



Shepherd's News

Latest information from the Bethesda Auxiliary supporting AbleLight

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Auxiliary Members and Friends,

2 Corinthians 5:17 "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away, behold, the new has come." This Scripture verse says a lot to me during my Lenten journey. In Christ we are made new by His death and resurrection. What a wonderful "grace-filled" God we worship and adore!

I mentioned in my last newsletter article about the corporation Bethesda Lutheran Communities having a new name of AbleLight. Even though it is difficult to acclimate to a new name, please remember the ministry of serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities continues and we are still needed to support this important work of God. The name of the Auxiliary will remain Bethesda Lutheran Communities Auxiliary at least until the Governing Board's in-person meeting in July 2022.

The Auxiliary's Governing Board met by "zoom" on March 19, 2022. We were blessed to meet the new President and CEO of AbleLight, Keith Jones. Please pray for him and the Board of Directors of AbleLight as they begin their work together.

Scholarships for the 2022-2023 school year will be available for upper class college and seminary students who are planning a career in a disability related field. The deadline for application will be May 15, 2022. Please go to the Bethesda Auxiliary webpage to learn more about the application process and additional information. <https://ablelight.org/get-involved/auxiliary/>

President Gail Nicolaus, Vice-President Linda Koeller and Treasurer Joyce Voss were given a unanimous ballot by the Governing Board since there were not any other nominations. These three ladies have served for 2 years and will begin a second term of office at the in-person meeting in July. Thank you very much to these women for their service and dedication to the ministry for people of "all abilities".

Please pray for the people served by AbleLight and their caregivers (direct support professionals) be blessed by God as they work together each day. Prayers are also welcome for Bethesda Executive Team that their decisions will be reflective of God's love and mercy.

Reaching forward in faith and serving Christ in love,

Gail Nicolaus, President

Devotion by Rev. Dr. Martin Koeller

"Are You Waiting for a Personal Invitation?"

"Herod and his soldiers treated Jesus with contempt and made fun of Him."
(Luke 23:11)

Herod, Tetrarch of Galilee, politician. We probably never would have heard of him, but one day Jesus gave him a place in history by encountering him face to face. Unfortunately, the result was not good. Herod sent Jesus away! Was it because Jesus did not give him a personal invitation to follow

Him, like He did to the disciples: “Follow me”? If Jesus would have said, “Follow me, Herod,” do you suppose the outcome would have been different? No, not at all. You see, it wasn’t Jesus who rejected Herod, but Herod who rejected Jesus.

Whoever Jesus encounters receives the invitation to follow Him, to believe, and to be saved. Peter and James, John and Andrew, Mary Magdalene, Zacchaeus, Herod, you and me. God’s love reaches out to all, for He wants all to come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved. But something held Herod back! Is something holding you back?

To a rich young man who encountered Jesus one day, he felt his possessions were more valuable than following Jesus. Have you ever made that mistake?

To Pontius Pilate, his fear of the crowds prevented him from treating Jesus the way he should have. Do you have the fear of following Jesus because of others around you?

To the Scribes and Pharisees, Jesus spoke of a salvation through faith, they had a different plan of salvation, they rejected Him. Do you reject Him because you think you have a different way to get to heaven?

At the time of Herod, and today, so many people still dream up so many excuses as to why they feel they don’t want to follow Jesus. Why? Because it is the same devil, the same temptations, that plague us all. Sin makes us blind to the truth and to the one Who came to save us.

But listen! Jesus does extend a personal invitation to us all! The invitation is genuine and open to all. It comes through His Holy Word and by His Holy Spirit. This also includes all those with special needs whom we want to reach out to through AbleLight and our Bethesda Auxiliary. They are loved by the Lord, and we are helping them to hear about this wonderful love of our Savior.

You probably have heard it many times. In its simplest form we read it in John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” Did you hear it? Do you believe it? Jesus, Who died for you on the cross at Calvary, Who rose again on Easter morning, and Who is coming again, invites you to believe and follow Him unto eternal life.

***God loved the world (including you) so that He gave
His only Son the lost to save
That all who would in Him believe
Should everlasting life receive.***

***God would not have the sinner die,
His Son with saving grace is nigh,
His Spirit in the Word doth teach
How man the blessed goal may reach.***

(TLH #245, v.1,3)

Cross and Bell Award

Many Bethesda Auxiliary members are familiar with the Cross and Bell Award. However, we have some newer members—even on the Executive Board, who may not have heard much about it. Typically, names of nominees would be submitted to the Executive Board in March. The chosen recipients would then be presented

with their award often at a Unit’s “Celebration Meeting”. When Covid arrived and upset the gathering of Unit members, other ideas were followed, but there have been annual recipients of this award since the early 1990’s.

Qualifications for this award given to volunteers in the Bethesda Lutheran Communities Auxiliary are:

1. Given of self to generate exceptional resources for Bethesda Auxiliary.
2. Assisted in expanding the role of volunteer.
3. Provided a minimum of four years of service.
4. Demonstrated dependability and dedication.
5. Demonstrated good interpersonal relationships.
6. Been creative and innovative in promoting the course of Bethesda Auxiliary.
7. Shared the ministry of Bethesda Auxiliary by words, deeds, and actions.

This year, as per the March Governing Board meeting, it was decided that the recipient(s) would not need to be a Unit member, since there are Units that have been unable to meet as in the past. There have been other ways people have been volunteering actively. We thank the Lord for this Cross and Bell Award which honors people who have given freely of their gifts and time for spreading the Word to our people with I/DD!

2021 COLORADO CROSS AND BELL WINNERS

Kenetha Mann and Barbara Trute of Colorado were awarded the prestigious Cross and Bell awards on Saturday, November 13, 2021.



President Gail Nicolaus and Kenetha Mann



Barbara Trute

Kenetha Mann has been an amazing supporter of the people served by Bethesda Lutheran Communities for many years. She began serving on the Colorado Unit Board of the Auxiliary as the Financial Secretary in 2014. She has served in that position for many years because the Colorado Unit has been unable to find a replacement for her. In 2018 Kenetha was elected President of the Colorado Unit. She continues to serve as President and Financial Secretary at the present time. In 2016 Kenetha began helping with the craft sales in the Denver area. Kenetha and her co-salesperson, Dee Paulson, have done a great job of handling the sales. They have spent many weekends setting up the sale items in area churches on Saturday and then returning on Sunday to sell and re-pack the items for future sales. These successful sales have been a big part of the project money sent to the Bethesda Auxiliary each year.

Barb Trute has also been an amazing supporter of the people served by Bethesda Lutheran Communities for many years. She is serving on the Colorado Unit Board of the Auxiliary as the Area Representative for the NE zone of Colorado – a job she has had for many years. Barb never knew a stranger and will give of herself until she can hardly move. Barb's ministry to people of all abilities is her way of life. She has a special bond with a disabled young man in her home congregation and had worked tirelessly for the people served by the local nursing home until it closed. Barb has helped with many of the NE zone sales in support of the Auxiliary.

Congratulations to Kenetha Mann and Barbara Trute. May God bless them for their use of His time and talents.

IDAHO



Photo is from the Bazaar at Mountain Home

The Idaho Unit over the past year, has sent \$13,528 to the Auxiliary. We have continued to sell dishcloths. We received a \$10,000 donation for the sale of Christ Lutheran Church Wendell. Projects included a Bazaar held at Grace Mountain Home, a bake sale at Zion Nampa, and a crock pot supper at Immanuel Twin Falls for Ash Wednesday. We have received member-ships from only 4 congregations, so if you haven't sent in your memberships, make sure you get them to Grace Wegener.

OREGON

Remembering a faithful servant

With her son and daughter by her side, Magdalene (Maggie) Royston, went to be with the Lord March 25, 2022, after a long battle with Parkinson's Disease. She was 88 years old. Maggie was born in Platte Center, Nebraska in 1933. She was the first of two children born to Erich and Elsie Stahl. In 1955, Maggie married Frank Royston. Their son, Mark, was born in 1961, and daughter Theresa in 1968. IN 1970 they moved to Gearhart, OR where they spend the next 46 years. Frank retired in 1995 and five years later Maggie was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease.

Maggie's home was always filled with family, friends, and neighbors dropping by to visit and share food, drink and conversation. Some of her favorite activities were cooking and baking, gardening, playing Pinochle, sewing, knitting, and volunteering at church. She also hosted Bible studies in her home throughout the years. She enjoyed attending many of her granddaughters' activities and was proud of them.

Maggie was active in LWML and Good Shepherd/Bethesda Auxiliary. She spent many hours volunteering for both. She served as the Oregon Unit President for the Auxiliary and on the Governing Board, in addition to other offices over the years. She received the Cross and Bell Award in 2008. Her daughter Theresa Winn received the Cross and Bell Award in 2006 and husband, Frank, in 2012. God gave this family a passion for ministry with people living with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

A memory from Maggie's daughter, Theresa Winn:

“One of Maggie and Pat’s (member she worked with from Faith Lutheran, Seaside, OR.) memorable adventures was the quilt tour of 1981. Ladies from a church in Kansas sent a large number of quilts to be used for the benefit of the auxiliary. The Oregon Unit thought it would be a shame not to make the most of the opportunity, so Maggie and Pat decided to hit the road with the quilts and show them, taking silent bids along the way and logging over 2500 miles! Neither had any experience showing quilts, but they learned quickly. Maggie’s husband, Frank, and Pat’s husband, Ross, built frames for hanging the quilts, and Maggie and Pat learned how to set up the displays and store the quilts. These quilts were then sent to 11 other states, gathering 87 sealed bids. It was a very successful fundraiser.”



Magdalene (Maggie) Royston

Maggie is survived by her husband of 66 years, Frank; children Mark Royston and Theresa Winn, her husband Jeff, and granddaughters Janelle and Olivia Winn of Lincoln City, OR., and broth ED Stahl (Pat) of Salem, and many nieces and nephews.

Maggie loved flowers but, more importantly, she loved to help others. Please consider a donation to one of the following organizations in lieu of flowers: Bethesda Auxiliary-OR Unit (c/o Eileen Fligg, 800 NE 238th Place, Wood Village, OR 97060), St. Peter the Fisherman Lutheran Church, Samaritan Evergreen Hospice of Lincoln City, or the Michael J. Fox Foundation.

A memorial service will be held on Friday, June 3, 2022, 11:00 AM. at St. Peter the Fisherman Lutheran Church, 1226 SW 13th St. Lincoln City, Oregon.

Joni and Friends Family Camp

Members of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Tillamook, OR will be volunteering on Thursday afternoon, June 23, 2022, at the Joni and Friends Family Camp at the Friends' Camp at Twin Rocks, Oregon. The NW Joni and Friends Team was seeking Christian congregations in Tillamook to volunteer at the camp for families having a member with disabilities. Each year about 35 families attend this camp for the whole family for five days of respite, including Bible study, devotions, and many fun activities. Each person with disabilities will have a buddy, as will the siblings in each family.

The volunteers from Redeemer Lutheran Church will be engaging the youth and their buddies in craft and games. Rev. George Putnam is heading up assembling bird house with the child with disabilities and their buddy. All the kids and their buddies will have opportunity to decorate a wooden cross to take home with them. The whole group will have fun playing "God is Always With Me" picture Bingo, and learn that Jesus is always by their side wherever they are. What fun!

Sharing News of Bethesda Auxiliary and AbleLight

Opportunity to share changes taking place at AbleLight and decisions of how Bethesda Auxiliary hopes to continue to share God's Word and Jesus' love with people living with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) are being presented to Auxiliary members.

Oregon Unit President Terry Putnam will be speaking at the Mt Hood LWML Zone Rally on April 30, 2022, at Ascension Lutheran Church in East Portland and facilitating the Bible study, "Loving Little Ones Well." (All of us being little ones at various times in our lives when we have great needs and/or trials.) She will also be presenting at the Southern Oregon Zone Rally on October 1, 2022.

James Arciniega, AbleLight's Pacific NW Regional Director, is planning to return to in-person leadership team meetings in April and would like Bethesda Auxiliary to be represented at these monthly meetings. Rev. George Putnam has been asked to present the devotions for these meetings.

The Oregon Unit is very blessed to have such a godly man leading this team who are encouraged to give Christ-centered support to the people living with IDD in the Oregon homes and apartments.

Equipping People with IDD to Share the Gospel and Their Faith Stories Continues"

Oregon and Oklahoma LWML Districts approved Bethesda Auxiliary's request to redirect their grant funds from AbleLight/ Bethesda to Quiet Waters Outreach who is carrying out this project, via Zoom Activities that they have been presenting during the pandemic. Quiet Waters Outreach is celebrating their 25th Anniversary this year as a ministry to people living with IDD and their families and caregivers. Co-CEO and director of ministry and fundraising is Becky Lindsley, former ministry consultant for Bethesda Lutheran Communities. The ministry is doing an

amazing job of equipping and giving opportunity for these amazing Christians to share the Gospel and their Faith stories.

Two young women, along with Becky and Mona Fuerstenau (designer of this project), will be speaking at the Oregon District LWML Convention at St. John Lutheran Church in McMinnville, Oregon in July. They will also visit with convention attendees at an exhibit booth. What an opportunity to encourage congregations to become directly involved in ministry with people with disabilities. Everyone presenting and hearing is blessed as Jesus is glorified.

Advent and Christmas Blessings for AbleLight's Homes in Oregon

Since most people have received to Covid vaccine, it was possible to deliver Christmas-in-a-Bag parties to the group homes and apartments on Westside. Thank you to John and Lindy Tysor and their crew at Trinity Lutheran Church in Hillsboro for blessings the residents and staff with Christmas joy. Rev. George and Terry Putnam helped deliver the gifts and goodies to the Forest Grove and Cornelius homes and apartments. Trinity also delivered Birthday cakes for Jesus just before December 25. What Joy and smiles they received.

Thank you to Kathye Greene and her helpers at Living Savior Lutheran Church in Tualatin for their Christmas and year-round ministry to the people living in the Tualatin and Tigard homes and apartments. And thank you to Redeemer Lutheran Church in Gresham and surrounding congregations, who blessed the Eastside Portland homes with the Good News of Christmas: Baby Jesus' birth as our Promised Savior.

Remembering Janet Cramer

Janet was a loving, rejoicing, on fire for the Lord supporter of Good Shepherd/Bethesda Auxiliary. She was probably the first ever



Janet Broadus

Janet Cramer

Friend

auxiliary member under age 10. Her parents, Ruth and Paul, were part of Good Shepherd Lutheran Home of the West (Bethesda/

AbleLight) from the beginning. Her mother Ruth was a charter Auxiliary member in 1958 and served in many board positions. Her father Paul was the editor of the Governing Board Shepherdess newsletter, now known as the Shepherds News. Janet followed in their footsteps and served the Southern California Unit many years in many positions on the board and as the Southern California unit Shepherdess editor. In our early days each unit had a local newsletter as well. When memberships became harder to fulfill, she organized, in memory of Rev. Jim Hallmann, a golf tournament that earned thousands of dollars for the Bethesda Auxiliary. It was a local event looked forward to by many in her community of Hemet, CA.

There will never be another like Janet Cramer. We will miss her smiling face and support but know we will see her again soon. She lived her life to the fullest. Below is the link to her obituary.

<https://www.miller-jones.com/obituaries/Janet-Cramer-3/#!/Obituary>



Bethesda Lutheran Communities is pleased to offer, Future Leaders Grant Program for Elementary Schools: *Changing Lives One Heart at a Time*, a year-long Disability Awareness Program for Christian elementary schools. The objective of this program is to encourage staff and students to embrace students of all abilities and create a sense of belonging in their school community, with the understanding that every person is WONDERFULLY MADE by God. We are all gifted and talented according to God's plan; God does not make mistakes.

Goals for this program:

1. Know that every person is wonderfully made by God (*Psalms 139*)
2. Know that every person has God-given abilities and are part of the Body of Christ (*1 Corinthians 12 NIV*)
3. Know that some people may take longer to accomplish a task or may do it in a different way (*Psalms 139*)
4. Recognize when adaptations need to take place, both physically and socially (*Proverbs 31:8-9 NIV*)
5. Learn how to become advocates for people with disabilities, including creating a sense of belonging for those who may feel left out (*Proverbs 31:8-9 NIV*)

New leader takes the helm

President and CEO Keith Jones joined AbleLight in late January. He is highly qualified, mission-driven, and a servant leader who believes the people we serve, and our employees are always our top priority.

AbleLight's Board of Directors conducted an extensive search,

looking for someone with a true caring heart for people with disabilities and with an appreciation and support for our Christian mission and legacy. Keith reflects these attributes and more. He has a proven track record and more than 20 years of success in creating and executing strategic plans, growing an organization, and leading with heart and humility.



Keith most recently led Blue Sprig Pediatrics, a company he founded in 2017 to provide Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy to children with autism. He also led PSA Healthcare where he orchestrated significant improvements in the employee experience, clinical quality, and financial performance.

<https://ablelight.org/newsroom/keith-jones-named-president-and-ceo-of-ablelight/>

New name and renewed Christian mission

Effective Jan. 10, AbleLight is the new name for Bethesda Lutheran Communities. The organization celebrated with a grand kickoff that featured a special live performance from Grammy- and Dove-award winning Christian musician Michael W. Smith. NASCAR great and FOX Sports announcer, David Ragan served as our event host along with his brother Adam Ragan, a disability advocate.

You can still enjoy the celebration and music. Watch the replay.

The concert was exciting, but it was just the beginning because the new name is about the people AbleLight serves. Chosen from among more than 1,000 options, the name AbleLight reflects the many skills and abilities of people with disabilities, while also demonstrating how Christian values will be a guiding light for people with developmental disabilities and their families.

March was Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month (DDAM) is always an exciting time at AbleLight. The entire month of March allowed us to shine a light on the people they serve. The theme,

Together, We Shine Brighter reflected their belief that the world shines brighter when people with intellectual and developmental disabilities receive the support they need to achieve their full potential.



This year, AbleLight harnessed the power of partnerships to spread awareness about the organization and raise funds in support of its mission. The month was kicked off with a thrilling **visit to Auto Club Speedway** as members of the NASCAR family hosted several of the people they support.

[You can watch a video of their experience here.](#)

Kendra Scott, a nationwide fine jewelry retailer hosted "Give Back" days in March, with 20% of sales coming back to benefit AbleLight.

Celebrities including **Christian musicians Michael Tait, Crowder, David Ragan, NASCAR driver and FOX Sports analyst** and his brother disability advocate Adam Ragan, and others recorded PSAs in support of AbleLight's mission.

AbleLight team members got involved, hosting fundraisers in support of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and raising thousands of dollars to help people live a full life.

Billy Mauldin, Senior Chaplain for Motor Racing Outreach and faith advisor for AbleLight, shared a special devotion celebrating National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month.

[You can watch that devotion here.](#)

AbleLight also demonstrated their ability to be a valued partner to parents and the people they support by featuring practical webinars on prepping for college life and using technology for independence

[You can see the webinars here.](#)