

Metropolitan Chicago Synod Deaf Ministry Report

1. **Deaf Confirmation Student:** In September of 2007, a family with a deaf child of confirmation class age, Keith, started attending Grace, Evanston. Pastor Dayton went to Grace to lead worship and preach in English and Sign Language. It was the first time Keith had seen a pastor sign or receive Communion in his own language. Pastor Dayton arranged for them to have a Sign language interpreter so Keith could attend confirmation classes.
2. **Worship in Sign Language for Deaf Worshippers:** On Sundays Pastor Dayton travels to various synodical congregations to lead and interpret worship in American Sign Language. He is the only Deaf ministry pastor in the ELCA who is also a nationally certified Sign Language interpreter.
3. **Deaf Worship In American Sign Language:** Once a month, Pastor Dayton leads an all Deaf worship service in the Mt. Greenwood area of Chicago. The service is done entirely in American Sign Language.
4. **Serving the ELCA:** Pastor Dayton is serving as coordinator of services for Deaf teens attending the ELCA **Youth Gathering in New Orleans**. He has secured the services of American Sign Language interpreters. He is working with the youth gathering office to ensure that there will captioning for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing attendees, Assistive Listening Devices for Hard-of-Hearing people attending to ensure that the gathering will be accessible.
5. **Serving Deaf Individuals:** When one of our synod congregations needed help with a funeral, she called us. A congregation member passed away whose son was Deaf. Pastor Dayton came to the funeral and made it possible for him to participant in his mother's funeral.
6. **Every Deaf Person is Important:** One summer Sunday, a lone Deaf woman worshipped at **Grace, Mt. Prospect**. She signed to Pastor Dayton, "Remember, I represent over a thousand people." The smallest minority in America, there are approximately 500,000 Deaf persons in the United States who use Sign Language as their primary language.
7. **Purdue Extension in NW Indiana:** Pastor Dayton was invited to make a presentation about Deaf Ministry to a group of students taking a Sign Language Class at Perdue University. The teacher's parents are Deaf and involved in our Synodical Deaf Ministry.

8. **Our Need for Continuing Mission Support**: Deaf Ministry income has been impacted by the economy and is no longer in the synod budget. Some individuals and congregations with investments or endowment funds have decreased their support, because their earnings have been adversely affected. We are grateful to the synod and our mission partners and will continue to use our funds wisely.

Mission Support is crucial for this ministry to continue doing the work it has done. **Congregations can include support for this ministry in their monthly check to the synod by indicating the portion that is for Deaf Ministry on one of the “Other” lines of the benevolence coupon.** If you have any questions, please contact Steve Homberg in the synod office.

9. **Deaf Ministry** spreads the Good News of Christ throughout the Metropolitan Chicago area and beyond. Pastor Dayton Williams is available to assist any congregation in the synod in making its ministry accessible to Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing people. Our motto is “Have Sign Language; will travel”.

10. Pastor Dayton and Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing members are **available to visit** your congregation, mission committee or church council. Contact us!

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