

# LUTHERAN INTERSYNODICAL DEAF MINISTRIES COMMITTEE



5859 Elmer Drive  
Toledo, Ohio 43615  
(419) 536-3370

OCTOBER 31, 2014

Dear Pastors and Congregations of Northwest Ohio and Southeast Michigan:



Lutheran deaf ministry was first started in Chicago in 1896. Circuit riding pastors ministered to the deaf in Northwest Ohio as early as 1906 with Pastor Krauss from Elkhart, Indiana coming to this area and leading Bible Studies and worship in sign language. Later, other pastors from Detroit and Cleveland came to Toledo as circuit riders and served the deaf in this area. In 1968, Good Shepherd of the Deaf Lutheran Church was established and Pastor Larry Harris became the first full-time pastor, extending the ministry into Southeast Michigan. The current sanctuary was purchased in 1974 and serves about 100 members through all of Northwest Ohio.

Deafness has a low incidence occurrence, but it results in significant communication difficulties. There are interpreted services in different church groups. Usually deaf people are there to observe and receive and cannot participate in committees, responsible positions in the church, voters meetings, choir or be Sunday School teachers. Attending a church for the deaf allows the deaf to lead and participate in voters meetings, committees, choir, teach Bible Study and be involved in the ministry of the church. Also there are currently several thousand deaf people in Northwest Ohio and Southeast Michigan who do not know Jesus as their Lord and Savior.



For the last 40 plus years, the Deaf Ministry has been supported by the Ohio District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, the Lutheran Intersynodical Deaf Ministry Committee (including LCMS and ELCA Congregations), members of Good Shepherd of the Deaf Lutheran Church, Sunday Schools, VBS students and individuals.

The Ohio District was the largest supporter providing 48% of Good Shepherd's funds. Due to financial restraints and unforeseen circumstances, the Ohio District has to withdraw their support of Deaf Ministries throughout the Ohio District and will conclude its support to Deaf Ministries on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Due to a bequest, Good Shepherd of the Deaf and the other deaf congregations in Cleveland and Columbus will be able to financially continue the rest of 2014.

To the Ohio District of the LCMS, we thank and praise God for the support you have given to further and support the deaf ministry in Ohio. Thank you! We ask God's blessings, joy, strength, peace, wisdom and power of the Holy Spirit's on ministries and the spreading of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all in the Ohio District and beyond. Jesus bless you!



**(A note from President Terry Cripe)**

"Unlike many so-called "ethnic" ministries, the second or third generation of deaf people do not stop speaking their native languages to learn English. No matter what their age, sign language remains their chief means of communication and so it remains the Church's chief means for communicating the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ to them. While we are no longer able to support these ministries from the entire District, I encourage the congregations around Toledo, Cleveland, and Columbus to keep these outreach ministries viable so that the Holy Spirit can open their hearts as well."



**(A note from Bishop Marcus Lohrmann)**

"Pastor Shirrel Petzoldt, who provides leadership for the Lutheran Deaf Ministry, is a longtime friend and trusted colleague who also is an invaluable resource when one is seeking to provide ministry with those who are deaf. He was an important resource for me during my days as a parish pastor. I do not hesitate to provide an endorsement for this ministry which has enjoyed the support of the Northwestern Ohio Synod for many years."

This letter comes to you from the Lutheran Intersynodical Deaf Ministry Committee, which consists of representatives of the Northwest Ohio Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the Ohio District of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. The purpose of the committee is to support and encourage ministry for and by persons who are deaf, especially the congregation of Good Shepherd of the Deaf Lutheran Church in Toledo.



Pastors and Lutheran Congregations, we encourage you to consider support of this unique and specialized ministry in Northwest Ohio and Southeast Michigan. If you would consider support of this ministry, here are some suggestions to encourage your congregation for this support. Consider: VBS events; special offerings; Lent, Advent opportunities; Thrivent Choice Dollars; Kroger Community Rewards (Toledo area); line item in the budget.....

Thank you for considering this request. Jesus bless you, your congregation and the Ministry to the people the Lord has given you.

**Please make support checks payable to Lutheran Intersynodical Deaf Ministry and mail them to:**

Mr. Howard Snyder, Treasurer  
Lutheran Intersynodical Deaf Ministries  
5859 Elmer Drive  
Toledo, Ohio 43615

L.I.D.M. is a part of the ministry of Good Shepherd of the Deaf Lutheran Church. Foundations or Fund gifts can be made to Good Shepherd under their 501c3 status. Please indicate "LIDM" in the message area or the check or fund form.

Thank you very much!

Sincerely,

**The Lutheran Intersynodical Deaf Ministry Committee**

**The E.L.C.A. Representatives are:**

Pastor James Van Brussel  
Member of Grace Lutheran, Toledo

Pastor Ray Gottschling  
Retired Assistant to the Bishop, NWOS, Defiance

Pastor Chuck Campbell  
Church of the Master Lutheran Church, Perrysburg

**The L.C.M.S. Representatives are:**

Pastor Dale Kern  
Retired, Archbold

Pastor Jan Kucera  
Redeemer Lutheran Church, Tiffin

Pastor Steve Lutz  
Trinity Lutheran Church, Elmore