

the messenger

Growing, Building,
Expanding



Lutheran Bible
Translators

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FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Dear Reader:

Imagine being a member of a remote language community without God's Word in your language. At best, you have a Bible in a language that you don't really understand. A core base for life is not available. Nothing offers the certainty of "forever."

The Scripture provides a firm foundation.

I've heard this sentiment expressed time and time again by people who never previously had Scripture in their own language. One translator in Botswana marveled as he expressed his thanks to you who were a part of translating the Bible into his language, "This Bible brought hope in my life. It brought light in my life.... If it were not for you, we could be reading ... Bibles which we do not understand."

We all want to "do good." Over 1.5 million non-profits exist in the US, according to the National Center for Charitable Statistics. In addition, local churches and congregations address urgent issues like hunger, health, education, and the environment. But there are few needs as foundational for deep transformation as the one you will see described throughout this issue of the Messenger.

Almost 2,000 language communities still do not have even one word of the Scripture in their own language. These remain the most remote languages of the world,

used by the most marginalized people in the world. Reaching them is not easy—but it is our imperative.

This is the reason we serve together—that God's Word might bring

hope and light to others no matter where they are or what language they speak.

The Word is necessary to grow faith. "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?" (Romans 10:14).

Pray that those without God's Word may be reached and know Jesus. Ask others to pray for you as you consider a career overseas with Lutheran Bible Translators. Rejoice as you give your gifts that people receive the Word not just for their "today," but for their "forever."

Thank you for doing whatever you can so that others don't have to read Bibles they cannot understand.

In Christ,

Dr. Mike Rodewald
CEO and Executive Director



DR. MIKE RODEWALD,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Future Built Upon History

by Eshinee Veith

How could Bible translation and pastoral care merge to serve African people better? What started as a tiny kernel of a thought grew and grew.

Between 2015 and 2017, a half-dozen key international church, education, and mission leaders initiated a series of meetings to discuss the potential of training pastoral students in Bible translation.

Early in 2018, a small group of people assembled at a seminary in Ethiopia. They talked about Bible translation and its role in the future of Africa.

By February 2019, when they met again, the small group had expanded and so had the project. The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) church leaders, Mekane Yesus seminary program directors, and key Lutheran Bible Translators staff had been involved from the start. This time, the Bachelor of Theology students enrolled in the Bible translation track within the program also participated.

“The history of Bible translation is the history of the church,” said Solomon Haile, Manager of the Comprehensive Planning Bible Translation Program for EECMY. He reviewed Ethiopia’s long history of Bible translation, since as early as the 4th century with the Bible in Ge’ez, the ancient language of the Ethiopian and Eritrean Orthodox church traditions. He spoke of Onesimos Nasib and Aster Ganno, who produced the Afan Oromo language Bible and were instrumental in the growth of the Ethiopian Evangelical



Program Manager Mr. Solomon Haile speaks to Bible translation students at Mekane Yesus Seminary in Ethiopia.



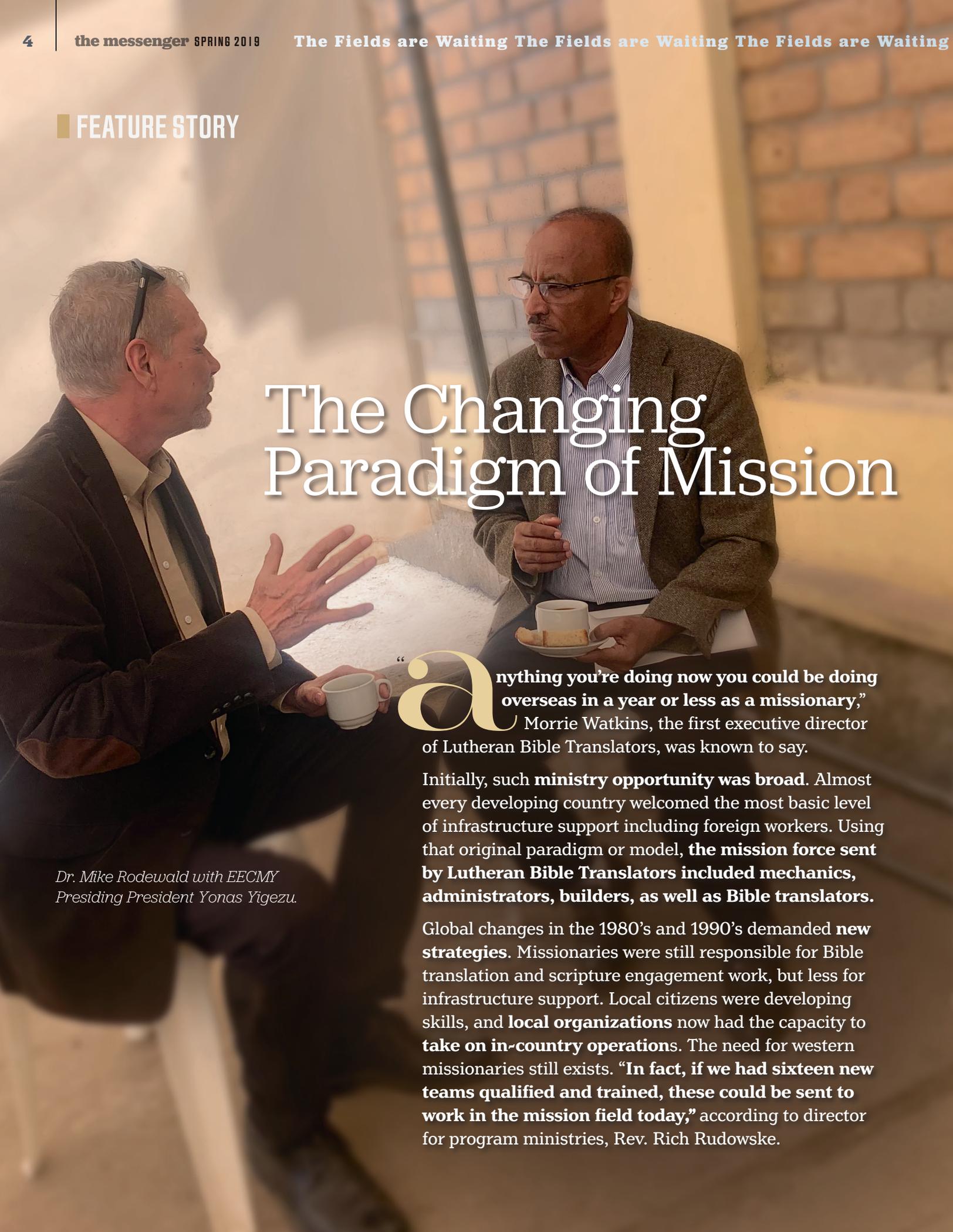
Students in first class, Bachelor of Theology Program, Mekane Yesus Seminary.

church in the 1800’s. After summarizing other Ethiopian language translations that occurred more than a century ago, he shared the more recent work, including the 18 current EECMY translation projects.

The students present at the meeting are members of the first group in the Bible translation track at Mekane Yesus Seminary. The 15 students were selected for this specialty from more than 40 applicants. These seminarians are ministry candidates who are also studying Bible translation mission. They will learn to offer not only pastoral care, but also to facilitate Bible translation in their future parishes where the Bible may not yet be available in the local language. Their great interest and dedication to integrate Bible translation and pastoral care is a tangible outcome of the tiny kernel of thought imagined years earlier.

According to the executive development officer for Lutheran Bible Translators, Dr. Tilahun Menedo, “What is happening in Ethiopia is mission transformation! Local leaders are empowered, churches are planted, cross-cultural mission is occurring, and servant leadership is developing that enhances the missionary nature of the church.” **m**

FEATURE STORY



The Changing Paradigm of Mission

“**anything you’re doing now you could be doing overseas in a year or less as a missionary,”** Morrie Watkins, the first executive director of Lutheran Bible Translators, was known to say.

Initially, such **ministry opportunity was broad**. Almost every developing country welcomed the most basic level of infrastructure support including foreign workers. Using that original paradigm or model, **the mission force sent by Lutheran Bible Translators included mechanics, administrators, builders, as well as Bible translators.**

Global changes in the 1980’s and 1990’s demanded **new strategies**. Missionaries were still responsible for Bible translation and scripture engagement work, but less for infrastructure support. Local citizens were developing skills, and **local organizations** now had the capacity to **take on in-country operations**. The need for western missionaries still exists. “**In fact, if we had sixteen new teams qualified and trained, these could be sent to work in the mission field today,**” according to director for program ministries, Rev. Rich Rudowske.

*Dr. Mike Rodewald with EECMY
Presiding President Yonas Yigezu.*



Early missionaries' duties varied from builder to Bible translator.



Students at Mekane Yesus Seminary

But change challenges mission leaders to continually **rethink the most effective methods**. Faced with multiple opportunities to place resources, which opportunities will result in the greatest impact?

The **most vital opportunities** to engage in Bible translation today are being **driven by church partners**. Their vision integrates mother tongue scripture and education into local ministry and evangelism strategies. These partners are requesting specific expertise. Their objective is to further strengthen the skills of their increasingly qualified workers and develop more infrastructure to aid in their Bible translation efforts. They want to **grow and build local capacity to advance translation** and evangelism.

Current executive director, Dr. Mike Rodewald, knows the value of increasing and strengthening partnerships. He brings a vision to more intentionally connect Bible translation with overseas Lutheran church leaders of some of the largest and fastest growing church bodies in the world. **"Bible translation is more than a technical task,"** says Dr. Rodewald. "At its core, it is a natural part of an outreach and discipleship strategy by the local church."

Rodewald and Rudowske have implemented a strategy to visit Lutheran church leaders motivated for mission. One such place is the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY), the largest Lutheran church in the world with 9.3 million members. This month, assisted by Lutheran Bible Translators, the first class at the Mekane Yesus Seminary will conclude its initial year of an innovative Bachelor of Theology program, **training seminarians in Biblical languages and Bible translation skills**.

"It's gratifying to see those early seeds take root and begin to bear fruit," says Rev. Rudowske, "and the relationships we have with these partners can potentially be duplicated in Lutheran churches across the world. We're looking at a **paradigm shift in mission the likes of which hasn't been seen in a long time.**"

"God gives us all a role in His mission," says Dr. Rodewald. "This is an exciting time to be involved in Bible translation ministry. What a privilege to see God raising up new leaders and mission vision from places that many here in the west still think of as 'the mission field.'" **m**

“

It's gratifying to see those early seeds take root and begin to bear fruit.

”

The Olsons to Mission Field

Those who speak Kerewe are mostly fisherfolk. They're often exploited by other groups. Their home on Ukerewe Island, accessible only by ferryboat, is about the same size as the Hawaiian Island of Maui. They are among the most remote peoples of the world isolated by language and geography.

New missionaries Rev. Andrew and Alexis Olson, with daughters Mariah and Selah, will reach East Africa in the next weeks. Andrew will work with the team to assist in translating the Bible into the Kerewe language. Excited about their imminent arrival, Andrew says, "The project started when the Lutheran Church in Tanzania invited Lutheran Bible Translators. I will be working alongside the local Bible translation team, to help them understand the meaning and background of each passage, help with questions related to translation, and provide encouragement in the daily work."

Bishop Andrew Gulle, diocesan church leader, said, "It is important for (Andrew and Alexis) to come and work with the project. We want God to speak with the Kerewe people in their own language." According to regional director Jim Laesch, "I am convinced this is the right time for this mission to the Kerewe people, so God's Word

will be heard and received in each person's heart."

Services in the few churches on the island are held in the national language of Swahili, a language most people do not understand. A Bible in the Kerewe language would greatly assist the church to expand to all parts of Ukerewe.

"It's absolutely essential for the Kerewe people to hear God's loving gospel message," Andrew says. "We are thrilled to serve the Lord in this strategic partnership to bring the Scriptures to the ends of the earth." Find out more at lbt.org/the-opportunity-of-a-lifetime/. **m**



Transportation on Ukerewe Island on Lake Victoria, East Africa, site of the Olsons' project.

A Building Speaks Volumes

by Valerie Federwitz

"Language is power. Language is people. Language makes a difference in the hearts of the people." These words of Rev. Dr. Jasper Ndaborlor inspired and welcomed guests to the consecration celebration of the new office building in Monrovia, Liberia. Ndaborlor chairs the Liberian Translation and Literacy Organization (LIBTRALO) board.



LIBTRALO building dedication in Liberia Spring 2019.

Church choirs from around this west African country brought their praise and thanksgiving to the Lord in the Kisi, Sarpo, Dan, and Bandi languages. They heard Scripture read in Klao, Lorma, Bassa, and Vai languages.

Until now, LIBTRALO rented inadequate office space in Monrovia at ever-increasing costs. This new structure allows staff ample space to work, produce and store materials, and hold meetings and workshops. As owners of the new office building, they now rent out facility space to generate additional income for Bible translation.

Lutheran Bible Translators missionaries Dale and Alvina Federwitz were among the original advocates of LIBTRALO in the 1990s. During the civil war in Liberia, missionaries were evacuated. When they were unable to return, Liberians realized the importance of producing, teaching, and distributing Scripture materials on their own.

LIBTRALO works with 16 languages groups in Liberia, so people can hear and read Scripture in those languages. **m**

Birthdays

June

- 2 Eshinee Veith, International Offices
- 9 Claude Houge, Ghana
- 17 Audrey Grulke*, Botswana
- 21 Elijah Wagner*, Sierra Leone
- 28 Joshua Rudowske*, United States
- 30 Jo Ann Megahan, United States

July

- 1 Mary Holman, United States
- 5 Aili Esala*, United States
- 7 Jim Kaiser, Ethiopia
- 9 Isaiah Wagner*, Sierra Leone
- 10 Joshua DeLoach*, United States
- 11 Vanice Schultz, United States
- 12 Nathan Esala, United States
- 12 Josiah Federwitz*, Ghana
- 30 Andrew Beckendorf*, Botswana
- 30 Jeannie Peterson, International Offices
- 31 Judy Krause, International Offices

August

- 1 Valerie Federwitz, Ghana
- 4 Tim Miller, Southeast Asia
- 6 Kara Kuhn, Cameroon
- 6 Ruthie Wagner, Sierra Leone
- 8 Rachel Federwitz*, Papua New Guinea
- 10 Rich Rudowske, International Offices
- 16 Katie Hogan, International Offices
- 18 Mariah Olson*, Tanzania

*missionary kid

FINANCIALS

January 1—March 31, 2019

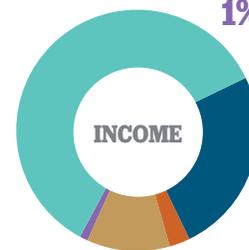
INCOME

	Unaudited 1st Quarter	Unaudited Year-to-date
Designated	\$ 580,406	\$ 580,406
General (Undesignated)	246,763	246,763
Restricted Funds	24,390	24,390
Bequests	106,185	106,185
Endowments	11,647	11,647
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 969,392	\$ 969,392

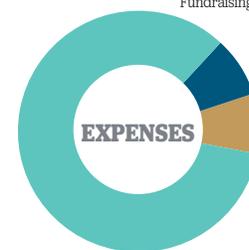
EXPENSES

	Unaudited 1st Quarter	Unaudited Year-to-date
Program	\$ 986,235	\$ 986,235
Administration	92,980	92,980
Fundraising	88,478	88,478
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 1,167,694	\$ 1,167,694

General (Undesignated) **25%** Restricted Funds **3%**
 Designated **60%** Bequests **11%**
 Endowments **1%**



Program **84%**
 Administration **8%**
 Fundraising **8%**



Pray for:

Asia-Pacific > Pray for **Janet Borchard** as she travels to Papua New Guinea to work with the Ipli team on Exodus 1-8. > Pray for the **formatting, printing, and audio recording of the Old Testament Bible story series** in Southeast Asia. > Pray for the **audio recording** of the Old Testament Bible story series in Southeast Asia.

Botswana > Pray for the **Shekgalagari translation team** as they review several NT books in the community in May and check them with the consultant in July.

Ghana > Pray that the **LBT member care team** will have successful meetings, taking place in Ghana during mid-May.

Liberia > Pray that the **Maan, Gola, and Dan literacy classes** can get the support needed to continue within their communities.

United States > Pray for potential new missionaries in **Crossroads: Ethiopia**, that God would grant them safety in travel, good interactions, and discernment as to their calling. > Pray for all the leaders, speakers and attendees of **Concordia Mission Institute 2019**, a training workshop being held July 7-13 in Concordia, Missouri. > Pray for **productive office visits for LBT missionaries** on furlough during the 2019 summer. Pray also that their **visits with existing and potential supporters will be a blessing** to all.

West Africa > Pray for **Michael Ersland** and **Amy Formella** as they attend the Adelante Program in Malaga, Spain.

Zambia > Pray for successful consultant checking of the **Nsenga OT portions** and that the printed portions may be used in the Nsenga churches.

Gift Designations

We make every effort to honor donor designation preferences; however, all gifts are subject to the discretion and control of Lutheran Bible Translators.



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Correspondence may be directed to The Messenger Editor.
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Lutheran Bible Translators, an independent mission group founded in 1964, is the only Lutheran organization dedicated to making God's Word accessible to those who do not yet have it in the language of their hearts. LBT actively recruits Lutherans to serve as Bible translators, literacy or vernacular media specialists and support missionaries. The LBT ministry is supported by the prayers and contributions of fellow Christians. It is not subsidized by any church body or sponsoring agency.

Executive Director: Dr. Mike Rodewald



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CHANGING THE WORLD—THOSE COINS ADD UP

Growing Partnerships



Faith Lutheran Church in Bridgeport, Michigan, is one of many congregations that touches the world through Lutheran Bible Translators (LBT). Faith's members bonded with missionaries Jim and Susan Kaiser in the 1980s through a connection at a district convention. The Kaisers serve in Ethiopia and have visited Faith several times speaking about their work. Church members pray regularly for their work and for their safety.

Jim recalls their journey with the church that began decades ago. "We have always felt that God would bring those he wanted to our presentations. Only three or four people showed up that first time. They thanked us and promised that more would be there next time." Susan and Jim went overseas and were invited again several years later when they were back in the USA. "The room was full of enthusiastic people! We were amazed! That's

when our relationship truly began, and I think we have been back there every time we returned since then. They have been very faithful in regularly sending cards to encourage us, along with their prayers and giving."

Faith's prayers, messages of encouragement, and Dimes for Missions program support the Kaisers. For many years, the **Noisy Dimes for Missions Cans** have been passed around on the last Sunday of the month for worshippers to deposit their dimes, loose change, or bills. Many times, those mission offerings were designated for Bible translation.

Other people contribute in different ways. Some offer financial gifts on a monthly or

annual basis. Many choose an automatic method through their bank or credit card. Others designate funds through PayPal. A surprising number designate transfers from their will or estate.

Faith's offering has generated thousands of dollars over more than 30 years to build a firm foundation for people previously without God's Word. Only God knows the impact of Faith's notes and prayers over the years!

Do you have a story to share? How do you or your organization support Bible translation? To be considered for possible use in future communications, please send to **Communications@LBT.org** (noting "story" in the subject line) or to LBT Communications, PO Box 789, Concordia, MO 64020-0789. **m**