



# The Deaf Episcopalian

July - Oct 2023

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Want to be the new **Membership Secretary**?

Know someone who does?

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## Membership Dues

It is getting close to the end of the year. Membership dues are \$30, but you are welcome to donate more than that!

If you are a new member, there is a membership form on our website at [www.ecdeaf.org](http://www.ecdeaf.org).

If you are a current member, you do not need to fill out a membership form, just go to [www.ecdeaf.org/donation](http://www.ecdeaf.org/donation) and either send your dues online or send a check to the address posted online.

## DE Articles

Send in any articles, pictures, upcoming events, and more for the next DE newsletter! Your stories are valued and we want to share them.

Send articles and/or ideas to:  
**[deaf.episcopalian@ecdeaf.org](mailto:deaf.episcopalian@ecdeaf.org)**

If you have any questions, please reach out to us.

## Holy Land Pilgrimage

Information will be coming out in the next several months regarding the Deaf Pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

This is an exciting opportunity, and something the ECD is working hard behind the scenes to make happen. This is a rare opportunity and we are all excited to share this with you.

**[vice-president@ecdeaf.org](mailto:vice-president@ecdeaf.org) for more information**



## ECD Board Members and Staff

The ECD Board of Directors is elected from the membership of ECD Conventions. To contact any one of them, see information below

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# Chaplain's Corner



Hello, it is with humble emotion that I am a Chaplain on the ECD Board. I thank you all for your prayers and support as we face the challenges of growing together as Deaf Christians in the Episcopal Church. Since this is my first time writing in Chaplain's Corner, I am going to introduce myself.

As some of you already know, I was born Deaf due to maternal Rubella - also known as German Measles. While growing up in the suburbs of Seattle, my parents strongly advocated for me to read lips and use hearing aids. It was not until college in Colorado Springs that I gradually adopted American Sign Language. Despite my involvement with St. Paul's of the Deaf in West Hartford, Connecticut, my parents supported me to attend Yale-Berkeley Seminary in New Haven. My parents encouraged me to become a priest and I am very grateful for their support. I also studied to obtain the Master of Social Work degree and worked as a clinician in a mental health program serving the Deaf community in the greater Hartford area, where I still live today. Fortunately, as a semi-retired person I have more time to focus on our concerns as Deaf Christians in The Episcopal Church. It is extremely fortunate that we have the Episcopal Conference of the Deaf to promote and support churches that do ministry with Deaf people all over the United States.

How do you and I have a relationship with God? That is a question that each of us have and we try daily to have a connection with the Divine especially by giving God thanks and taking time to pray for the health of friends, family, and especially for the health of this earth. Globally we all are facing great challenges of Climate Change and trying to recover from the devastating effects of the coronavirus pandemic. Please continue to give God thanks and consider what Jesus would want us to do each day. While serving as a Chaplain, I look forward to growing together as we experience God's love and follow Jesus.

Yours in Christ

- Rev. Erich

## Looking for new ECD Membership Secretary!

The ECD is **hiring a new ECD Membership Secretary**. Pay DOE. Duties and skills include:

- Maintain and update membership information
- Manage church software (CMS)
- Assist with any recruitment duties
- Write Membership Report summary for each board meeting and Convention
- Attend General Convention booth
- Register new people
- Use ECD Social Media to network
- Computer literate

**Interested? Contact Rev. Dick Mahaffy at [president@ecdeaf.org](mailto:president@ecdeaf.org)**



# Greetings from President of ECD

Hello ECD Friends!

Hope you had a good summer. Thanksgiving and Christmas are just around the corner. Wow! Time surely goes by fast! We had a wonderful 76<sup>th</sup> ECD Convention in Federal Way, Washington. The weather was beautiful and cool. We had great discussions about the future of ECD. We hired Diane Lynch to be the ECD's interpreter coordinator.



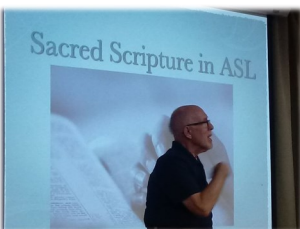
At the convention, we agreed that modern technology has been a huge gift for our Deaf ministry. Zoom and Live streaming services have enabled us to meet and worship together, no matter where we live. But we have also realized that it is important for us to have some face-to face gatherings because many Deaf people prefer to meet and socialize in person.

I want to welcome our new Board members: Lee Holland, Vice President; Ron Selinger, Treasurer; William "Bill" Heran, Secretary; Jason D. Boyd, Member-at-Large; and Emily Rakassi, Member-at-Large. The board selected the Rev. Erich Krengel to be its chaplain.

As we look to the future for our Deaf ministry, there is not a lot that encourages us. Our churches are shrinking, and our numbers are few. We have only 63 members. Most of us are older. We are not alone in this. Churches all over North America are growing older and smaller and it is more and more difficult to draw people to Church.

We agree to prioritize these things in order to improve the lives of our present members and to build toward the future.

- **DEAF YOUTH CAMP** - We all know that we need Deaf young people in the Episcopal Church. We used to have an Episcopal Deaf youth camp years ago, but the person who ran that program for years retired and there was no one to replace her. There is a large Deaf community in and around Austin.
- **SPIRITUAL FORMATION** - How can we help Deaf people grow in faith and learn to live a Christian life? How can we offer good Christian teaching to our people? How can we help them read and understand the Bible? How can we help them learn to pray? Can we offer workshops or retreats or other kinds of opportunities that will help them grow in faith? The ECD board recently approved payments for ECD members who take EfM (Education for Ministry) classes. The ECD will now cover ALL costs for this program - including tuition and books - for any ECD members who take the course. This will enrich the spiritual development of our members and allow our members to commit to the program independent from their local church or diocese.



- **ECD RETREATS** - We need to think about important topics that are of interest to Deaf people and that are important for Deaf people to know. We need to focus not only on religious topics, but also on topics related to social media, medical care, education, social justice, our rights, and many more. How can we help people gain the skills and knowledge they need to live well?

- **VIRTUAL GROUPS** - How can we bring people together? Can we form groups for Bible study or for discussions about the Christian faith, connecting people from across the country and bringing them

together? All of us need to be connected to other people. How can we connect Deaf people with one another to form communities?

We could improve our ministry with the Deaf outside of the Church:

- 1. We could invite people to meet with us at a park or a beach for worship. That might be more appealing for some people than meeting at a church.
- 2. We could meet at a bar and invite Deaf people to enjoy some social time with us, playing cards or talking over drinks. We all know the importance of community. We can help people understand that a church is not just a building; it is a group of people who meet regularly to get to know one another and to support one another in their Christian lives. It is a place where we enjoy fellowship with one another.
- 3. We can invite people to meet us on Zoom to talk together about our faith, or about Scripture, or about ways we can help Deaf people.



These ideas are examples of our vision to grow future ministries. We need every one of you to offer your time and your talent to ECD, and work with others to achieve our vision. The ECD Board can't do everything themselves. We need you, and God needs you.

There is one project that I think is very exciting and very important. We are planning a pilgrimage for members of the ECD and others to the Holy Land in 2025. A small committee has been working with Lightline Pilgrimages, a group that leads pilgrimages in the Holy Land, to **plan a pilgrimage for Deaf people in February of 2025.**



I am very excited about this program. I believe the trip will be spiritually beneficial to all who join it. I believe it can even be *life-changing!* It is a great gift to be able to walk in the land where Jesus grew up and lived his life and to visit the holy sites that are connected to his ministry. Our trip will take us to Nazareth and Capernaum, to the Sea of Galilee and to the Jordan River, to Bethlehem and Jerusalem. We will see the city and the country as Jesus saw it. We will ride in a boat on the Sea of Galilee, just like he and his disciples did. The Bible will come alive for us because we will know the places that it is talking about. We will have seen them ourselves!



This is a great gift we can offer our faithful ECD members. It is a tremendous opportunity, probably the only chance most of us will have to see the Holy Land. I am very excited that we can offer this, and I ask you to support it with all your strength. Let's make this happen!

Thank you for your faithfulness and loyalty to ECD. Have a wonderful fall season. Be safe and be well.

Faithfully yours,  
*Rachael Mahoffy +*

# Meet your board members!



## President

Hello! My name is the Rev. Richard “Dick” Mahaffy. I am an ordained priest of the Episcopal Church who has been profoundly Deaf since birth. I communicate with people orally (i.e., through speech and lip-reading) and with Sign Language. I was educated at the Clarke School for the Deaf (now Clarke School for Hearing and Speech) in Northampton, MA, and the Williston-Northampton School in Easthampton, MA. I went on to earn a bachelor’s degree in Religion from Trinity College in Hartford, CT, and a Master of Divinity degree from the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, MA. I was ordained through the Diocese of Western Massachusetts. I started the Episcopal Deaf congregation in Sarasota at St. Boniface Episcopal Church, Siesta Key. The congregation moved to St. Margaret of Scotland Episcopal Church, Sarasota in 2020. I currently am serving my third term as ECD President. My hobbies are reading books, collecting antiques, and walking. My husband, Doug and I were married in the Episcopal Church in 2015. We moved to Florida in 2017. Doug is also profoundly Deaf. We have one beautiful pug, named Max.



## Vice President

Hello! My name is Lee Holland. I was born and raised in Washington state and am a cradle Episcopalian. I was born Deaf and grew up oral, however, when I went to Gallaudet when I was 19, I learned ASL and I was so happy! I used to work in banking, I have a degree as a Paralegal, and now I am retired. I enjoy traveling around the United States in my RV, especially going south to warmer climates for the winter! I have been on the ECD board for four terms, first as a Member-at-Large, and I am now starting my third term as Vice-President. I have two lovely daughters. I am an active Lay Worship Leader in the Diocese of Olympia (western WA state) and also an advocate for Deaf miniseries as well.



## Treasurer

Born and raised in St. Louis, where I still reside. I am a member of St. Thomas Church for the Deaf in St. Louis, MO. I teach ASL and Deaf Studies courses at University of Missouri - St. Louis and Maryville University as an adjunct instructor. This is my third term as an ECD board member (and second term as treasurer).



## Secretary

Dr. William Heran is a licensed Psychotherapist in Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and Hawaii. He has worked with the Deaf Community and hearing impaired adults for over 40 years. He started in 1981, assisting Rev. Thomas Coughlin and Camp Mark Seven. He was a counselor at both the Pennsylvania and Mill Neck Manor Schools for the Deaf. He later worked at the Philadelphia Psychiatric Center's Deaf Treatment program, helping Deaf women and men with mental health issues. Dr. Heran holds a Ph.D. in Clinical Social Work from Smith College and a Master in Social Work from New York University and has over 35 years as a clinician, researcher, author, educator, spiritual advisor and program developer. He has worked in many multi-cultural settings including Jamaica, Hawaii, New York City and Boston. He is a former Jesuit scholastic and continues to integrate spirituality into his work and ministry. He is currently in priestly formation for the Episcopal Diocese of Hawai'i. Dr. Heran and his partner, Gabe Lau, make their home in Honolulu, HI. Dr. Heran is honored to serve on the Board of ECD.





### **Member-At-Large 1**

My name is Jason D. Boyd, and I am a sixth-generation Mississippian. I lost hearing at 18 months old due to rubella, which diagnosed me with profound hearing loss. I grew up oral with the help of hearing aids until I received a cochlear implant before the start of my senior year at Mississippi State University. I am a Team Lead in web software development for a private telecommunication company of over 24 years, and I do some freelance projects.

I am the ECD's Technology & Communication Coordinator, which allows me to help ECD gain exposure through today's social platforms and also insight into the future development of better live-streaming options for ECD members nationwide. I am proud to be your Member-at-Large I am in year one of the EfM study group and halfway through the discernment process to become a Deaf Priest in the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi. I look forward to serving Christ's mission in the Deaf community.



### **Member-at-Large 2**

Here's an insight about me... My name is Emily Ann Rakassi. 9w1 Enneagram, INFP (Introvert, iNtuitive, Feeler, Perceiver)

I am a teacher at Texas School for the Deaf. I have been a certified Deaf/HH teacher for 20+ years, with the last 15 years as a licensed/certified Agriculture Teacher. I have three College Degrees: Physical Therapy, Allied Health Management, and Deaf Education. I am certified in these areas: ASL, Bilingual, and Special education in the state of Texas. With that said, I am also a Deaf Self-Advocacy Trainer. I am a womb to tomb Episcopalian. I've explored various religious organizations, non denominations and denominations. I have family members that are Jewish and have explored Islam for 7 years. I feel as if a full circle has closed in and I've returned back to my Episcopalian faith and now proudly serve as an ECD board member - Member-at-large. On a personal note, I love to tend to my garden, vermi-composting with red wigglers, fostering schnauzer rescues, and sustainable living. In my free time, I love to travel around the world and have been to over 20+ countries. Fun fact, I love to sew costumes/clothes for dogs.



### **Chaplain:**

Hello, I am Reverend William Erich Krengel and most of the time people call me, Erich. I am humbly honored to be the new Chaplain on the ECD Board. I was born Deaf due to maternal rubella, also known as German Measles. I wear hearing aids and grew up in the eastside of Seattle in the town of Bellevue attending mainstream programs with focus on oralism. At that time I did not learn sign language although secretly I did learn some signs. Later in college, with my new found freedom, I learned ASL, which has become my daily language. I attended Berkeley-Yale Divinity School for both the Master of Divinity and Master of Sacred Theology (STM) with focus on Anglican Studies and a minor on Deaf Ministry - graduated in 1988 and 1991. Later I was ordained in 2001 as a Deacon and subsequently as a Priest in 2002 in the Diocese of Connecticut, which is now named: "Episcopal Church of Connecticut - "ECCT". Also in the early 2000s, I returned to graduate school and obtained the Master of Social Work degree. With the mental health program for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing persons in the Connecticut State Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, I worked as a clinician for thirty-three years - recently retired in March of 2023. I reside in Hartford, Connecticut. Now I am a supply priest for both St. Ann Church in New York City in person and for St. Barnabas Church of the Diocese of Washington, DC via ZOOM. I hope to be of spiritual service with prayer and listening intently to people's concerns especially as we face challenges of ministry in the Deaf community and experience God's grace while following Jesus.

# Preparing for Advent

By: Elizabeth Holland

Advent, in the Episcopal Church, is a season of preparation and anticipation leading up to the birth of Jesus. This year it will begin on December 3rd (the fourth Sunday before Christmas) and lasts for about four weeks. The word "Advent" itself means "coming" or "arrival," signifying the anticipation of Christ's coming into the world.

During this season, we focus on various themes such as hope, peace, joy, and love. Each week, an Advent candle is lit, representing these themes and marking the progression towards the birth of Jesus. This practice serves as a visual reminder of the spiritual journey taking place.



For people who want to celebrate Advent and worship from home, there are several ways to do so. You and your family can set up an Advent wreath, using candles to mark each week and engage in moments of reflection and prayer. There is the #AdventWord. Also, there are various online resources, such as videos in ASL Advent readings and reflections.

The Episcopal Church also incorporates special liturgical elements during Advent, such as specific hymns and also prayers and readings that reflect the themes of the season. You can do these prayers and reflections at home as well!

Advent is not only a time of anticipation for the birth of Jesus, it is also a time for personal reflection and spiritual growth. I would encourage you to create a sacred space at home or in your yard (it's not too cold) and incorporate elements like candles and decorations, to cultivate a deeper connection with God during this time of waiting and preparation.

Let us gather with other ECD members this Advent in any way you can. Invite people to a service, or to a gathering in your home. There is no limit to what you can do this Advent Season!

## Words from the Church Mouse

Hello! It's your friendly Mouscopalian dropping by with a little message. First of all, let me just say how blessed we are to have such a wonderful community like you. All of your spirit is contagious, and I love seeing the love and support we all have for one another. Also, all the bread crumbs from the Convention were quite delicious!

As I sit in my mouse home near the altar, I am remembering how joyful it was to gather this past July in Washington state. Let me tell you, my little heart wept for joy to get away from the heat of the country and relax in the warmth of Seattle.

It hasn't been easy to fully gather since Covid, and though I try to make it to each of your churches, it doesn't always happen in a timely manner. Some of my Mouscopalian friends have even told me that some churches have moved or changed. In these times of frustration and uncertainty, I'm reminded that the church is not just a building. It's the people, or mice, within it that make it special. So, I have an ask for you. Reach out and get to know your fellow parishioners a bit more. Share a joke, lend a helping hand, or simply offer a warm smile. Call up someone you haven't seen in awhile. You never know how much of an impact a small act of kindness can have on someone's day, or even their life.

Lastly, let's keep our faith alive and vibrant. It doesn't matter if we gather in a church, a bar, at the beach, or even someone's home. Engage in thoughtful discussions and take your faith into the world. Remember, my dear Episcopalians, we're all in this together. Episcopal, no matter what we look like. So let's continue to be the loving, accepting, and supportive family I've always witnessed.

The human is coming back to her computer. Eat lots of Halloween candy and Thanksgiving food, and don't forget to leave some crumbs for us church mice. You may not see us, but we are always here for you.

Till next time!



- The Church Mouse



# Community News

*Mission, Outreach, Community, Culture*

Holyrood/Santa Cruz

presents a free community event

*Deaf Music Ensemble*

November 12, 2023 3 - 5 PM



All welcome  
Please join us  
at the church

@DEAFMUSICENSEMBLE



Hollyrood/Santa Cruz has been having several Deaf events. Don't miss the upcoming one, on Nov. 12, it's a Deaf music Ensemble! Go and visit! They welcome you and anyone you would like to bring.

If you go, send a short blurb about it to the DE!

West 179 St at the corner of Fort Washington, Manhattan  
easily accessed on subways: 1 or A trains

info: oandmhk@msn.com

## Previous Community News

August 27th was the Feast of Thomas Gallaudet & Henry Winter Syle . The Episcopal Church recognizes and honors these two for their work, commitment, and advocacy for Deaf Episcopalians. Thomas Gallaudet was the son of Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet. He was an Episcopal priest and started the first Deaf church in America, St. Ann's Episcopal Church in New York. One of his parishioners, Henry Winter Syle, became the first Deaf priest in American. Deaf churches and missions across the country celebrated Gallaudet and Syle.



St. Barnabas, in collaboration with St. Ann's Church for the Deaf, had a collaborative worship.



Members of Good Shepherd on the Hill, in Austin, TX, gathered in fellowship, food, and discussion after the service.



*En la Iglesia Episcopal consideramos santos/as a todos/as los que nos muestran como vivir y ordenar nuestras vidas siguiendo a Cristo.*

**Marcos silencioso**  
Me escuchas?  
Escucha, no con tus oídos  
sino con tus ojos.  
A ti he hablado  
mis silenciosas manos.  
Quiero cantar mi canción,  
quiero cantar mi canción.  
Aprende mi lenguaje.  
Mi hermosa lengua propia.  
Escucha mis manos,  
escucha mi música y mi  
historia.  
Aprende mi lenguaje.  
Háblame con tus manos.  
Comparte mi hermosa  
lengua.  
Oye mis manos silenciosas.  
Tenemos una historia que  
contar,  
una canción que cantar.  
Abre los ojos  
y fíjame hablar.  
Autor: Sandra L. Brook  
Traducción: Ronda, María  
habla! Santiago »



JESUS nuestro sanador: "Eftat" ("Abrelo"). Los oídos  
del sordo se abrieron, se le desató la lengua y pudo  
hablar bien (Marcos 7:34-35)



Holyrood/Santa Cruz in New York, commemorated and celebrated Gallaudet and Syle.

**Silent Hands**  
Can you hear me?  
Listen, not with your ears  
But with your eyes.  
To you they speak,  
My silent hands.  
Hear me tell my tale.  
Hear me sing my song.  
Learn my language,  
My beautiful native  
language.  
Hear my hands,  
Hear my music and story:  
Learn my language.  
Speak to me with your  
hands.  
Share my beautiful  
language.  
Hear my silent hands.  
We have a tale to tell,  
A song to sing.  
Open your eyes  
And hear me speak.  
Author: Sandra L. Brook



JESUS OUR HEALER: "Eftat" ("be opened"). The  
man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosed and he began  
to speak plainly. (Mark 7:34-35)



# 76th ECD Convention recap



This past July, members of the ECD from around the country gathered in Federal Way, WA for the first in-person Convention since the start of COVID. It was an incredible experience filled with good food, comradery, guest presenters, the ability to livestream the convention, the announcement of a future Pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and more!



Some highlights from Convention! The weather was quite nice the entire time we gathered. We opened and closed with a wonderful worship! A new board was voted in. Members took some time to tour the area, eat with friends they hadn't seen in awhile, and one person even went on a solo adventure in Seattle! A day trip to Seattle and a visit to the Duwamish Indigenous Lodge and Museum, then a sightseeing trip around Seattle.



Fr. Dick presiding over opening worship



Bishop Mike via zoom

We had two guest speakers at the convention. Canon Bishop Mike Klusmeyer joined us via zoom and shared his support of, and advocacy for, the ECD. He discussed the ECD creating a core discernment committee for Deaf Episcopalians discerning a call to Holy Orders, so the discernment team would have the cultural and language background.

There were many positive takeaways from his presentation and it sparked conversation ideas to further support the ECD community. We were so thankful to have had Bishop Mike take time to join us.



The other speaker was Brother David Vryhof, who joined us in person. He spoke of his experiences in leading pilgrimages to the Holy Land and how exploring such sacred sites and connecting with our Christian heritage

can be an incredibly enriching experience to follow the footsteps of Jesus. He also mentioned that the pilgrimages are very safe, and our guides will adapt the pilgrimage as needed for safety. It will be an incredible experience to witness. More information to come!



Israel/Palestine Pilgrimage



Washington state has a rich Indigenous culture. On our day trip, we up went to Seattle and ate at Chief Seattle Café, then visited the Duwamish Lodge and Museum where we took a tour and looked around. Their mission is to promote the social, cultural, and economic survival of Seattle Washington's aboriginal Duwamish Tribe. The experiences provided valuable insights into the local culture, history, and traditions of the Duwamish people. It was there, that co-editor Jannie found a puppy and brought him home, to the joy of all the ECD members there! After the lodge, some people went to the Chihuly Glass museum and walked around Seattle, before finally coming back to the hotel. Exploring Seattle and its attractions was a great way to unwind and connect with fellow attendees.



co-editor Jannie and puppy



A last highlight was the showing of The Late Rev. Steve Lloyd Mathis's vestments from Ephaphatha in Baltimore. His daughter donated a few things, including the vestments and altar frontals. The precious items are historical artifacts that tell a story, and they are currently held in the ECD storage. Donations like this can help preserve history and tradition within our community. If you have any artifacts for the ECD, you can contact Fr. Dick or Lee Holland.



Fr. Dick and Elizabeth, holding Rev. Mathis' vestments



For our Banquet Dinner, we went to Anthony's Seafood restaurant, and sat outside on the waterfront, watching the sunset throw beautiful colors on Mt. Rainer.



Mt. Rainier behind Puget Sound and ferry

Jason, our tech guru, made sure that we were able to share our convention with people who could not come. He also made sure the guest presenters and the CART team were logged in and ready to go. Much thanks to Jason and the ECD Board for making this happen.



Top: ECD members  
Bottom: Clergy only

The 76th Episcopal Conference of the Deaf convention was truly a memorable event. The community, engaging presentations, discussions of an upcoming pilgrimage, and the local excursions were heartwarming and fulfilling. This convention served to strengthen bonds and inspire future workshops and goals within the ECD community. The next ECD Convention is already in the works and will most likely be in, or around, St. Louis, MO in 2026.

Rev. Erich holding a tiny mustache and a mustache cup



Last day of convention, everyone outside with their luggage. Bye!



Top left: Chihuly Glass

Top Right: Fr. Dick, Elizabeth, Jannie, Jason, and new puppy, under Chihuly Glass

Bottom left: Looking up at Space Needle

Bottom Right: Dinner on Capital Hill—famous 5 point cafe

Top: part of the group eating at Chief Seattle Café

Middle: The group standing at a lookout above Seattle

Bottom: Emily Rakassi picking wild Blackberries





**Get ready for Advent!**



**Mission:**

Empower Deaf people with the Good News of Jesus Christ, encourage full participation in Church Life, and advocate for Deaf Ministries

**Vision:**

Full inclusion in Church Life.

# The Deaf Episcopalian



ECD is looking to hire a new  
**Membership Secretary.**  
Is it you?



Check out the 76th ECD  
Convention recap!

**Episcopal Conference of the Deaf**  
c/o Episcopal Church of the Advent  
9373 Garber Rd  
Crestwood, MO 63126  
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

