

The Deaf Lutheran



*Ephphatha, that i.
Be opened.*

MARK 7:

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A Lutheran church in New Guinea bordered by a sweet potato patch

Almost Forgotten — New Guinea

A tourist guide book describes New Guinea as the "land the 20th century nearly forgot." That picture seems to fit the country. It is here that stone-age civilization suddenly meets the modern 20th century. For example, a person visiting New Guinea arrives in a jet airplane only to be met by people wearing lap-laps (loincloths), feathers in their hair, and possibly a stone ax in their belt. This happens every day now, but only 33 years ago the first white European set foot in the Western Highlands of New Guinea.

A Look at the Country

The Territory of Papua and the Territory of New Guinea are south of the equator about 100 miles from Australia. These two areas cover about half of the island of New Guinea, the second-largest noncontinental island in the world. The other half of the island belongs to Indonesia.

Although it is near the equator, the mountains keep much of the island quite cool. The low coastal areas are warm, however, and the land is covered by dense jungle. Large mountains, rising to 16,000 feet on some peaks, divide the country.

An estimated one and a half million people live in the Territory of New Guinea. Life in coastal communities which have been in contact with Europeans for some 80 years is much the same as on other South Pacific islands which have been influenced by the western world.

The people in the Highlands, however, still live as their ancestors lived—in very primitive conditions. Because the mountains and streams are natural barriers, the population is divided into 700 dialects or languages.

The cities on the coast are growing rapidly, but the greater number of people still live in rural

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For promotional materials write Rev. Earl Thaler, Promotion Manager, 32 Brunswick Ave., West Hartford, Conn. 06107

The Board for Missions of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod

Secretary for Deaf Missions:

Rev. H. W. Rohe, 210 N. Broadway, St. Louis, Mo. 63102

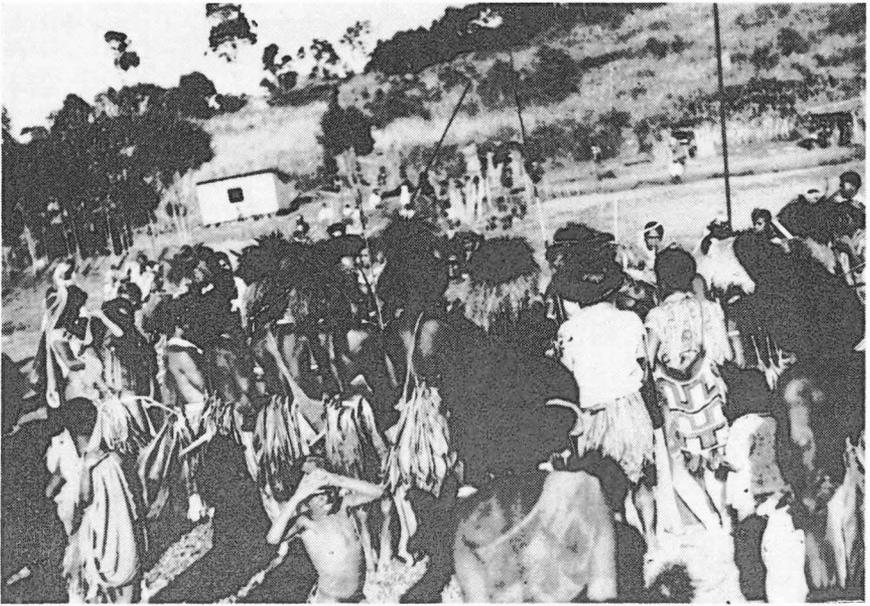
(314) 231-6969

Commission for Deaf Work (Advisory):

Rev. Elmer W. Koberg, 1365 First Ave., S. W., Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52400

Rev. Walter Uhlig, 444 Locust St., Seward, Nebr. 68434

Mr. Fred Fiechtner, 1334 8th Street, S., Fargo, N. Dak. 58101



People of New Guinea dance at a Sing-Sing. This social entertainment may last as long as one week

areas. Their life is quite simple. Each family has its houses—a long low building for the women and a round house for the men. In some areas the whole family is beginning to live together in one house.

Houses are made with materials found in the *bush*, the forest. Bark forms the lower walls, while bunches of long grass thatch the roof. This makes a very watertight and well-insulated house, which is necessary during the heavy rain season and the cold mountain nights.

Each family has its own garden, in which the sweet potato, the main food, is grown. I was told that an adult may eat as much as 7 pounds of sweet potatoes a day. Very little meat is eaten, although

pigs are quite common. Pigs, however, show how wealthy a person is and are used for trading. They may be killed and eaten only at a special occasion such as a wedding.

Missionaries have introduced other vegetables such as celery, tomatoes, cabbage, and other common items. The people grow these but sell them rather than eat them.

Clothing consists of simple loincloths for men and grass skirts for women. Many women are also starting to wear blouses available at the trade stores which have opened in recent years. The stone ax is being replaced by the steel ax, but an ax still is very important to the men. They are rarely seen without one.

When our missionaries arrived in New Guinea in 1948, the Western Highlands had no roads. This has changed, and today most of the mission stations can be reached by road or by an hour's walk from a road. As new mission areas open, however, it is still necessary to hike — sometimes a full day — to reach them. The people of the whole area still must walk, although many do "hitch" rides in the mission jeeps. Our mission also uses a plane for more convenient transportation of supplies and people.

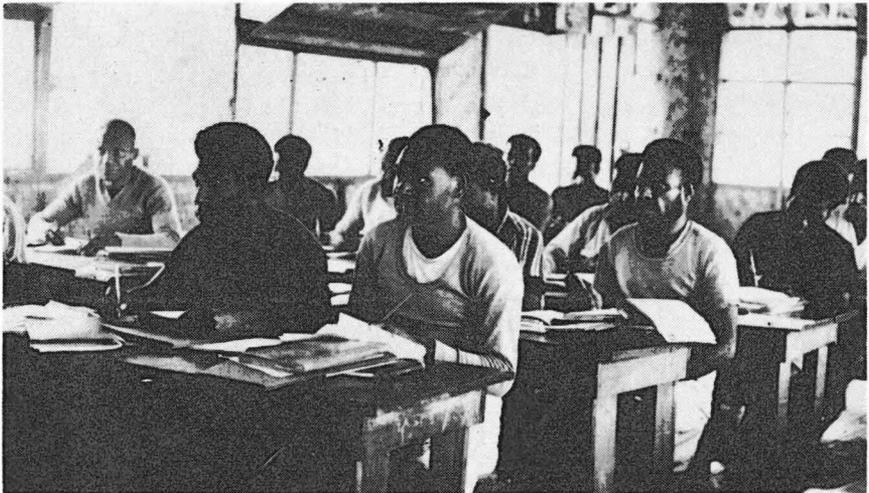
Religion

As I stood one evening gazing up into the star-filled sky, I saw that beautiful star constellation in the Southern Hemisphere, the Southern Cross. I could not help but think of the cross of Christ shining now in New Guinea.

The first missionaries came to the coastal area in 1886. Their work was very difficult, and many died. God's Holy Spirit did work in the hearts of the people, and today the Evangelical Lutheran Church of New Guinea has over 200,000 members.

In 1948 our Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod was invited to help evangelize the Western Highlands of New Guinea. Soon our first two missionaries arrived — Rev. Otto Hintze and Rev. Willard Burce. You may be interested to know that Rev. Hintze helped Rev. Francis Gyle at Holy Cross Lutheran Church for the Deaf in St. Louis, Mo., during his years at the seminary, and I learned my first signs from him.

It took a long while for God's Word to grow in the hearts of the people, but after 9 years the first baptism took place. At the pres-



These men are studying at the Lutheran seminary in New Guinea. They will become pastors in the Wabag Lutheran Church

ent time our church has 30,000 baptized members among the Enga people.

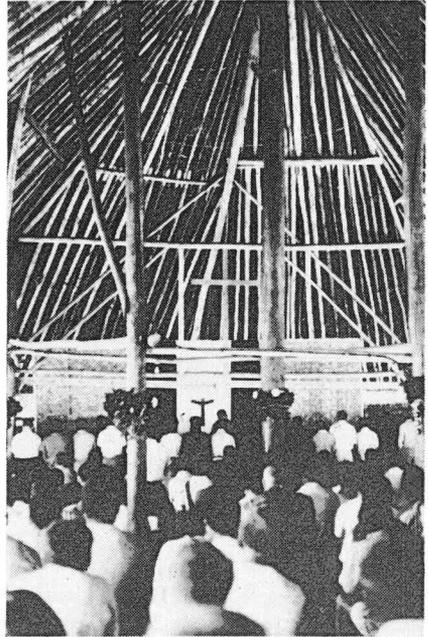
A visit to New Guinea is truly a spiritual experience, as you see firsthand how God changes the hearts of people. Many have given up traditions and customs of the past which have not agreed with the Christian way of life. Many have also been eager witnesses for Christ. They have shared their love of Jesus with others whom they have helped bring to faith. Native evangelists are willing to leave the security of their villages and valleys to go into new areas, learn a new language, and teach these strangers the love of Jesus Christ. Many soldiers or airmen from World War II days will long remember these "fuzzy-wuzzy angels" whose Christian love prompted them to be of great service to the Allied troops.

No Deaf Communities

The purpose of my visit in the summer of 1966 was to learn as much as I could about the life of the deaf there.

It is difficult to estimate how many deaf live in New Guinea.

The young man on the right with the big smile is Pii. He is deaf, but he is a baptized member of one of our Lutheran congregations. He is able to read and write a little, for he had the chance to go to school a while. He chose the name Pii at his baptism. The name is the Enga word for "speak"



At the opening worship service at the Wabag Lutheran Church convention, June 1966, some 370 delegates received the Lord's Supper. Many of the delegates walked several days to get there



No figures are available. In one survey taken by our mission in 1958 about 200 deaf were found among the 175,000 Enga people with whom our mission worked. A more extensive and detailed survey is needed to identify the deaf in this area.

New Guinea has no schools for the deaf. This is not surprising, because less than half of the normal school-age children are in school. Education is still very new, and two thirds of the school-children are in mission schools.

I have suggested to the Lutheran missions in New Guinea that they consider calling an educator for the deaf to New Guinea

to study this problem further and develop a program of deaf education. The church here in New Guinea can fill a very vital need of the deaf.

The life of a deaf person in New Guinea is not an unhappy one. A deaf child is loved by his family and accepted by the village society. His lack of education is not unusual, because most of the villagers did not go to school either.

Employment is not a problem, for each family grows its own garden, builds its own houses, and provides its own clothes. The deaf member takes his rightful place in the family.

One problem deaf men must



These faces are familiar to some of our readers. They are former workers among the deaf in the USA. At the left is Missionary David Houser, who was a vicar for a year in the Texas field. Next to him is Missionary Donald Yarroll, who worked with our churches in Cleveland and Chicago. He is holding his daughter Christine, and his wife Chris holds their son Denver

meet is their difficulty in getting married. Hearing girls do not want a husband who cannot talk to them. Deaf girls, on the other hand, do not have this problem with hearing husbands, for they can still tend the garden, bear children, and perform all the duties of a wife.

Why don't the deaf marry the deaf? The deaf are so scattered that I did not find one who knew that there were other deaf people. The life of the people is still limited to their village. A village is not houses built close together, but rather it is spread out across the valley and up the sides of a mountain. Therefore, the deaf never have a chance to see one another.

The deaf in New Guinea do not have a standard language of signs. The deaf do use their own gesture language to communicate with their family and other hearing friends.

Teacher Donald Yarroll, who

formerly worked with the deaf in Cleveland, Ohio, and Chicago, Ill., is now a missionary in New Guinea. He is now writing down the signs he has learned from a young deaf lad he met. After he returns from his furlough year in America, he hopes to complete this work of trying to develop a New Guinea language of signs.

If the language of signs is standardized and taught to the members of the congregations, our church in New Guinea can begin to reach out and bring the Gospel to the deaf.

I ask you to remember the deaf of New Guinea in your daily prayers, that God may soon bless them with faith in Jesus. God remembered the land almost forgotten by the 20th century, and the shadow of Jesus' cross is covering many people there. May it also be God's will that the cross of Jesus and His love will cover the deaf too.

REV. WILLIAM F. REINKING
St. Louis, Mo.

This Journey's End

A Footnote to the Previous Article

A few months ago you read in the DEAF LUTHERAN (Aug. 1966) that I had accepted the call to serve as secretary for missions in Africa and the Middle East. Since August my family and I have resettled in St. Louis, Mo., and I am busy at my new tasks in the Lord's work.

My leaving Hong Kong and the

Far East does not mean that our church is giving up our work there. Not at all, for many of you have already heard that the Board for Missions has called Rev. Louis Jasper for the Hong Kong work. Pastor Jasper has accepted the call and plans to end his services as pastor of the New York City Field in June.

Therefore the work already started will continue in Hong

Kong, Macao, Taiwan, and Japan. The churches in the Philippines, Korea, India, and New Guinea continue to study ways of working with the deaf.

I shall always be thankful to the Lord for the thrilling experiences I have had in working with the deaf in the Far East. Our work there is only beginning, but already we have seen much evidence of God's rich blessings on those who are working with the deaf.

My new position with our church's missions in Africa and the Middle East has taken me out of deaf work, which has been my ministry since I graduated from the seminary 14 years ago. I know that I could have had no richer, no happier, no more rewarding ministry than that among the deaf.

I shall always feel close to deaf missions and hope that I may continue in some small way to help with that work. It may be that by God's grace our work among the deaf in Africa can eventually be established. God moves in mysterious ways, and I am convinced that He has led me to this new and different work.

I ask for your prayers as I take on this challenging responsibility. It has been enjoyable visiting with you through these lines. I hope that I have helped in a little way to give you an appreciation of the problems of the deaf in the Far East and also an appreciation of the blessings that the deaf in America enjoy. God be with you all and bless you abundantly for Jesus' sake.

REV. WILLIAM F. REINKING

Lutherans Celebrate Christmas in South Vietnam

St. Louis, Mo., Dec. 2. Dr. Oliver R. Harms, President of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, today commended President Lyndon B. Johnson for agreeing to plans for a Vietnam cease-fire at Christmas and during the Western and Asian New Year's holidays.

In a telegram sent to the President at his ranch at Johnson City, Tex., the Lutheran leader said:

I commend you for your part in the Christmas and New Year's truces in Vietnam. There is blessing even in this brief lull in fighting. I urge you to pursue permanent peace in this tortured land. Since temporary truces could be arranged, the Prince of Peace and the welfare of men compel us to work ceaselessly for enduring peace.

About 15,000 Lutherans, 6,000 of them members of Missouri Synod congregations, are among the U. S. fighting forces in Vietnam, according to an estimate by the synodical Armed Forces Commission. Thirty-five Lutheran chaplains, 12 of them from the Missouri Synod, are on active duty in Vietnam.

Dr. Kenneth L. Ahl, executive director of the Armed Forces Commission in Washington, issued a statement commending President Johnson for his part in arranging the holiday truce.

He said he was certain that the Lutherans serving in Vietnam "will appreciate the opportunity to worship the Christ Child and think about the significance of Christmas without being disturbed by enemy fire.

"We pray that their faith in the Savior may be renewed and sustained by the Spirit's power and that their courage for the challenging tasks they are called upon to do may be strengthened," Dr. Ahl said.

Our Missouri Synod has a membership of some 2.8 million in all the states and in 27 foreign countries.

Professional Rehabilitation Organization Announced

As this issue was being written, word reached your editor's desk about a new development in the area of rehabilitation and the deaf.

A new organization called the *Professional Rehabilitation Workers for the Adult Deaf* was officially established in May 1966. It was formed during a workshop in St. Louis sponsored by the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration.

The purposes of the organization are stated as follows:

1) To promote the development and expansion of professional rehabilitation services for the adult deaf.

2) To provide a forum (a meeting place for discussion) and a common meeting ground so that the organization may be instrumental in bringing about a better understanding of deaf people as

a whole. The organization will encourage students, professional persons, and laymen to develop more than a little understanding of the needs and problems of the deaf. People ought especially to know the problems of communicating with the adult deaf in a rehabilitation setting.

3) To promote and encourage scientific research on the needs and problems brought forth by deafness. These studies will look at the various ways a deaf person is held back as he lives as an individual.

4) To promote and develop recruitment and training of professional workers for the deaf.

5) To sponsor a professional publication for the sharing of ideas, problems, helps, and methods by professional people who work with the adult deaf.

6) To cooperate with other organizations concerned with deafness and rehabilitation of the deaf. Together the groups would promote and encourage important legislation to develop professional services and facilities for the adult deaf.

For the first 3 years membership in the organization is open to anyone who is in any way con-

nected with adult deaf. After this period, applicants will be screened by a membership committee on a professional qualification basis. Membership dues are \$10.00 a year.

Application for membership or any questions may be sent to Mr. William Woodrick, Box 1698, Jackson, Miss. 39212, secretary of the organization.



FIELD

GLEANINGS

Northwest Regional Lay Conference

Spokane, Wash. The Northwest Lutheran Deaf Camp was held July 29—31 at Camp Lutheranhaven on beautiful Lake Coeur d'Alene in northern Idaho. Some 84 deaf from Idaho, Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia attended. The theme of the camp was: The Communion of Saints.

The workshop program planned by the members of Faith Congregation in Spokane tried to show the correct ideas regarding the church and how we all could better be the church of God. During the meeting the group explained the word "church" as "God's chosen and redeemed people who work together to worship God, to grow in faith, and to bring the

Good News of salvation to other people."

Friday evening the group played Bible games using verses which talked about the Church. Then Mr. Purvis of Spokane presented the filmstrip *The Glad Church and the Sad Church* so that the campers would begin thinking about our theme.

Saturday morning the young deaf of Spokane presented 14 different pictures of the church as seen by people. Some of the pictures asked: "Is the church a museum, launching pad, infirmary, boot camp, service station, or a country club?"

Then six members of Faith led short Bible studies in small groups using six Biblical pictures: the church as (1) a building, (2) a

vineyard, (3) an army, (4) a betrothed, (5) a body, and (6) a flock. The whole group met again to find a common definition of the word "church."

Regional Counselor Rev. R. Ryneanson presented some information regarding present and future plans for the Pacific Coast Region.

After a pleasant afternoon of swimming, volleyball, and hiking, the deaf met in the evening to find ways that they could better serve as God's church in this world. They met in five small study groups: elected officers, LWML, Golden Age members, youth, and elders.

After Bible classes led by Pastors W. Bottlinger, R. Johnson, and J. A. Beyer, Pastor L. Harris preached at the Communion service, showing us among other things the Holy Spirit's power and help for His church.

REV. R. RYNEARSON

Deaf Campers

Miami, Fla. Last August, 10 deaf teen-agers of Deaf Zion Lutheran Church attended a Walther League camp at Lake Wales, Fla., with 120 hearing teen-agers.

Rev. Walter Busby, pastor of Deaf Zion Congregation; his parish worker, Mrs. Doris Myhre; and Miss Judy Horne, a Gallaudet College student, served the camp as counselors.

One of the highlights of the week of camping was "skit night." Our deaf group was joined by two



Deaf campers present their skit, "Family Picnic in the Family Auto," at a Walther League camp last August. Competing with the skits of hearing campers, the deaf took first place

hearing boys and we took first prize.

On the final night we gathered together for the closing program. Prizes and awards were given out to our outstanding campers. The award for "best all-around camper" went to Chris Williams, one of our deaf boys.

As the camp broke up and everyone headed homeward, all the hearing campers wanted the assurance that the deaf would come again next summer. The deaf are equally anxious to return.

MRS. DORIS MYHRE
Miami, Fla.

New England Deaf Conference

West Hartford, Conn. The first New England Conference of the Deaf was held at the Lutheran Church of the Deaf, West Hart-

ford, Oct. 21—23, 1966. The conference was a great success with more than 70 persons attending.

The conference began Friday evening with registration and fel-

lowship. The evening came to an end with closing devotions led by Pastor Robert G. Blakely of Norwood, Mass.

The Saturday program started



Lutheran Deaf Workers in Scandinavia

The Scandinavian countries now have 20 full-time pastors serving the deaf. They meet every second year. Last August the meeting was held in Finland. On the picture, sitting, from left: Pastors Folke Thuresson (Sweden), Ivar Svennas (Sweden), Conrad Bonnevie-Svendsen (Norway), Poul Hansen (Denmark), Per Bogerud (Norway); standing, from left: Pastors Sven-Eric Lönnell (Sweden), Urho Paljakka (Finland), Lauri Paunu (Finland), Eino Savisaari (Finland), Alvar Grundborg (Sweden), Heikki Hyvärinen (Finland), Asger Andersen (Denmark), H. A. Kallenbach (Denmark), Lennart Källkvist (Sweden), Ragnvald Hammer (Norway), Conrad Vogt-Svendsen (Norway).

The themes discussed were: "How Should We Explain the Central Christian Concepts to the Deaf?" "How Should We Bring the Gospel to the Youth?" "Confirmation Instruction," "Foreign Mission Work Among the Deaf," "Discussions Regarding the Terms Deaf and Hard of Hearing," "The State of the Sign Language in the Scandinavian Countries," "What Will the New Age Bring with It for the Deaf?" "The Church, the Deaf Congregation, and the Multihandicapped Deaf," "Contacts Among Those Who Take Care of the Deaf," and "Participation in the International Deaf Congress in Poland, 1967"

with a short worship service in the chapel at 9:00 a. m. Our guest speakers then presented their topics. Rev. Herbert Rohe of St. Louis, Mo., spoke on stewardship. He was followed by Rev. Louis Jasper of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church for the Deaf, Elmhurst, N. Y., who presented the subject of duties and privileges of church membership. The entire conference greatly enjoyed the presentations of our guest speakers.

After a hearty lunch served by the host congregation, the out-of-town visitors were taken on a tour of the general Hartford area to see such significant landmarks as the original site of the American School of the Deaf — the first school for the deaf in America. We also visited the many statues

which honor persons in deaf education.

The conference continued in the afternoon with a presentation by Pastor Rohe about our Lutheran deaf missions in the U. S. A. and foreign countries.

After our supper hour a movie from the "This Is the Life" television series was shown, and an evening hymn sing was shared by all. All hymns were projected on the screen and sung by both deaf and hearing. The evening was brought to a close with a devotion.

Sunday morning we worshiped in our new church building with Rev. Rohe as our guest preacher.

Since this conference was a great blessing for all who attended, we are all looking forward to the next.

REV. EARL J. THALER



LIGHT FOR YOUR WAY

Daily Bible Readings

for February

You have a faith. Speak of it to others.

Feb. 1 — Matthew 6:16-34. You need the ever-living God who gives you all things. Pray for needy families that God will bless them with enough food and clothing. Pray that their lives will give Him thanks.

Feb. 2 — Matthew 7:1-12. Know God and His Word, and you will know how to act. Pray for the members of your congregation that they may love and understand each other.

- Feb. 3** — **Matthew 7:13-29.** You have heard the words of Jesus. Have you wisely tried to do them? Pray that the members of the Bible classes may be inspired to live their faith.
- Feb. 4** — **Deuteronomy 8.** May we be thankful. May we want fellowship with God more than we want money. Pray for our prosperous nation that we do not forget God.
- Feb. 5** — **Acts 1.** You can expect God the Holy Spirit to give you courage when you pray. Ask for the courage to follow the officers and leaders of your church.
- Feb. 6** — **Acts 2:1-36.** God gives His people the opportunity to speak, and He gives us the confidence to tell about our faith. Pray for this blessing. Pray also for Rev. A. L. Hauptman, St. Paul, Minn.
- Feb. 7** — **Acts 2:37-47.** Holy Spirit, cut me to the heart so I can see what I am. Then show me how to repent! Pray for all who only pretend to be Christian that they may see their mistake and turn to Jesus with faith.
- Feb. 8** — **Acts 3.** You are sure God has given you salvation. Do you tell others about your sure faith? Pray for the young people in your church that they may know Jesus and speak for Him.
- Feb. 9** — **Acts 4:1-22.** The world dares you to confess and live your faith. Pray for those who believe in Jesus against their family's wishes.
- Feb. 10** — **Acts 4:23-37.** God has given us very much, but are we afraid to give it to others? Pray for Lutheran World Relief and for the zeal to support it.
- Feb. 11** — **Acts 11.** Everyone who loves Jesus and follows Him is your brother. Pray for all Christians in the world that they may be united in the faith.
- Feb. 12** — **Acts 12.** In some parts of the world Christian leaders are persecuted and imprisoned. Pray for them and ask that their witness might be strong and that they might be freed.
- Feb. 13** — **Acts 13.** Have you been eager to tell others what Jesus means to you? Ask God to send His Spirit to the members of your congregation that they may be encouraged to witness for Jesus.
- Feb. 14** — **Acts 14.** You are a witness for Jesus whether you are a leader or a follower in your congregation. Pray for the congregations in your District that God will give more eagerness to serve Him.
- Feb. 15** — **Acts 15.** God has graciously guided our church in its work and planning. Pray for the pastors and leaders of our congregations as they plan the work of our church.
- Feb. 16** — **Acts 16.** Dear Father in heaven, I have asked You to be with us in our house. Have I asked my church to use it? Pray for God's blessings of joy to every Christian home.
- Feb. 17** — **2 Samuel 12:1-23.** Lord, You know all my secret and hidden sins. Please lead me to repentance! Pray for the Christians fighting in our Armed Forces that God would strengthen them against temptation.

- Feb. 18 — 2 Kings 5:1-19.** Forgive me for doubting Your power in little things. Pray for Christian families, especially for that family member who has not accepted Jesus as Savior. Pray also for Rev. Ervin Oermann, Birmingham, Ala.
- Feb. 19 — John 1:14-34.** Sometimes our sinful pride makes us forget to give glory to God. Pray that God may strengthen the chaplains in the Armed Forces as they speak of His love.
- Feb. 20 — John 1:35-51.** As a Christian you must be interested not only in foreign missions but also in the person next door and in your own family. Pray for God's blessings on our feeble witnessing.
- Feb. 21 — Daniel 2.** When you have the opportunity to speak, can other people see the kingdom of God through you? Pray that God may give the leaders of our country the wisdom to lead the world in the way of peace. Pray also for Rev. F. P. Gehrs, Winnipeg, Man., Can.
- Feb. 22 — 1 Corinthians 9:1-18.** The blessings of God are yours in your Christian work. Pray that Christians everywhere may eagerly speak for Jesus. Pray also for Mrs. Alma Scheibert, pastor's wife, Melrose Park, Ill.
- Feb. 23 — Exodus 32.** You know your own weakness and sin. Pray that God would forgive for Jesus' sake our blindness and failures in our worship. Pray also for Mrs. Delores Anderson, pastor's wife, Jacksonville, Ill.
- Feb. 24 — Psalm 121.** You can live without fear or shame in the knowledge that God is near. Pray that the members of your congregation will have this confidence.
- Feb. 25 — Luke 10:1-24.** God blesses His people with faith and trust that He will guide their work for Him. Pray that God may give you that faith and trust.
- Feb. 26 — Luke 10:25-42.** The Lord can help us to do even greater things for Him. Pray for God's guidance in your life.
- Feb. 27 — 1 Corinthians 1.** All we need to say is that God has loved mankind in Jesus Christ. Pray that the children in your congregation may grow up with a strong faith.
- Feb. 28 — 1 Corinthians 2.** Are you afraid? God is near you. Pray for the courage to volunteer your mission work for the church. Pray also for Rev. William Ludwig, Columbus, Ohio.

Remember your Ebenezer Thankoffering and pray:

Lord, we have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed. We have taken the gift of life for granted, and we have forgotten Your death which gave us life. Forgive us. Give to all who live this new year the ability to show You their thanks, to honor You by the way they live, and to depend on You for guidance. We pray in the name of Jesus, who died for us and rose again. Amen.

Lutheran Deaf Mission Staff

Rev. Wm. Aiello, 54 Hempstead Road, Trenton, New Jersey 08610	(609) 585-5263
Rev. Orlin S. Anderson, 104 Finley St., Jacksonville, Ill. 62650	(217) 243-2528
Rev. Clark R. Bailey, 2406 107th Avenue, Oakland, Calif. 94603	(415) 632-0845
Rev. Robert A. Bauer, 5808 113 B St., Edmonton, Alta, Can.	(403) 434-4246
Rev. James Bengelsdorf, 8408 Madison Ave., Des Moines, Iowa 50322	(515) 276-8479
Rev. John A. Beyer, 1101 15th Ave., Seattle, Wash. 98122	(206) 324-2200
Rev. R. G. Blakely, 233 Winter Street, Norwood, Mass. 02062	(617) 769-3942
Rev. N. E. Borchardt, 11719 Ewanston Ave., Detroit, Mich. 48213	(313) 527-7023
Rev. W. Botflinger, 4609 Watling St., S. Burnaby, Vancouver, B. C., Can.	(604) 433-1763
Rev. Clarence Bremer, 1400 Bluff St., Fulton, Mo. 65251	(314) 642-4737
Rev. Robert Bremer, 1017 N. Chevrolet, Flint, Mich. 48504	(313) 767-2158
Lay Worker Alex Brodie, Apt. 708 — 706 Queens Ave., New Westminster, B. C., Can.	(305) 688-0312
Rev. Walter Busby, 15000 N. W. 27th Ave., Miami, Fla. 33147	(608) 249-8076
Rev. Robert M. Corl, Jr., 1929 Huxley St., Madison, Wis. 53704	(415) 752-6761
Rev. E. Theo. DeLaney, 441 7th Ave., San Francisco, Calif. 94118	(214) 239-0719
Rev. William E. Duey, 13209 Coit Rd., Dallas, Tex. 75240	(314) 642-5040
Rev. P. N. Ernst, 2100 W. Broadway, Columbia, Mo. 65201	(816) 561-3849
Rev. A. E. Ferber, 3807 Gilham Rd., Kansas City, Mo. 64111	(701) 235-5661
Rev. W. Ferber, 617 14th St., S., Fargo, N. Dak. 58101	(612) 926-5470
Mrs. Florence Finke, 5149 Penn Ave., S., Minneapolis, Minn. 55419	(602) 944-1911
Rev. Theodore Frederking, 9902 N. 5th Ave., Phoenix, Ariz. 85021	(204) 489-6302
Rev. F. P. Gehrs, 694 Beaverbrook St., Winnipeg 9, Manitoba, Can.	(714) 689-6571
Rev. G. A. Gehrs, Jr., 6262 Soledad, Riverside, Calif. 92504	(201) 485-2260
Rev. C. Roland Gerhold, 510 Parker St., Newark, N. J. 07104	
Rev. Francis G. Gyle, Fla. School for the Deaf, St. Augustine, Fla. 32084	
Rev. Larry Harris, 4807 N. E. Rodney, Portland, Oregon 97211	(503) 287-6244
Rev. Don Haug, 1066 Chamboard, Houston, Texas 77018	(713) 682-3196
Rev. A. L. Hauptman, 205 N. Otis, St. Paul, Minn. 55104	(612) 721-3239
Rev. Martin Hewitt, 1221 Virginia Ave., Lakewood, Ohio 44107	(216) 226-8340
Rev. Harry W. Hoemann, 1103 Lambertson Dr., Silver Spring, Md. 20902	(301) 949-7611
Vicar Garland Iseler, 832 E Pikes Peak Blvd., Colorado Springs, Colo. 80903	(303) 634-0308
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