mustard Seed Devotionals, while younger students assisted in labeling and packaging Large Print and Braille subscription magazines. *Thank you, Adonai Christian Co-op!*

A group of students holding up Braille Mustard Seed devotions. They are standing in front of the wall of Braille plates at headquarters.



Longing for Sight

Written by Brooke Pernice, Director of Outreach

I sometimes lead dining in the dark events, in which sighted people eat a meal while blindfolded. I let them fumble through finding the food on their plate for a few minutes, then explain that many of us think of our plates as clocks, memorizing where the different foods are within this mental image, sometimes even touching everything. Eventually, people feel less embarrassment about using their hands and moving so carefully, and start talking to each other.

Shame goes back to the moment in the Garden of Eden, in which Eve and Adam gave into Satan's temptation and the desire of the eyes.

“ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.” (Gen 3:6-7 ESV). After looking upon each other with their fallen eyes, fear and shame drove them to hide, in vain, even from God (Gen 3:8-9).

Since then, shame and fear haunts everyone who sees and is seen by the eye, whether in small ways like a sighted woman being unwilling to go out in public without make-up, or in large ways such as being the object of wild assumptions due to the lack of a home or job. Although Jesus was speaking about moral judgments, His words are also true about visual conclusions:

“For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.” (Mat 7:2 ESV). Often, those most afraid of being put to shame because of appearances have themselves judged by unfair standards, and knowing they will sometimes fall short, fear being judged in kind. As King Solomon wrote:

“Haughty eyes and a proud heart, the lamp of the wicked, are sin.” (Prov 21:4 ESV).

Normally, the dining in the dark participants start noticing the textures, smells, and taste of their food with more clarity and pleasure. When they take the blindfolds off, some disappointment strikes as self-consciousness returns, and the sensory experience of their food is lost. That brief blindness takes away some distractions and fears, and the relief at sight's restoration is tempered by the return of its burdens. Likewise, we lose sight of earthly cares to adore Christ (Col 3:1-10), and pray for recognition of the unseen, rather than the visible as being eternal (2 Cor 4:16-18). Proud pronouncements fade, and our sight is transformed to more closely resemble our King's.

“He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth”

~ Isaiah 11:3b-4a ESV



A very Merry and Blessed Christmas from all of us at LBW headquarters! Donations gathered from LBW volunteers and staff provided six bikes and gifts to children in the city of Yucaipa. *Thank you, LBW!*

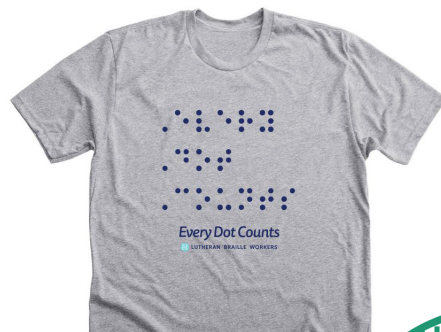


The Boar's Head Christmas Festival at Concordia Ann Arbor was a great place to run into LBW supporters! Ministry Production Center #203 (Trinity Monroe) Leaders Kevin and Linda Wellinau and staff member Rachel Potts were blessed to see each other at the 64th annual celebration.

LBW T-Shirts and Sweatshirts Make Great Gifts!

Do you want your gifts to make an impact ... and look really good?

LBW merchandise is just the thing! LBW has beautifully designed t-shirts and sweatshirts for purchase with 100% of the profits donated to LBW. This is a way to share about the ministry you so selflessly give your time to!



Various Sizes, Colors and Styles Available

Designs can be purchased at www.bonfire.com/store/lutheran-braille-workers or scan this QR code.





Please consider making a gift through check, credit card, IRA minimum distribution, Thrivent Choice Dollars, stocks, or other mechanisms for people who are Visually Impaired.



Your gifts help bring the Gospel to 338 million men, women, and children who are Blind or Visually Impaired through Braille and Specialized Large Print formats.



Scan this QR code for quick links to our Donation Page, Social Media Sites, Online Bookstore, Official Merchandise, and the LBW website.

"We live by faith, not by sight"
2 Corinthians 5:7

Are You Following Us on Social Media?

Staff spotlights, event highlights, history, and other information are posted on our Facebook and Instagram pages! Follow us to keep up with news, events, and more.

Book of the Month highlights are posted monthly with a description of the books that are available! Followers are encouraged to leave a book review or share the post!

Follow us on social media  @LutheranBrailleWorkers  @lbwloveworks



"A woman whose mother is losing her sight and battling depression found hope in our Large Print materials."

— Sandy —



LUTHERAN BRAILLE WORKERS