

# Lutheran Braille Workers

*Helping People Touch the  
Promises of Jesus*

## Ministry Memo

PO Box 5000 Yucaipa, CA 92399 • 800-925-6092 • [www.LBWinc.org](http://www.LBWinc.org)

MEMO #400

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### Message From The President

#### **Blessed for Such a Time as This**

For about seventy years Lutheran Braille Workers (LBW) has been providing God's Word in Braille and Large Print to thousands of people throughout the world. Although English books are most often requested, LBW also has books in French, German, Modern Greek, Indonesian, Malayalam, and 26 other languages. Each year many thousands of people who are visually impaired are blessed by the receiving of God's Word in the language and technology that allows full access to it.

Over the years LBW has worked hard to meet the changing needs of readers. By offering new products and new formats, LBW has sought to provide new resources as needed and requested. In recent years, it has come to our attention that fewer people are requesting Braille books than ever before. In times past, people who are blind had few information options, but because of new technologies, readers now have several options from which to choose. There are now several formats used to access information once available only in Braille. Devices such as the Victor Stream allow a person to store thousands of books on one small device; this is used much like a Kindle or an iPad. A number of ministries have saturated countries throughout the world with the Bible on CDs as well as with various types of audio-Bibles.

These technologies have caused a shift in Braille reading habits. These changes have caused a significant reduction in the number of Braille orders.

After a lot of prayer and discussion, it has been reluctantly decided that a number of LBW's Work Centers will need to close. This is due to lack of sufficient Braille orders. At one time LBW had in excess of 750,000 Braille orders waiting to be filled. Now that number has dropped to less than 55,000. We are working on several solutions to this problem and we hope to stimulate more orders in the near future, but the fact remains, that as of this year, our manufacturing capacity is far higher than current orders.

However, there is some good news in all this. Whereas Braille orders are down, Large Print orders are significantly higher than in years past, and with the merging of Lutheran Blind Mission into Lutheran Braille Workers, a huge growth area for us has become apparent, Outreach Center ministry.

Some Braille Work Centers have had to close, and still others might need to close as we continue to address the changing Braille demands. Some Work Centers might prayerfully consider "re-tooling" as either a Large Print Center or as an Outreach Center. The Large Print work would be similar to what you already do as a Braille Work Center.

## **From the President (Continues)**

Just as with the Braille Work Center, the ministry model includes asking for financial support to cover the cost of this work.

The Outreach Center ministry is completely different, and for many congregations, a very good ministry “fit.” An Outreach Center establishes a ministry group for people with visual impairment. The congregation provides a room, transportation, hosts a monthly meal, fellowship time, and devotions, all served by volunteers. As of today, there are 67 Outreach Centers located throughout 38 States and one Canadian Province. Combined, about 1,700 people with vision impairment are served. As with all LBW ministries, we encourage ongoing financial support in order to make it possible to provide equal access to the Gospel of Jesus to every person in the world, even those with special needs.

Please continue to pray for this ministry. Lutheran Braille Workers is the largest ministry of its kind in the world, and the mission field is huge. There are more than 258 million people that have severe vision loss. About forty-million of those people are completely blind. Your prayers and participation offers people hope in Jesus.

If you would like to discuss modifying your Work Center as outlined above, please contact the Home Office. For particular information on how a Large Print Work Center would work, contact Roy at the Yucaipa office. For detailed information on the Outreach Center ministry, please contact the Home Office.

Change is always difficult, especially when we didn’t choose the change. But change is also a wonderful opportunity to refocus and re-energize.

Please keep Lutheran Braille Workers in your prayers! May God continue to bless each of you, your families and your congregation! -- *Rev Dr Phil Pledger*



## **FYI By Roy**

### **For Your Information - Large Print in Need of a Few Good Proofreaders.**

As we expand the Large Print Department with new Work Centers, we find that we could use a couple of volunteer proofreaders. What this entails is to read a proof copy of a Large Print Book of the Bible, against a regular Bible (NIV © 1984), looking for even the slightest deviation. This means a missing or extra space, an incorrect punctuation mark, a word or letter added or missing, paragraph breaks, etc. If you think that you would enjoy doing this type of work and are both reliable and detail oriented, please contact me, Roy, in the Large Print Department. I will be glad to answer your questions and look forward to talking to you.

**Luther’s Small Catechism in Large Print** - A newly formatted, 3-Volume set of Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation is now available in Large Print. It will be assigned to a Work Center for production very soon.

Just months ago, the newly formatted 6-Volume set of the Lutheran Service Book (LSB), was completed. It is currently being produced by WC #175 in Birmingham, AL, located at the Lutheran Church of Vestavia Hills.

If you know of someone who could benefit from either of these works, please pass the word and we will be happy to accommodate. -- *Roy Fisher*

# Joanna's Production Corner

## Just a few reminders:

- LBW no longer produces English Grade 1 ½ Braille, please pull any grade 1 ½ plates from your work centers and recycle them. Please do not ship them to Yucaipa.
- We are currently discontinuing several books and I have called for those plates. If you need boxes to ship them in let me know. Make sure to pack securely to help minimize the damage to the plates.
- International shipments must be wrapped in plastic bags. If it ships in a box it will need a customs form.
- Be sure to use reinforcement cardboard at the ends of your boxes to prevent damage in shipping. We've received books that we are not able to use due to damage.
- If your center is behind on production, please let me know so I can place a hold on your labels. All Orders should go out by the end of the month indicated on the labels that you receive.
- When you receive returned boxes of books, it's better if you call or email me rather than just returning the labels. Many times I will instruct you to resend the books and if you have shipped me the labels you may not have an address to reship the books.

As always each of you do an awesome job and I thank you so much for what you do. If you have any questions it is my pleasure to hear from you. -- *Joanna Ervin*

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## Rose's Braille Notes

It's with great sadness to tell you that since October 2012, 30 Braille Centers have been closed due to the lack of orders/work. Unfortunately, orders for Braille books continue to decline so there may be more closures in the future. Lutheran Braille Workers is still a thriving ministry, its just that the focus has changed.

There is good news. Large quantities of orders for Large Print and Audio continue to come into the Home Office. In fact Large Print will be opening five new centers by the end of the year. These centers were once Braille Centers and are converting to Large Print.

I would like to thank all LBW Volunteers for their years of dedication and for serving others by producing the word of God for those who otherwise would not have been able to purchase a Bible or Christ-centered Braille book.

A special blessing goes to the volunteers of those Braille Centers that are now closed. I will miss talking with all of you leaders, some I've known for over 17 years. I will keep you in my prayers and ask that you continue to keep the ministry close to your heart.-- *Rose Jaimes*

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## There's a New Kid on the Block

### Erin Wronka

*"Hello, I would like to introduce myself, my name is Erin Wronka. I have been married to my wonderful husband David for 17 years. We are blessed to be the parents of three amazing girls. I consider myself very fortunate to have grown up in the church and I am excited to now be a part of an incredible ministry like Lutheran Braille Workers.*

*I look forward to learning more about the ministry and getting to know more of the volunteers and workers that work so hard to touch the lives of others with the love of Jesus." -- Erin Wronka*



## **Insight from Pastor Dave**

Who hasn't uttered the words, "I wish there was something I could do to help"! Now you can. Start shopping! At [www.iGive.com/LBW](http://www.iGive.com/LBW), you can buy the items you've always wanted—like that CD box set, expensive cologne, or the oversized, coffee-table photography book you've had your eyes on, only without the guilt.

It's FREE, no invisible costs or tricky obligations. Shop for everyday items at the over 500+ stores at the Mall at [iGive.com](http://iGive.com), such as Barnes & Noble, Eddie Bauer, Lands' End, QVC, and [Expedia.com](http://Expedia.com). Up to 26% of each purchase is donated to Lutheran Braille Workers. Join now at [www.iGive.com/LBW](http://www.iGive.com/LBW) -- *Pastor Dave Andrus*

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## **From Our Purchasing Agent...**

Before ordering materials for your Center, please take inventory of your paper, covers, spirals, cartons, and tape. We would prefer that you order a 6-month supply to help defray Freight Charges. Our Vendors charge quite a hefty fee for even small deliveries. By ordering for 6 months, we can greatly reduce this cost.

Also, please make sure you're not producing too many books in advance, especially if they are books that have few orders.

The covers and backs ordinarily take up to three weeks to be printed, so please take that into consideration when ordering. Thank you! -- *Kathy Buss Purchasing Agent*

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## **Deanna's D&V Relations**

I recently had a call from a Work Center volunteer telling me about a new way to get free funds for Lutheran Braille Workers. It is called "Goodsearch.com." This is a search engine, which utilizes Yahoo for its searches. Each time you do an internet search through Goodsearch.com, it will credit LBW for one cent. If we can get several people using it, the funds will add up. You must first go to Goodsearch.com and set up an account or register through your facebook account. You can then set up Goodsearch.com as your homepage and select Lutheran Braille Workers as your supporting organization. You can also register to shop, dine, complete surveys and play games, etc. through this same site, while earning funds for LBW. If you have any problems setting this up, please see the Frequently Asked Questions and it will walk you through everything you need to know. Spread the word and raise funds for LBW.

I am sorry to say we will not be able to distribute these funds to your individual Work Centers, as they will not send us a breakdown of each donation raised, however the funds will go directly into our General Fund. -- *Deanna Bowles*

## Did You Know (DYK)?

- a) The very first Braille Center to produce Braille using zinc plates and a Braille Press was located at Zion Lutheran Church in Maywood, CA? Opened in 1950
- b) A Grant of \$50.00 from The Lutheran Women’s Missionary League of First Lutheran Church, Long Beach was for the purchase of LBW’s first “large” order of Baille paper?
- c) The 18 point font used for Large Print Publications is “APHONT” (pronounced A-Font)?

*Please prayerfully consider Lutheran Braille Workers in your Estate Planning.*

## Outreach Center News

On July 27th, a new Outreach Center opened at St. James Lutheran Church in Quincy, IL. The first gathering had 12 people who are blind and 9 volunteers from the congregation. A wonderful start! We have been working with this congregation and community for over a year. The Keokuk Outreach Center had a lot to do in the opening. Praise God.

For an outreach center to start, it needs:

- 1 - A “mission minded” Pastor
- 2 - Volunteers who are willing to be trained for a hands-on service
- 3 - Connection into the blind community

We are working at updating our information at the home office to better serve you. We want to send the material, Print; Large Print; Braille or Audio to the right place and person. You should have been contacted by volunteers from the Eureka, MO center, looking for the following information:

- 1. Blind leader; name and address.
- 2. Sighted volunteer; name and address.
- 3. Pastor and church phone number.
- 4. Email addresses for any of the above people.

Once the completed contact list is received, we would like to help link and support Outreach Centers. If you have not yet been contacted please contact the Home Office who is assisting with this project. Thank you.

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## BREAKING NEWS...

LUTHERAN BRAILLE WORKERS NEEDS YOUR PRAYERS!

We have been notified that a few Braille Centers are experiencing Post Offices that have refused to ship Braille boxes to foreign countries, Free of Charge. The states that have been affected at this time are: AL, NY, MA. There is a possibility that this can affect the entire country. There has been a directive sent to all US Post Offices to ensure all foreign packages being sent “FREE MATTER FOR THE BLIND OR HANDICAPPED”, are being sent to a US Citizen living abroad. If all Post Offices follow this directive, we will no longer be able to send books to those who are in need of the Word of God unless postage is paid for the shipment.

**Please keep this matter in your prayers.**