

Deaf Mission Church UMC Completes Deaf Certified Lay Servant Training **By Rev. Dr. Tom Hudspeth**

On March 27-28, 2026, sixteen people gathered at the former Walnut Hill Church in Dallas for a 10-hour basic Certified Lay Servant (CLS) class. The group included 12 Deaf and four hearing participants. Sharon Spratt, representing the Metro East District and Horizon Texas Conference, shared her 21-year journey as a CLS. Her presentation was facilitated by ASL interpreter Rev. Dr. Leo Yates, Jr., pastor of Magothy Church of the Deaf in Maryland.

The Evolution of SEEDS

Rev. Dr. Tom Hudspeth leads SEEDS (Serving Educating Evangelizing Deaf Seekers), which launched as an Extension Ministry on July 1, 2025. Originally founded in 2008 as a school, SEEDS transitioned into a scholarship ministry before being established as a Deaf Mission Church in May 2025.

Impact and Outreach

- **Broad Reach:** SEEDS serves Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals across Dallas and 19 surrounding communities, reaching international audiences in Tanzania and Zambia via livestream.
- **Engagement:** The church averages 41 worshippers and has welcomed 15 new members and six baptisms in the last 11 months.
- **Mission:** With only 2% of Deaf people claiming a church home, SEEDS focuses on ministry "with, by, for, and of the Deaf."

Training for Leadership

Following an advanced class in Baltimore, Rev. Dr. Yates and Alma Andrews traveled to Dallas to complete this foundational training. On Palm Sunday, March 29, ten of the eleven newly certified Deaf Lay Servants led worship, including a sermon by Judy Carter. Contact: Rev. Hudspeth at 469-708-5593 (VP: 469-522-294) or thudspeth@lumc.org.

Names for pictures:

1. Rev. Dr. Leo Yates, Jr., Sharon Spratt
2. CLS class, pictured left to right: Sherry LaRue, Karen Harrell, Mary Kay Hudspeth, Joel Rodriguez, Naomi Rapp, Tash Gates, Judy Carter (in green top), Brenda Rodriguez, Rev. Dr. Tom Hudspeth, Sharon Spratt, Ashy Trevino, Edwin Carter. Not pictured is Kendrick Lewis.