



ILLUMINATIONS

Sharing the Gospel Always

p.2 Hart for the Mission

p.4 Life and Legacy

p.10 Devotion

p.14 Exciting News Update!

The Light in the Shadows: A Story of Braille, Calling, and Redemption

In the quiet suburbs of Hawthorne, California, where the hum of traffic on the 405-freeway blended with the distant roar of LAX planes, Pastor Arthur Stevens lived a life shaped by faith and service. A dedicated member of the Lutheran Church, he had long been involved in prison ministry through the Pacific Southwest District. It was a calling that took him into the stark, unforgiving worlds of California's correctional facilities, where he shared the Gospel with those society had deemed irredeemable. But in the waning days of the COVID-19 pandemic, as the world tentatively reopened, Pastor Stevens felt a new pull, a divine whisper that would lead him to Patton State Hospital, a sprawling facility in the Inland Empire near Highland, California housing the criminally insane.

Patton wasn't like the state prisons Pastor Stevens knew. Nestled in the foothills of the San Bernardino Mountains, it was a place where mental illness intertwined with criminal pasts, a labyrinth of wards and therapy rooms guarded by razor wire and watchful eyes. For years, the pandemic had shuttered many programs, including Protestant religious services. The patients, men and women committed by courts after being found not guilty by reason of insanity, had been left in spiritual isolation. But the Lord works in mysterious ways, Arthur often reminded himself. Through the tireless efforts of the Pacific Southwest District's Prison Ministry team, doors began to creak open. Volunteers petitioned administrators, coordinated with chaplains, and navigated the bureaucracy to restart services. By spring-2024, Protestant worship was back, a beacon of hope amid the sterile halls.

It was during one of these initial visits that Arthur met the facility's librarian, a kind-eyed woman named Maria, who managed a modest collection of books and resources for patient rehabilitation. As they chatted about expanding spiritual materials, Maria mentioned a small but profound need: Braille Bibles for the Visually Impaired patients. *"We have a few Blind folks here," she said, "And they've got nothing tailored for them. It could make a world of difference."* Arthur's heart stirred. He knew just the organization: the Lutheran Braille Workers (LBW), a ministry dedicated to producing Braille Scriptures for the Blind worldwide. Founded in 1943, LBW had grown into a global force, transcribing and binding Bibles by hand and machine in a nondescript warehouse in Yucaipa, California, not far from Patton itself.

The LBW's work is a labor of love, steeped in precision and prayer. Volunteers, many of them retirees or homemakers, gather in workshops equipped with specialized Braille embossers and binding machines. Each page is embossed on heavy-duty paper, the raised dots forming letters and words that fingers can "read." A single Braille Bible spans 37 volumes, massive tomes stacked like encyclopedias, because Braille takes up far more space than print. The workers pray over each batch, knowing these Scriptures will reach hands in darkness, bringing the light of Christ. *"We're not just making books," one volunteer once remarked. "We're crafting vessels for the Word."*

Inspired, Arthur reached out to LBW. **(Don't miss what happens next—continue reading on page 3.)**





Mark 16:6

And [the angel] said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here.”

Blind and Low Vision persons are often identified by what they lack, sight or clear vision. It's untrue because, like all of us, they have abilities that others, like a sighted person for instance may not have, so to identify them as “lacking” misses the incredible gifts the Blind possess. And many times the Blind are better prepared for reality than the sighted.

Jesus' resurrection was just such an event. The disciples went looking for the crucified savior, and the tomb was empty; they could not see Him. But seeing Jesus was not and is not today the real gift we are looking for as people of faith. We can't see him because He is risen and ascended, yet the Holy Spirit allows us to feel His presence and to place our trust in Him. What would be hard for a sighted person is actually in their skill set of the Blind and Low Vision community.

The Apostle Peter said it this way in his first epistle:

“Though you have not seen Him, you love Him. Though you do not now see Him, you believe in Him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory.” (1 Peter 1:8)

Research indicates that Blind and Sight Impaired persons in the U.S.A. are less likely to have a connection to a local church- community. Yet they, better than the sighted community, can inherently understand the mystery and faith of the empty tomb, or said another way, believing what can't be seen with eyes but can be received by faith in the heart.

Our prayer at Lutheran Braille Workers is that all people would not miss what cannot be seen in an empty tomb: ***that the one who died for the sins of the world had been raised to new and eternal life.*** And that all of us, as the Blind do every day, can live with faith in a world where things are not seen. May God grant all of us the ability to feel the presence of Christ and put our trust in Him. That is, in fact, our goal and desire to make sure that all who request may receive God's Word and Christian resources so they can go each day to a risen Savior, the one who could not be seen in the empty tomb but can be felt by His presence and put their faith in Him.

And as we hear people around the world confessing faith in the one they cannot see, it fills my Hart with joy for the mission of LBW.

Robert Hartwell

"We'd be honored to provide a Bible for Patton," they responded. It was a first for a California forensic hospital like this, Braille Bibles in a place where minds were as fractured as bodies were confined. The district's prison ministry facilitated the donation, and soon, the first volumes arrived at the library, available for patients to request. But Arthur's role was just beginning. The Lord, it seemed, had called him deeper into Patton's shadows.

For six months, starting in March of 2024, Arthur volunteered as an interim Protestant chaplain. Sundays became marathons: a 90-minute drive from Hawthorne to Highland, navigating the congested I-210 through the urban sprawl of Los Angeles County into the drier, mountainous terrain. Patton's campus was vast, with separate wings for male and female patients, a policy reinstated after a misguided integration experiment years earlier had led to several unexpected pregnancies. *"Babies in a place like this," Arthur shook his head, "a reminder of how fragile boundaries are."*

His guide into this world was Father Gomez, the Catholic chaplain, a warm, dedicated man overworked trying to cover both Catholic and Protestant services. Father Gomez had weathered the pandemic shutdowns and knew Patton's rhythms like a symphony. *"Come, my friend," he'd say, clapping Arthur on the back. "I'll show you the ropes."* Unlike state prisons, where routines are rigid and interactions scripted, Patton emphasizes therapy and rehabilitation. Patients aren't just

inmates; they are individuals with diagnoses: schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, PTSD from traumas that had spiraled into crimes. Arthur led Sunday services, Bible studies in small groups, prayed one-on-one in quiet corners, and listened to stories that broke his heart.

One patient, a Blind man named Jamal, became a regular. Committed after a delusional episode led to arson, Jamal had lost his sight in a childhood accident. When Arthur introduced him to the Braille ESV, Jamal's fingers danced over the pages. *"Genesis feels alive," he whispered during their first session. "I can touch God's words."* Arthur sat with him, discussing creation, fall, and redemption, pastoral work at its core: comforting the afflicted, pointing to Christ's grace. With women like Elena, a former nurse haunted by hallucinations, Arthur shared Psalms of lament and hope. Father Gomez often joined, bridging denominations in a shared mission. "Protestant or Catholic," he'd joke, "we're all chasing the same Shepherd."

The Braille project deepened Arthur's sense of purpose. Every other month, LBW sent a new book, embossed, bound, and blessed. Volunteers in Yucaipa worked meticulously proofreading dots with magnifying glasses, stacking pages in order, and binding them together. *"We're 23 books away from a full set," Arthur updated Maria the librarian one crisp autumn day.* Volumes of the Old Testament prophets and New Testament epistles arrived steadily, each one a step toward completion. Patients requested them more frequently,

finding solace in tactile Scripture amid their isolation.

But ministry has seasons, and Arthur's at Patton drew to a close. In the fall of 2024, the facility hired a retired Navy chaplain, Reverend Hayes, a stoic veteran with a chaplain's cross from deployments in the Middle East. *"You've done good work here," Hayes told Arthur during the handover. "But it's time for me to take the helm."* Arthur nodded, relieved yet bittersweet. The drives had worn him down, two hours to Patton, then another leg to his regular prison ministry site in San Diego. Gas prices, hovering at \$5 a gallon, added insult to exhaustion. "The Lord provides," Arthur prayed on his final drive home, the San Gabriel Mountains fading in the rearview.

Reflecting in his Hawthorne study, surrounded by LBW newsletters and Patton mementos, Arthur marveled at the journey. The Braille Bibles weren't just books; they were lifelines. In a place like Patton, where insanity meets incarceration, the Word in Braille pierced the darkness, both literal and spiritual. Jamal had written him a note: "Thanks to you and those Braille workers, I see Jesus clearer than ever." And the Catholic-Protestant collaboration? A testament to unity in Christ.

As August 2024 unfolded, with LBW promising the next volume soon, Arthur felt content. Twenty-three books to go, perhaps the first complete Braille ESV in a California forensic institution. It wasn't about accolades; it was about obedience to the call. *"The Lord called me there," Arthur often said, "to be His hands, even if just for a season."*

"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die." John 11:25-26 (ESV)

LBW received word from Ken Loeber that his father, Norman, passed away at 104 on Friday, January 30, 2026.

Norman was the brother of Helene Loewe Koehler, our founder, and engineered the first Braille Presses. Norman has been an active volunteer and supporter throughout his long life. His service to LBW was profound, serving on the Board of Directors from 1962–1974 and again from 1990–2008, and lending his engineering expertise to make Braille production more efficient and accessible.

A Pioneer in Braille Innovation

In 1944, Norman caught the passion for creating Braille Bibles—a passion that never left him. Over the decades, he tirelessly researched and engineered systems to improve Braille production. With his son Kenneth, Norman developed the roller press system still used in LBW's Ministry Production Centers today. Originally designed and copyrighted in 1946, the roller press became the essential tool for high-volume Braille production. While small updates have been made, the core of Norman's design continues to serve thousands of volunteers faithfully.

Norman's contributions went even further. In 1957, he persuaded his employer, IBM, to donate keypunch equipment, which he transformed into the first "Braille Encoding Keyboard." This revolutionary device reduced operator fatigue and errors, producing thousands of plates and paving the way for future computer-assisted Braille technology. His forward-thinking innovations, from automatic line spacers on stereotype machines to pioneering magnetic card embossing systems, were decades ahead of their time and proved instrumental in expanding LBW's ability to serve people worldwide.

An International Voice for Braille

Norman's influence extended beyond LBW. In 1975, he traveled to Paris to represent LBW and IBM at the 150th anniversary of the braille language. There, he heard what would affirm his life's work: "Nothing will ever take the place of Braille, it is our window to the world."

Please keep the Loeber family in your prayers as they celebrate Norman's life and life eternal in Jesus.



A Life Well Lived in Service

Norman's story is one of dedication, creativity, and love for others.

Through his ingenuity and perseverance, millions of people who are Blind or Visually Impaired have been able to hold God's Word in their hands. His quiet but steadfast work—often done behind the scenes in workshops and production centers—changed the course of this ministry and ensured that the dream his sister Helene began would continue to grow.

As Norman celebrates 104 years of life, we give thanks for him, for Sally (preceded in death), and for Kenneth, who have poured themselves into this ministry. We honor Norman not only for his remarkable age but also for his remarkable legacy: one that continues to bless countless people across the globe.

Norman Carl Loeber, follower and servant of Jesus Christ, devoted husband, father, and friend, was born on August 14, 1921 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He was baptized as a child of God shortly thereafter at the family's Lutheran Church.

He was the youngest of seven children, including Helene Loewe Koehler, the founder of Lutheran Braille Workers. They had a special bond and Norman acted as a "big" brother to his sisters throughout their lives.

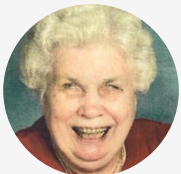


Estate gifts help to continue to support the important work of LBW long after the supporter has joined her/his Savior in heaven. And the need for Braille and specialized large print and audio for the Blind and Sight Impaired is expected to double in the next 30 years (by 2056). How comforting to know that a LBW supporter can continue to help fund the mission field through estate gifts even after passing.

Every individual or couple that indicates they have included LBW in their estate planning (or gives a gift of \$20,000 or more to our Helene Koehler Endowment) Is automatically inducted into Helene Loewe Koehler: Light of Christ Legacy Society. Each member is listed yearly in our newsletter which encourages others to consider what they might do. Each member also receives a commemorative medallion in a keep sake box to show appreciation and to encourage the member to pray for the ministry of LBW.

Included in this newsletter is a return card that has space to inform us of your intent and over the course of the next several years informative information will be shared via mailings, email, Zoom and live events around the country to provide smart best practices on estate planning that provides for loved ones, beloved charities like your congregation and LBW , and keeps taxation burden to a minimum for family and the estate.

Won't you consider joining The Helene Loewe Koehler: Light of Christ Legacy Society today?



Meet **Dolores V. Frederking**

Legacy Society

A recent estate gift was received by Lutheran Braille Workers from the estate of Doloris Frederking. Dolores was born on March 31, 1933 on a farm near St Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church in the rural farming community of Hahlen, Illinois. She was the third child of Oscar and Alinda Frederking, who worked a farm with dairy cows and crops (wheat, alfalfa, corn, soybeans, hay). Dolores was baptized when she was 17 days old by Rev. A. C. Marquardt.

When Dolores was 6 years old, she walked with her older sister to the congregation's school, where Pastor Marquardt also served as the teacher. The following year, she and her entire family became sick with chicken pox and flu. Dolores and her younger brother Wilfred became so sick that they were sent in an ambulance to Children's Hospital in St Louis. Five weeks later, when the two children were discharged, Wilfred had lost sight in one eye, and Dolores was completely Blind.

Her Blindness, of course, changed her life in a profound way. She had to learn how to find her way around the house, farmyard, and schoolhouse without sight. She listened to the lessons in school, and her mother read her schoolbooks to her in the evenings. Everyone tried to help Dolores have as normal a life as usual, so she was thrilled when her friends from school figured out a way to let her ride a bicycle with them on the country roads. She listened to them clinking their handlebars to keep between them. **(continue reading on the next page)**

(continued from page 5)



When Dolores was 12, her parents sent her to the School for the Blind in Jacksonville, Illinois, then St Louis, Missouri. There she learned all kinds of skills, including sewing, cooking, cleaning, and the use of Braille and a white cane. After her graduation, she worked at the Lutheran Building's Library for the Blind. Shirley Groh, a deaconess who worked with Dolores, encouraged her to go into the deaconess program at Valparaiso University. Dolores became the first university student in her extended family. In 1961, she graduated with a double-major in theology and sociology. Her family still can't figure out how Dolores learned how to walk on her own around such a big campus regardless of weather. Or how she managed to take notes and pass courses. She even took a bowling course. She was the first Blind student to graduate from the Deaconess Program.

Dolores had a long career, working in the Lutheran Hospital Chaplain's Office in St Louis, the Bethesda Lutheran Home for the Mentally Regarded in Watertown, Wisconsin, and rehabilitation programs for the Blind in state facilities in Nevada, Oregon, and South Carolina. She took graduate level courses wherever she lived, including some correspondence courses from Concordia Seminary in St Louis.

In retirement, Dolores stayed active in many volunteer activities until COVID and her age slowed her down. Her faith was always the most important part of her life, and she was an important model for her many nieces and nephews and their children. She died at age 91 on July 12, 2024.

Her family writes: Perhaps the Bible verse that best fits Dolores' life is Isaiah 42:16: "I will lead the Blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them." LBW helped Dolores journey along her paths. Thank you.

Dolores and other Individuals and families who have planned for support for Lutheran Braille Workers in their estate planning, have provided a estate gifts upon their passing or make a \$20,000 gift to the LBW Endowment are recognized in the Helene Loewe Koehler: Light of Christ Legacy Society.

**Contact LBW for more information on becoming a member of the society.
Membership encourages others to support LBW and the Blind and Sight Impaired
through their thoughtful planning and gifts.**

Thousands of Calendars to the Philippines

Greetings from Resources for the Blind, Incorporated, (RBI) Philippines.

On behalf of our Blind fellows here in the Philippines, we would like to thank you for sending 1,000 Braille Calendars for 2026. Our Visually Impaired staff unloaded all the boxes from the Philippine Post Office.

Again, thank you so much. And Blessed Christmas and Happy New Year to all!

God bless,
Lorrie Barboza

Around the World



Serving the Blind in Zambia

Pastor Byrne Katongo recently shared a joyful report from outreach in Chinsali, Zambia. On December 13, 2025, he rented a motorcycle and traveled to remote communities to reach blind individuals with the Good News. He met with a group of 20 blind individuals, and many gave their lives to Jesus Christ.

We thank God that blind men and women are not only hearing the Gospel, but are also being equipped to read God's Word for themselves. Please join us in prayer for Pastor Byrne and for continued open doors for this ministry.

*"Silver and gold I don't have, but what I have, I give you—the Word of God."
(Acts 3:6)*



God is using Braille Bibles from LBW to bring hope and the Gospel to Blind individuals in Zambia.



During the sharing of the Gospel, I humbly told them, "I didn't have material possessions like food to offer, but I had the most precious gift of all, the message of salvation through Jesus Christ, as it is written, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16)."

Zambia has many remote communities, making it hard to reach everyone. Pastor Byrne is committed to ensuring no one is left behind.

Pastor Byrne has received many invitations from villages to visit and share the love of Jesus Christ with Blind individuals in their communities. *Please pray for:*

1. God's Guidance in this Mission
2. Good Health and Protection for Pastor Byrne and His Family
3. God Strengthening him for the Task Ahead

The group of 20 blind individuals expressed their gratitude, saying, "Give thanks to the Lord for sending Pastor Byrne Katongo to give hope to us because we were hopeless. But through this wonderful message, we are strong and standing in Lord Jesus Christ."

Braille Material Delivery in Uganda

I humbly submit my January report, highlighting my involvement in LBW works, specifically ministering to those with eye defects and the Blind. I've been providing Braille materials and high-font-size resources that LBW sends to foster their spiritual growth and empower them to contribute to Yahweh's work.

I've attached a picture of me preparing to deliver Braille Bibles and other materials. I'm seeking support to create PowerPoint presentations (if I get a laptop) to showcase ways to integrate individuals with visual impairments into ministry and ministerial work. Pray for me.

I've taken local loans to cover postal charges for the parcels and this ministry and will repay them in installments. I'd appreciate prayers for this financial commitment.

Thank you for the materials and your support. Please pray for me, my ministry, and the recipients of our services.

Yours faithfully,

Mwesigwa Jaffar, Kisiwa Cha Jerusalem Church



Staff Anniversaries

Celebrating 30 Years of Faithful Service: Carlos Fierro



In December, we joyfully celebrated 30 years of service from Carlos Fierro in our Large Print Production department.

Over the past three decades, Carlos has witnessed and helped navigate tremendous changes in technology. From earlier manual production methods to today's advanced digital systems and specialized printing equipment, he has faithfully adapted and grown alongside the ministry. Through every transition, his commitment to quality and excellence has remained constant.

Carlos has played an essential role in ensuring that individuals with visual impairments receive God's Word and other Christian resources in Large Print. His steady, quiet dedication, attention to detail, and servant heart have blessed countless readers around the world, many of whom will never know his name, but have been deeply impacted by his work.

Carlos' faithfulness reflects the heart of Lutheran Braille Workers: quiet service that shares the love of Christ, one volume at a time. We are profoundly grateful for his 30 years of commitment and ministry.

Congratulations, Carlos, on this remarkable milestone!

Celebrating 10 Years: Sky Ervin

Next month, Sky Ervin, our Director of Production and IT, will celebrate 10 years with Lutheran Braille Workers.

Sky's connection to LBW began long before he joined the staff. He first volunteered in 2007 at just 14 years old, years before his mother, Joanna Ervin, became a staff member. From those early days to now leading Production and IT, his journey reflects both dedication and a deep understanding of the ministry's mission.

Over the past decade, Sky has strengthened and streamlined our production systems, helping LBW adapt to evolving technology while maintaining the high standards that ensure accuracy and quality in every Braille and Large Print volume. His expertise with specialized equipment, including the Puma Embosser, is recognized worldwide. His leadership supports our nationwide network of volunteers and Ministry Production Centers, helping make possible the distribution of more than 120,000 volumes each year.

For Sky, this work is deeply personal. Former President Phil Pledger confirmed him in the LCMS, officiated his marriage to his wife, Alyse, and remains a close family friend. He also grew up at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, where Helene Koehler knew Sky as a toddler and where Sky's family was connected with Leroy Defosse. Through these relationships and years of attending LBW events, the ministry has been woven into his life from an early age.

We are deeply grateful for Sky's faithful service and for the lifelong connection he brings to this ministry. We look forward to the continued impact of his leadership in the years ahead.



Welcome Joseph

Lutheran Braille Workers is very excited to welcome Joseph Leon as the new Office Assistant. Joseph brings with him a passion for Jesus and many years of experience in non-profit and Christian ministries. We are excited for the gifts and faith he brings to LBW.

Joseph writes, "Hello! I am Joseph Leon the Office Assistant at LBW Headquarters, and I am deeply grateful to be part of the wonderful team at Lutheran Braille Workers. The Lord has placed a calling on my heart to serve Him and the community through my daily work, and I am thankful that He led me to be part of this meaningful ministry. Throughout my Christian journey, I have had the privilege of serving in various roles, including as a Eucharistic Minister, teaching the faith to children, and participating in other ministry opportunities.



I enjoy working in my garden and most recently designed a drought resistant front yard landscape. Taking long walks with my dog Harry brings me much joy. One of my favorite bible verses is Romans 8:38-39 "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels or demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."



Walking, Standing, And Sitting Wisely

Written by Dr. Brooke Pernice, Director of Outreach

Most of my navigational technique fades when I'm walking alone in a crowded convention hall or similar gathering because mental mapping is difficult in the midst of what my Braille teacher always called "**the masses of humanity**." When they're all going a different direction than me, I rarely try to walk against them. I find myself going along with the human wave, at least for a moment. I often listen to voices and conversations within the crowd and try to move toward discussions that interest me. If I get close enough to engage, I usually stop when that group does and stand with them for a while. If I make friends with one or more of my conversation partners, I try to sit with them during the next meal or breakout session.

God places a rather surprising amount of significance on the acts of walking, standing, or sitting with certain people. The Psalmist sings, "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers" (Psa 1:1). Taking a few early steps steered by wicked counselors can happen almost unnoticed, as the culture and those around us compromise with sin, slowly at first, then more rapidly. By God's Spirit, we can resist that human wave rather than being, "Tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes" (Eph 4:14b). Standing in the path of sinners is more deliberate because we choose to stop moving once a group of disobedient people is reached. The intent to sin is already there, and it will be much harder to avoid following the steps of sinners once we are on their path (Prov 1:15-16).

The walking and the standing could be unintentional at first, but we cannot accidentally sit, joining the conversations of those who openly dismiss the words and works of God. It is popular today to say that we are part of sinful groups and cultures and cannot be a light. We can and should try to live the Gospel before all, but large groups are more likely to influence us (1 Cor 15:33).

If I don't want to be swept along by a crowd, I find a pillar or wall and stay as close to it as I can while people pass. I then build a mental map with that landmark at the center and find my next destination. As Christians, we avoid walking, standing, or sitting in sinful places by loving and following God's Law (Psa 1:2), which shows us Christ's character, and matures us into His image (Mat 5:3-10). "God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself," C S Lewis says, "because it is not there. There is no such thing." ***Only with the reference point of God's Word can we truly be called blessed or joyful.***



Walking, standing, and sitting were discussed within the context of this pericope at a Simply The Story workshop on March 9, 2025 at Crosswoods Baptist Church in Nicholasville, KY.
C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, (London, ENG, Harper Collins, 1952), 142.

Outreach in North Carolina

Today we celebrate our Mission Outreach Center in Cary, North Carolina (#644) at Resurrection Lutheran Church. The group has between 30-40 attendees with 5 being Braille Readers and 15 that utilize specialized Large Print.

The group's Prayer request is that God would bless the many participants with serious health issues but added this Praise: *"God always seems to miraculously provide the needed volunteers each month, sometimes at the very last minute."*



Outreach in Wisconsin



The Visually Impaired Mission Outreach Center, VIMO, (#662) meets every fourth Saturday of each month other than June, July, and August at Pilgrim Lutheran Church in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Approximately 15 visually impaired members attend each month for a time of prayer and devotion, a wonderful meal together, and an additional meal to take home at the end of the evening.

Transportation to and from the center is offered by a core group of approximately 10 volunteers. VIMO requests prayer for more individuals to join the leadership team, and an increased number of volunteers. None of the participants are members of Pilgrim Lutheran, coming from a variety of denominational traditions, and frequently express their gratitude for the kindness shown by this church community. One participant with low vision recently shared VIMO'S impact on her life:

*"This ministry is a great blessing to our lives. When someone's vision is lost, numerous issues affect our daily living, including social isolation, transportation, meal preparation, loss of independence, loss of reading ability, and so forth. The amazing group of Pilgrim volunteers treat us with lovingkindness and minister to our bodies, mind, and spirit. They make homemade meals and ensure there are leftovers to bring home. Volunteers pick us up and bring us home. Importantly, the pastor or one of his colleagues share Bible teachings and asks each of us if we have prayer requests (there are always many), and each request is handled gracefully. **When prayers go up, blessings come down. What you are doing, and your minister speaking to us, is all so very, very precious. God bless you. Thank you for what you do.**"*

Alamo, Texas

Ministry Production Center #327 at Zion Lutheran Church in Alamo, Texas, hosted an educational event for the Lutheran Pastors, current and retired, of the Rio Grande Valley on March 3. MPC leader, Candace Marquis, writes, *"We took this opportunity to walk them through our Bible making process, and requested they reach out and ask for volunteers and education on LBW in their communities. Thrivent helped us with the event, we fed them breakfast and lunch. We handed out Thrivent T-shirts and LBW pens, pencils, bookmarks, information pamphlets. Thanks to y'all at headquarters for your help with trinkets and literature. It was a great event!"*

Ministry Production



Scarsdale, New York

On March 1, Rev. Dr. Robert Hartwell visited Trinity Lutheran Church on a snowy Sunday morning. Despite the winter weather, members gathered faithfully as President Hartwell shared about the mission and impact of Lutheran Braille Workers. It was a meaningful time of worship, fellowship, and encouragement, as the congregation learned more about how God's Word is being shared in Braille and Large Print with individuals who are blind or visually impaired around the world.



55 Years in Texas City, Texas

This year, Ministry Production Center 52 at Peace Lutheran Church in Texas City, Texas, celebrates an incredible milestone: 55 years of faithful service with Lutheran Braille Workers.

Led by Norma Doss, this "small but mighty" group has been serving faithfully for more than five decades, producing Braille materials that share the hope of Christ with individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Through changing seasons, evolving technology, and countless volunteer hours, their commitment has remained steady and strong.

In April 2026, Peace Lutheran Church will host the Gulf Coast Zone LWML Spring Rally, where MPC 52 will be highlighted and celebrated. The rally will not only recognize their 55 years of service but also help educate and inspire others about the impact of Braille ministry. With six active churches in the zone, and more encouraged to join, the opportunity to share the story of LBW's mission is an exciting one.

We thank God for the faithful volunteers of MPC 52 whose dedication over 55 years has placed the Word of God into countless hands. May the Lord continue to bless their work and the many lives touched through their service.

Fun Facts

Did You Know?

Most people may think Braille is just raised letters on a page, but Braille is much more complex! Braille is, in fact, a tactile reading and writing system that is used by people who are Blind or Visually Impaired. *In the coming editions of Illuminations, we will be sharing some fun facts about Braille.*

Braille is not a language since it doesn't have a spoken form. It's a tactile code that is used for reading and writing. Braille can be produced in different languages, such as Chinese, Spanish, Arabic and Hebrew. All English-speaking countries around the world use Unified English Braille. There are also codes for Braille music, computer braille and math braille (Nemeth or UEB math Braille).

Braille started as a military code called "night writing."

Developed in 1819 by Charles Barbier and the French army, this system allowed soldiers to communicate at night without speaking or using candles. Fifteen-year-old French schoolboy Louis Braille (who had lost his vision due to a childhood accident) learned about the code and developed a more usable, streamlined version of the Braille alphabet used today.




CANE TRAINING

Rachel Potts was honored to spend today with MOST Ministries as they gathered and trained 20 Team Leaders preparing for mission trips in 2026 and beyond. She had the privilege of leading a session on how to instruct someone who is blind in the use of a white cane—practical, respectful skills that can make a real difference in the mission field.

After the presentation, several leaders shared that they felt encouraged and confident, knowing that if someone who is blind comes to them, they can offer meaningful, dignified assistance. *Please keep these leaders—and the many people they will serve—in your prayers as they prepare to go where they are needed most.*



Devtech Tours Headquarters in Yucaipa, California

Lutheran Braille Workers was pleased to welcome Paul William Busi, Director of Devtech Publishers and Printers Private Limited, to headquarters in February during his visit to the United States. Based in India, Devtech is a growing printing and publishing company serving both commercial and charitable clients with a commitment to quality, affordability, and honoring God in their work.

With a significant need for accessible resources in India, Paul's visit provided an opportunity to learn more about LBW's production processes and explore shared efforts to expand access to Christian materials for those who are blind or visually impaired worldwide.



Songs of Faith, Stories of Light: An Exciting New Chapter for LBW

Lutheran Braille Workers has been awarded a five-year grant from the Lilly Endowment to launch Songs of Faith, Stories of Light, a national storytelling initiative that will share the real-life faith journeys of people who are blind or visually impaired.

Out of more than 1,300 applicants, only 48 organizations were selected, and LBW was one of just two Lutheran ministries chosen. This recognition reflects both the strength of our mission and the trust placed in us to carry it forward in new and creative ways.

Through this initiative, individuals who are blind or visually impaired will be invited to share their faith stories. These testimonies will be paired with Christian singer-songwriters who will transform them into original music. Over five years, the project will produce 45 original songs, 60 podcast episodes, short storytelling videos, discipleship resources, and a fully accessible website to serve as a central hub for these materials.

We are also exploring the use of MegaVoice audio devices to distribute Scripture, songs, and other Christian resources in an easy-to-use format, especially meaningful for blind children and families.

Importantly, this grant allows LBW to expand awareness of our mission on a national scale while continuing our core work of producing and distributing Braille and Large Print materials free of charge. The Lilly initiative strengthens and shines a light on what LBW has faithfully done for more than 80 years ... sharing the Word of God with those who request it.

Please keep this exciting new chapter in your prayers as we move forward, trusting the Lord to use these stories and songs to point many to Christ.

We can't wait to connect with you and hear your story!

Lilly Request for Stories

Greetings in Christ!

Are you someone who has received a Bible or book from Lutheran Braille Workers in the past? If so, we need your help.

As someone who has received Braille or Large Print materials from LBW, we are excited to invite you to be part of a new initiative called Songs of Faith, Stories of Light. This project will share the real-life faith experiences of people who are blind or visually impaired through songs and podcasts.

We want to hear your story!

Right now, we are in a season of listening.

We would love to hear your story and talk with you about your life, your experiences, and your walk of faith. The stories we gather may be used in a variety of ways:

- Shared in the LBW Newsletters
- Featured in the Project's Monthly Podcasts
- As the Inspiration for One of the Project's Songs

If you are interested in talking with us about your faith and experiences, just send "I'd like to share my story" in an email to Rachel Potts at rachel@lbwloveworks.org.

You can also reach out with questions. Rachel will follow up with you by email or phone to talk through next steps.



Thrivent Choice Dollars and Action Teams

Lutheran Braille Workers would like to thank Thrivent Financial for the Choice Dollars which we receive monthly. In 2025 we received \$22,653.00 from this program which will help us to continue producing Braille and Large Print, to be given free of charge to anyone who is in need.

Thrivent Action Cards for 2025 raised \$14,418.72 which helps Ministry Centers with their supplies. There are also centers participating in fundraisers with their funds, which raises so much more.

The Thrivent Choice program encourages benefit members to recommend where Thrivent Financial distributes an amount of its charitable grant funds. Members make this recommendation by directing Choice Dollars to enrolled nonprofit organizations.

If you are a Thrivent member and have not taken advantage of these programs, please reach out to me with any questions. Deanna Cobb at (909) 795-8977 or deanna@lbwloveworks.org.

If you have allocated your Choice Dollars to LBW and would like your funds to go to your Ministry Center, please call or email Deanna Cobb at (909) 795-8977 or deanna@lbwloveworks.org.

Please remember you only have until March 31 before your Choice Dollars expire for the previous year.

Thank you for all that you do!

Deanna Cobb
Volunteer Relations Coordinator & Accounting Technician





Notes & Jokes

from Dennis...

One of the joys of ministry at Lutheran Braille Workers is hearing from the people whose lives are touched by God's Word in accessible formats. Among our most faithful correspondents is Dennis from Sierra Madre, California.

Dear LBW,

Good morning and how are you doing? I am doing just wonderful! Here are some jokes for you. I do hope that the jokes make you laugh. Have a Happy Easter!

Sincerely Yours,
Dennis

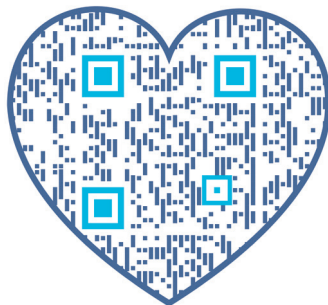
p.s. Thank you for the books. p.p.s. I have Jesus in my heart as my Lord and Savior.

“ Why can't your nose be twelve inches long? Because then it would be a foot.

“ How do skunks know if they're right for each other? They trust their in-stinks.

“ What kind of vegetable is lazy and irresponsible? A dead-beet.

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