



Lutheran Braille Workers

Helping People Touch the Promises of Jesus

ILLUMINATIONS

Winter 2012

PO Box 5000 Yucaipa, CA 92399 • 800-925-6092 • www.LBWinc.org

Exchanging Gifts

What do *you* hope for when exchanging gifts at Christmas time?

Children hope for special gift(s) from Santa... a Bicycle, a Barbie Doll, a Lego Set. To children, Christmas gifts are all about *receiving*. But unknowingly, these excited, wide-eyed, little boys and girls are *giving* gifts of joy – memories that parents and grandparents will cherish for years to come.

Most adults feel differently about gift giving. As an adult, you probably get more excited about *giving* that “special” gift to a loved one than *receiving* one. The same goes for the volunteers and donors of Lutheran Braille Workers. This must be true, because, after all, they are *giving* the most “special” gift of all... the message of Hope, through faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Yet, if you talk to our volunteers you will hear them say things like “this work is so rewarding,” and “it’s the highlight of my week.”

Recently, Carol R. came to the Home Office to volunteer for the first time. LBW had made a request for help on a special project. Carol, who can not drive due to her having macular degeneration, rode over with some friends from Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, here in Yucaipa. She had been wanting to find out more about the ministry and this seemed like the perfect opportunity.



The joys of giving

After the project was finished, Carol had a chance to see some of the Braille and Large Print Christian material that is being produced. Compared to her own large print Bible at home, she was amazed at the difference this Large Print made in her ability to read. She left that day with the 10-Volume New Testament. Carol was as excited as a child on Christmas Morning.

Let me ask again. What do you hope for when exchanging gifts at Christmas time? May I suggest giving the greatest Gift of all? You can help to put the Word of God into the hands of people with visual impairment, like Carol, here and around the world, in the format they need. The volunteers, prayer partners and donors of Lutheran Braille Workers are truly a gift from God. Christmas Blessings to all! – Roy Fisher

WHAT'S INSIDE

The Gift	2
The Gift of Fellowship	3
Dedicated to His Word	4
Christian Greetings!	5
UBS Change	5
Empowering Ministries	6
A Special Note	6

The Gift

“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10-11).

It’s easy to understand why so many people throughout the world live in fear. Just as the Bible predicted, there are wars and rumors of war. There is a high degree of economic uncertainty, and our future is unknowable.

What word of comfort would help us cope with a world such as this? What message offers us hope? Where can we turn when faced with uncertainty and we are filled with fear?

To this world filled with uncertainty and fear, God reveals Himself. The Angel’s first words are: *“Do not be afraid.”* Those are comforting words, a precious gift from God that we can trust. The Angels “revealed” God’s plan that He would become flesh and become our Savior. And that revelation comes to us through the living testament called the Bible.

The Angels announced that God was about to deliver “The Gift.” The centerpiece of the Bible message is “The Gift” revealed in Jesus. And *our message* of hope and comfort to this chaotic world is pointing to that same Gift, Jesus.

As you read this article, please keep people with vision impairment in your prayers. People all over the world – people who are blind – ask the same hard questions, experience the same fears, are in need of the same level of comfort as you and I. But very few ministries serve the spiritual needs of people who are blind. God’s Christmas Gift is Jesus. *Our gift* is the giving of His Word to people with vision impairment.

Irma from Monterrey, Mexico writes: *“As you know, after the doctors told me that I was not able to see anymore, and that there was no solution to my problem; I didn’t have a way to feed myself from the Word of God. Sometimes people were able to read the Bible to me, but it was different. I still longed for those hours with my Lord alone in meditation. A while after that, I was able to attend some Braille classes and began to learn as well. I’m still learning to read, but my delight and my petition to the Lord has been fulfilled: I have a Bible I can read!”*

Your gifts are needed now more than ever! Most countries of the world are still in recession, and many others are in social turmoil; and people who are vision impaired end up suffering the most. Your gift becomes The Gift of Jesus as His message of hope and comfort is given to people who are blind in Braille, Large Print, or in Audio. The same message first heard from the Angels continues throughout the world through you, “Fear not, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.”

Please prayerfully consider Lutheran Braille Workers in your Estate Planning.

LUTHERAN BRAILLE WORKERS

ELECTRONIC GIVING AUTHORIZATION FORM

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Name _____ Address _____		Date of first contribution: _____/_____/_____	Frequency of contribution (check one): <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly on the 1 st <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly on the 15 th <input type="checkbox"/> One Time	Amount per donation: \$ _____ Work Center Number (optional)
CHECKING / SAVINGS Complete only if using checking or savings account.		CREDIT / DEBIT CARD Complete only if using your credit or debit card.		
Please debit my donation from my (check one): <input type="checkbox"/> Checking Account (attach voided check) <input type="checkbox"/> Savings account		Please charge my (check one): <input type="checkbox"/> Visa <input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard <input type="checkbox"/> Discover <input type="checkbox"/> American Express		
Routing #: _____	Account #: _____	Credit Card Number: _____		Expiration Date: _____
I authorize Lutheran Braille Workers, Inc. and Vanco Services, LLC to process debit entries to my account. I understand that this authority will remain in effect until I provide reasonable notification to terminate the authorization.		Name on Card: _____		
Signature on bank account: _____ Date: _____		Billing Address: _____		
		I authorize Lutheran Braille Workers, Inc. and Vanco Services, LLC to charge my card for the above dollar amount. Signature (as seen on the card): _____ Date: _____		

The Gift of Fellowship, Comfort and Hope

New Outreach Center in Charleston SC

Opened August 2012

[Excerpts; full article: <http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20121007/PC12/121009549>]

In July of this year, Lutheran Blind Mission merged with Lutheran Braille Workers to become one exciting ministry that serves people with vision impairment. This merger created the largest ministry of its kind in the world. One of the many exciting ministries we now share serves more than 1,500 people in various Outreach Centers.

The following article reports on the new Outreach Center located in Charleston, South Carolina.

Guests to this new ministry greet each other warmly and find seats around a large U-shaped table at Calvary Lutheran Church in West Ashley. Some make their way using long canes, two use guide dogs, two are in wheelchairs and all are blind.

One young man lost his sight due to severe head trauma in a car wreck. A middle-age woman had a stroke in her sleep and woke up blind. Another lost her sight to a brain tumor. Others suffer the slow surrender of sight to macular degeneration. Some, like Laurel Jean, the blind leader, in Charleston, South Carolina have never known what it is like to see.

Pastor Ed Grant welcomes the crowd of about a dozen blind folks and a few friends and family. They go around and introduce themselves so that everyone knows who's there. After all, they cannot see a friend who might be sitting right across the way.

"Good to see you!" Audrey jokes. She and Tweetie sit beside each other, shoulder to shoulder, chatting like the old friends they are, although they hardly ever can get together. Their guide dogs, Jessie and Yvonne, lie beneath the table, also side by side.

Sequestered from a sighted world for a few precious hours once a month, this gathering is their time together to joke, to bond, to eat, to vent and to not worry if they spill food or trip or bump into each other.

Here, everyone is living the same realities of being blind: A majority of blind people live alone; 70 percent are unemployed. "Isolation is the major thing," Rosemary says, garnering enthusiastic nods.

These should be better days for the blind. They live at a

time when screen-reading software on computers, tablets and smart phones will read text aloud that appears visually. "Refreshable Braille" displays can convert visual text to Braille. But as any "techie" knows, it all costs money. Sometimes a whole lot of it (\$3,500 to \$15,000 for a Braille display)! The Social Security disability checks that many blind residents live on, don't go far. And many, don't read Braille proficiently. Besides, no amount of technology or money can make it possible for a blind person to drive; this often means the lonely isolation of home.

That's why volunteers at Calvary Lutheran Church drive people to monthly gatherings. Called The Friends of Bartimaeus, the church provides free dinner for those who come as well as free groceries and free, confidential mail reading (which, commercially, can cost \$10 an hour). Yet, perhaps the most important thing people receive is priceless, the gift of friendship. "We all live in this isolated little world. Here we are able to be together

(Continued on page 4 "New Outreach Center")



Many of the people enjoying a meal at the Charleston, SC Outreach Center

New Outreach Center (Continued from Page 3)

and not worry about spillage and other things,” says Rosemary. “We need to come together and support each other.”

They learn mundane things sighted folks take for granted: How do you squirt the toothpaste onto a toothbrush without making a mess? How do you pick out clothes? Open a can? Cook? Fill a glass without spilling? “We all have the same problems and don’t judge each other for those problems,” Tweety says. “It’s a chance to be with people who are not judgmental. And it’s a chance to vent.” About 4% of the population is blind. Many don’t go to church or other gatherings. Some feel unwanted or unwelcome. Many have grown tired of being handed a program, bulletin or hymnal that they cannot read. Some are just plain angry at God.

Outreach Centers are a Gift

What word of comfort would help people with vision impairment cope with sight loss? What message of hope would you offer? Where can people turn when faced with uncertainty or filled with fear?

Outreach Centers are centers of Fellowship, Hope and Comfort for more than 1,500 people throughout the US and Canada. Your prayers and generous support are needed that this ministry might continue and grow. According to the World Health Organization, there are an estimated 1.2 million people in the U.S. who are “legally blind” and millions more with low vision, people who need adaptive technologies to do things sighted people take for granted.

People who are blind the world over ask the same hard questions, experience the same fears, are in need of the same level of comfort as you and I. But very few ministries serve the spiritual needs of people who are blind. God’s Christmas Gift is Jesus. Through your generosity to the Outreach Center ministry, your gift can be the gift of fellowship, comfort and hope.

For more information about Outreach Centers, contact the



Taylor singing with me (Laurel Jean) at the piano, Kevan-Ann on Percussion, and Pastor Ed playing the guitar

home office. If you would like to support this ministry, please keep us in your prayers and prayerfully consider a gift of any amount. Together we are helping people touch the Promises of Jesus. - Rev. Dave Andrus



Margarete Wiggins, Leader of Work Center #52 in Texas City, TX, receiving her 15 year pin from Peggy Turnipseed

Dedicated to His Word

In the last *Illuminations*, there was a mis-print in one of the pictures that was published. The picture that was displayed was a picture of Joan Sanders and not Margarete Wiggins. We would like to apologize for the mix-up and congratulate both Margerete Wiggins in receiving her 15 year pin and Joan Sanders (pictured in the last *Illuminations*) in receiving her 30 year pin. We thank you both for the many years you have dedicated to Lutheran Braille Workers and the Lord’s work.

NEWSLETTER STAFF



Rev. Dr. Phillip M. Pledger - President
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Rev. Dave Andrus - Director of Christian Outreach
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Roy Fisher - Large Print Administrator
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Christian Greetings!

"I am pleased to inform you that yesterday and today we have distributed Braille Scriptures to high school and college students as well as to the teachers. In each packet we arranged about three books. The response was very encouraging and we could distribute quite smoothly. We thank God that the school authority gave us permission to distribute to their students. We also served a piece of nice cake to the students, which made the distribution more refreshing. About 110 students and teachers in all have received the Braille scriptures. Now let us pray that the recipients of the Braille books will find time to read, understand and appropriate its message into their lives. I plan to distribute the remaining Braille books in different educational institutions shortly."

Thanks,
Sura - "Love and Serve India" (LASI)

We are Changing our Look for The United Bible Society **New covers and spirals and format...oh my!**

Yes we are changing the look of the Spanish Bible per request from The United Bible Society (UBS) of Germany. We have a partnership with UBS, Compass Braille of England and The Bible Society of Costa Rica. Together, we are working on providing the Spanish Braille Bible for individuals who are Blind in Costa Rica. Compass Braille is translating the Bible, "*La Santa Biblia, Dios Habla Hoy*," into a 36 cell, 28 line format, and then sending it to Costa Rica for proofreading. When completed, the files are sent to LBW for production.

Their first order for 75 books of the Gospels and Genesis must include heavy poly covers and coil spirals. Production of San Mateo (Gospel of Matthew) consisting of 100 Brailled sheets has begun.

This is an exciting new project for all of us! - *Rose Jaimes*

Dear LBW Ministries,

"Thank you so much for the wonderful Bible series of the New Testament for the vision impaired. Participants at our center often have difficulty seeing. They were quite pleased to hear of the receipt of your kindness.

May God and the Lord Jesus continue to bless your ministry."

*Chaplain David
Sutter Medical Center
Sacramento, CA*

PROMISE MAKERS

Honored people who have contributed time, talent and treasure to enhance and advance the ministry of Lutheran Braille Workers.

Norman & Sally Loeber	Roberta Werth
LeRoy & Marjorie Delafosse	Mel Stueve
Richard & Nancy Challis	Ida Mall
Rev. Sidney Frazen	Paul Eide
Mary Helen Kelly	Jean Peterson
Ane Ertzner	

Empowering Ministries

For a number of years, Lutheran Blind Mission and Lutheran Braille Workers have been praying about merging. Bringing together two ministries as large as LBM and LBW has not been easy, but has been very rewarding. Pastor Dave Andrus and I can now say that bringing these two strong and effective ministries together is the best decision either of us has made. And, we thank God!

LBM, with an 85 year history and LBW, with a 70 year history, are now ONE strong and effective ministry. Under the name of Lutheran Braille Workers, this ministry is the sole ministry in the LC-MS that serves the spiritual needs of people who are visually impaired, and the largest ministry of its kind in the world. Currently there are 203 Work Centers that manufacture and distribute more than 300,000 Christian books in Braille and Large Print every year. Along with volunteers that serve in 67 Outreach Centers, about 6,000 volunteers serve God by connecting people with visual impairment, with the Gospel of Jesus. In addition, this ministry has the largest Christian Library for people who are visually impaired in the world.

As Pastor Andrus and I continue to integrate LBM with LBW, some aspects of the combined ministry will change

and grow. Other aspects will remain the same. We will continue to put Christ first! We will always focus on the needs of people with visual impairment! We will always provide God's Word to people with visual impairment that all might know Him!

With your prayers and generosity we will also see great growth. The goal? That all who are visually impaired might know Jesus and connect with His Church. There are at least 161 million people that use adaptive technology to read, mark, learn, and internalize God's Word. LBW is on the cutting edge of Gospel Outreach to this unique mission field. The harvest is truly plentiful!

For those of you who have been receiving LBM's newsletter "In His Hands," you will now be receiving this newsletter, "Illuminations." To effectively integrate two ministries, we have combined the two newsletters into one comprehensive publication. - Rev. Dr. Phil Pledger



In His Hands

Lutheran Blind Mission * P.O. Box 5000 * Yucaipa, CA 92399

A Special Note to LBM Supporters

Every ministry you loved and supported continues and grows. By God's grace, every service provided to people with visual impairment by LBM continues: Periodicals, Lutheran Service Book, Congregational Services, Lutheran Library for the Blind, and Outreach Centers ministries; these ministries continue basically unchanged. Please continue to keep these ministries in your prayers and please continue to support these ministries! Your prayers and support are needed now more than ever.

There have been inquiries about donation record-keeping. Be assured, all donations you made in 2012 to LBM (or to LBW) are properly recorded. At year-end, you will receive a full accounting of contributions to LBM. Because the two ministries merged in July, you will receive two records, the first for donations made between

January 1st and June 30th, the second for donations between July 1st and December 31st.

This combined ministry is now the most exciting and important ministry of its kind in the world. With your prayers, labor and generous financial support, millions of people will be introduced to Jesus. With your help, many people will one day open their eyes, and the first thing they will ever see is Jesus!

May God continue to bless this ministry that people who are visually impaired throughout the world will meet Jesus and see His face.

