



Outreach Ideas
English District
Evangelism Team
Newsletter

April 2024

Reaching Out to the Blind and Those Who Are Visually Impaired

“Almost every blind person has heard, ‘Well, if you only had enough faith, God would heal you.’ It’s devastating.” Pastor Dave Andrus shared this insight with *The Lutheran Witness* back in 2007.

Andrus, who is serving today as Assistant Pastor at Abiding Savior Lutheran Church in St. Louis, Missouri, is the founder of the Lutheran Blind Mission Society (which has since merged with Lutheran Braille Workers) and co-founder of the Christian Blind Institute. He points out, “Out of the 9 million visually impaired people in the United States, it is estimated that 95% of that population is unchurched.” Here’s an important group that needs to hear of our Savior’s love.

Andrus observes that, when it comes to reaching out to the blind, “We are dealing with people who are by-and-large angry with God and isolated. We are dealing with people with no Christian background, so it’s some rudimentary teaching. Some are very active Christians, but for most it’s helping them understand there is a caring God whose name is Jesus.” What an opportunity we have to tell them of

their loving Savior! When folks find themselves welcome in church they tend to invite their friends. You can be sure that this is also true for those who are blind.

You can hear Rev. Andrus discuss “Outreach to the Blind and Visually Impaired” on KFUCO’s *Faith’n’Family* show with Andy Bates which aired back in 2016.



Pastor Dave Andrus

We are blessed with remarkable resources to reach out to those in our families and community who are blind with free Braille materials. The number of these resources continues to grow each day. In addition, take a look at the large print resources that we have to aid in our witness and worship. They include materials that have been prepared in a range of different languages and for different age groups.

Those of you who bring large print copies of *Portals of Prayer* to shut-ins on your communion calls know well what a treasure these are to those who receive them. Now take a look at how many more of such resources are available for witness and worship.

Toolbox

Ideas, Suggestions and Handy Bits



Where do you start? Our LCMS has a handy bulletin, as a part of the LCMS Disability Task Force Resources, titled *Ministry to and with People who are Blind*. It provides useful tips and it's a great introduction to this important outreach opportunity.



Lutheran Braille Workers is an incredible gift to God's Church. It exists to bring the Word of God to the 338 million people throughout the world who are Blind or Visually Impaired, completely free of charge, in Braille and Specialized Large Print. You can also read about them on their Facebook page.

Braille

Each Braille Bible is lovingly produced by LBW volunteers. Large print books are provided *free of charge* to readers who are visually impaired throughout the world. LBW produces the English Standard Version Unified English Braille (UEB) Bible and the New International Version Grade 2 Braille Bible in 37 volumes embossed on durable 10x12 quality Braille paper.

The Bible in Braille
37 Volumes
Covering 5 Feet of Shelf Space

18-Point Specialized Large Print Bible
26 Volumes
Covering 2 Feet in Shelf Space

14-Point Specialized Large Print Bible
7 Volumes
Covering 1 Foot in Shelf Space

LUTHERAN BRAILLE WORKERS

Large Print

The English Standard Version Bible (large print) consists of 26 volumes, taking up approximately 2 feet of shelf space. It's printed on 8.5x11 inch durable non-glare vanilla paper with plastic spiral bindings to open flat. It uses an 18 point font known as APFont, which was developed by the American Printing House for the Blind, and incorporates extra wide margins and extra line spacing.

In addition to Braille and large print Bibles, LBW produces devotionals, Bible studies, children's books, and hymns in an assortment of Grade 1 Braille, Grade 2 Braille, and UEB. These Braille books and subscriptions are also provided free of charge to readers who are blind or visually impaired throughout the world. The list of materials that are available is extensive. (Click on each of the lists below and have a look.)

[English Braille Order Form](#)

[English Large Print Order Form](#)

[Additional Languages Braille Order Form](#)

[Additional Languages Large Print Order Form](#)

Read about LBW's over 115 Ministry Production Centers throughout the United States. If you, or your congregation, would like to volunteer you can contact them to work from a center or from home.



LBW produces many works in Braille and Specialized Large Print for Lutheran Hour Ministries. Free monthly and weekly subscriptions are available for *Lutheran Hour* sermons. In addition, check out the list of *Project Connect* children's booklets and topical booklets that are also available in these formats.

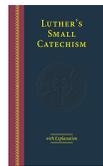
Subscriptions are also available for the *Lutheran Women's Missionary League Quarterly* in Braille and in large print.



Worship and Catechetical Materials

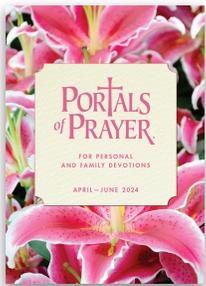
Concordia Publishing House (CPH) has a variety of large print materials available. *Lutheran Service Book: Large Print* for the pew is available in 14-point font. Lutheran Braille Workers has *LSB available in Braille* (7 volumes).

When it comes to catechetical materials, check out CPH's *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation-2017 Edition Large Print*. Lutheran Braille Workers also has *Luther's Small Catechism (UEB)* available in Braille (five volumes).

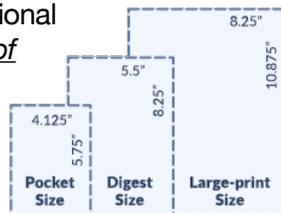


CPH also prints a "larger-print" edition of *The Lutheran Study Bible*. However, as this edition uses 10.65-point font, a number of reviewers have indicated that they wish the print was larger.

Devotional Resources



The popular devotional magazine *Portals of Prayer* is available from CPH in three sizes including large print. It's also available from LBW in Braille.



Lutheran Braille Workers has free monthly subscriptions available in large print for CPH's popular pre-teen devotional booklet *My Devotions* (monthly) and the popular Bible reading guide *Today's Light* (monthly).

Check out Pastor Dave Andrus' podcast, "Room 4216." He notes, "Reading the Bible can be difficult not to mention understanding it. Having a disability, like blindness can be difficult too. At times a person even wonders if God is there. Nevertheless in Room 4216 God shows us His path and we find we are not alone (Isaiah 42:16)."



Are you producing worship bulletins for the visually impaired at your church? Consider using APHONT



APHont™ (pronounced Ay'-font), was developed by American Printing House (APH) specifically for low vision readers. The font files are *free* to download and may be used by all. It features wider, heavier letters, larger punctuation marks and regular, bold, and italic font styles for users accustomed to using large print. They also have a free PDF titled "Large Print Guidelines" which you can download.

This is also especially useful if you prepare a copy of the communion liturgy to share when you bring the Lord's Supper to your shut-ins.



The Wisconsin Evangelical Synod also has resources available for non-WELS people who need them. Volunteers at the Mission for the Visually Impaired Workshop produce Christian materials in audio formats, braille and large print. These materials are distributed free throughout the world. Check out their Audio Resources Catalog.

Pastor Greg Manning, who was born blind, is the pastor of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in New Orleans. You can hear his inspirational presentation that was given at the 2019 LCMS Youth Gathering in Minneapolis, Minnesota. It's titled "Blind but Now I Can See."



A Look to the Future

What about Braille eReaders, such as the the NLS Reader? "A Braille eReader can have 1000s of books on the unit, in the palm of your hand." Time will tell which device-specific volumes become available that will aid in LCMS outreach.

Even more remarkable are Braille displays, such as BrailleSense Polaris, HumanWare, and the Monarch (coming next month). One was used recently at a 2024 ELCA event.

OCR Readers such as the JUNO, the Zoomax Snowpad (coming), Low Vision E-Glasses and digital magnifiers also show remarkable promise.

From the Field

Our Pastors and Congregations



Under the auspices of Lutheran Braille Workers Redeemer Lutheran Church in Lincoln, Nebraska operates Blind Lincoln Outreach Center (BLOC) which meets each month.

Fairlawn Lutheran Church in Fairlawn, Ohio, is home to the busy volunteers of Lutheran Braille Workers Ministry Production Center 191. God bless you!



Our Synod and District Programs

Materials and Workshops Available For You
(Have a workshop scheduled? Let us know.)



Young or old, small or large, rural or urban, your congregation is vital — it has life. There is vitality wherever God's Word is proclaimed in purity and the Lord's Sacraments are rightly administered. This Christ-centered vitality is the focus of re:Vitality, a suite of resources developed by the Office of National Mission to help you equip your congregation for carrying out God's mission in your context.

The re:Vitality suite of resources includes practical and productive workshops that address serving your inactive members (Shepherding Our Strays), consensus-based strategic planning for your congregation (Serving in God's Mission), and how to share the Gospel with your community through effective outreach (Connect to Disciple).



re:Vitality resources are available to LCMS congregations at no cost from the Office of National Mission.

For more information contact
Rev. Derek Mathers
our Mission Executive & Assistant to the Bishop
or Rev. Mark Wood LCMS Managing Director
Church Planting, Renewal and Support

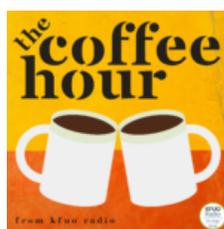
Articles, Books and Research

Current Research and Writings



The American Council of the Blind has an insightful article titled, "We Want to Worship Too."

Lutheran Bible Translators and Lutheran Braille Workers have recently formed a partnership to help lower barriers to accessing Scripture. In the LBT podcast, *Essentially Translatable*, from March 1, 2024, Dr. Rich Rudowski (LBT) and Daniel Jenkins (LBW) discuss the partnership between organizations to help others fully engage with God's Word.



On KFUV's "The Coffee Hour," you can also hear LBW's Daniel Jenkins describe who LBW serves, the variety of unique resources it provides, and stories from people who value these resources.

In the January 2004 article titled, "Fortifying Faith in Those with Vision Impairment," the LWML describes its current grant work to "provide LBW the opportunity to produce and add to their library 50 to 100 Scripture-based topical materials in Braille and specialized large print." They have provided ongoing source of support for LBW.



You can read Pastor Dave Andrus' Master of Sacred Theology Thesis in Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It's titled, Theology of the Church as Ministry to Blind People.



Please Contact

Pastor David Tannahill of our Evangelism Team with your ideas and input.

Share details of what has worked for you.
The collegial sharing of tips and ideas is a blessing for our brothers and sisters in Christ.