



THE BOOK OF

EPHESIANS

DEAF WOMEN CONFERENCE

2021

HOSTING GUIDE



HELLO

Friends,

Our world today is chaotic and feels heavy. We get distracted, lose our focus, and forget who we are in Christ. Many of us are facing these same challenges and experiences.

This past year has been overwhelming and hard, but we have hope! As children of God, we can turn to Him, be encouraged, and encourage one another. We can do this together through the book of Ephesians.

The book of Ephesians is a letter that Paul wrote long ago to the people of Ephesus. It tells us that we are God's chosen people, adopted as sons and daughters, and brought near to the Father through faith in His Son, Jesus.

Through this study, we will remember who God is and be strengthened through life's seasons and challenges. Together, we can step back, remember what matters most, and move forward as beloved women of God!

So, let's bring our friends together and remember who we are in Christ!

We want every Deaf woman to know that she is not alone!

Consider opening your home to the Deaf women in your community for this two-day conference. By hosting this event, you will be helping others come together to reflect on the power of Christ and remember who they are in Jesus!

We can't wait to see you there!

In faith,

The Deaf Women's Conference Team at Deaf Millennial Project

WHAT IS DEAF WOMEN'S CONFERENCE (DWC)?

It's a gathering of Deaf women that come together to learn about God through His Word. Through livestreaming, different speakers present on biblical topics to encourage, build up, and edify Deaf believers in Christ.

In 2020, more than 500 women from three countries attended DWC. They left feeling inspired and on fire for the Lord. This year, you can expect amazing instruction, deep conversation, powerful worship, and women who are **ALL IN** to experience a stronger connection to Christ!

WHY GATHER?

Gathering is special. It's set apart from our daily routine. It unites us with a spark that lights a fire for the whole year. Gathering helps us engage with each other and reminds us that we are not alone.

HOW DO I HOST A GATHERING?

You can host a gathering virtually or locally (check out our Covid Safety Guideline on page 10). To host a local gathering, you can host it at someone's home, rented space, or at your church! To host a virtual event, you can set up a virtual meeting (Zoom, Skype, Google Chat) and watch it together. We recommend that you NOT to screen share the live stream. Encourage everyone to watch the conference on their monitor. You can also set up a group text or chat for women to watch together without joining physically in the same space.

WHO IS IT FOR?

Women, ages 12+, across denominations, generations, and cultures come together to know God and make Him known. This isn't about making the name of Deaf Women's Conference great. We want to see the name of Jesus Christ lifted high in our lifetime. We want to see a movement among Deaf women for the sake of the Kingdom.

WHAT IS THE SCRIPTURE WE'LL BE STUDYING?

DCW21 will be focusing on the book of Ephesians. We picked this book in particular, because we are seeing a common theme of identity struggle throughout Deaf communities. We believe the writer of Ephesians speaks strongly about this struggle.

We encourage everyone to read Ephesians before the conference. We also have created an accompanying prayer guide for you to pray for yourself and your friends before, during, and after the conference.

We are excited to be reminded of what God says about us and be encouraged by how He can use us to make his name known!

WHAT IS THE SCHEDULE FOR THE CONFERENCE?

FRIDAY (CST)	SATURDAY (CST)
6:00pm - Worship	10:00am - Worship
6:10pm - Session 1	10:15am - Session 5
6:45pm - Session 2	10:45am - Session 6
7:15pm - Session 3	11:20am - Session 7
7:50pm - Session 4	12:00pm - Lunch, Q&A
8:30pm - Wrap Up	1:30pm - Session 8
	2:00pm - Session 9
	2:40pm - Session 10
	3:10pm - Session 11
	4:00pm - Worship

WHO WILL BE PRESENTING AT DEAF WOMEN'S CONFERENCE 2021?



JANET MORENO

is a graphic designer and a founder of Rings & Coffee, LLC. She is passionate about jewelry design, uplifting others, ASL alliteration, and of course, the gospel. She is currently living in Maryland with her husband and their precious toddler. She still dreams of moving to Charleston, SC to be close to her family and open a coffee shop. One day!



RENCA DUNN

After moving over 30 times in her life, Renca currently hails from Iowa. She just completed her journey as a Bible translator at Deaf Missions. She is now transitioning to becoming a Doctoral candidate in the field of Communication Studies at the University of Nebraska Lincoln for this upcoming fall. Renca enjoys expressing her humor through videos which you can see on Facebook and Instagram titled as Really Renca. She loves signing songs and traveling the world. Most of all, she loves Jesus.



BELINDA MCCLEESE

was raised by her both Deaf parents in Virginia. As an '86 graduate of Gallaudet University and '87 graduate of Deaf International Bible College, she pursued her MA degrees in Psychology Counseling and Pastoral Counseling at Trinity College of Graduate Studies. She currently serves as a licensed Marriage & Family Therapist / Deaf Service Coordinator in Orange County, CA. Now, she serves as Spiritual Care Mentor of National Deaf Culture Fellowship of Assemblies of God. As Director, she remains committed to fulfilling Vineyard Deaf Ministries' mission statement: empowering potential leadership to embrace Christ's vital life flowing through them into the community. She enjoys the awe of Nature and always has a soft spot in her heart for furry, four-pawed pals.



LAURA HILL

was born and raised in Texas until God called her and her husband to Virginia in 2019 where her husband serves as the Pastor at Deaf Mission of Richmond's First Baptist Church. Laura has over 28 years of experience in education and currently works as a Deaf and Hard of Hearing teacher with Richmond Public Schools and an adjunct faculty member at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College for the Interpreter Training Program. In her spare time (which is very rare), she works as an Independent Consultant with Pampered Chef. She is currently a student at Liberty University working on her Ed.D degree in Educational Leadership. Laura is very involved in the ministry alongside her husband, Dirk and has the greatest desire for deaf women to have an intimate relationship with God and to become women after God's own heart. Laura has two college-aged children - Dakota (21) and Lexi (19). Her primary ministry is being a wife and a mother and her favorite verse is Joshua 24:15 - As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.



DONNA VALVERDE

is an introvert who does a hodge-podge of tasks in her roles as an administrative assistant and deaf interpreter. With a background in deaf education, advocacy and project management, she uses her organizational and bilingual language skills to uplift the deaf people she serves. Donna's way of walking with Jesus is summed up in 1 Thessalonians 4:11a: "and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands." It fits with God's calling for her life: to serve at home, work and in the local church. There are a few times when Donna is not quiet: during worship, when she has to take a stand, and when God is the topic of a conversation. Her favorite thing about God is that He is a loving, no nonsense Dad who saves her from depression and continually leads her to repentance. Feet firmly planted on His truth, Donna remains #unmoved and hopes to inspire others to stay firm in Christ.



ASHLEY CLARK

teaches the basics of sign language on Instagram, @signedwithheart. She's passionate about helping improve the communications between the hearing and the Deaf, and also about reaching hearing parents of deaf children and encouraging them to learn sign language to communicate with their deaf child. She's also passionate about sharing about God because He has changed her life. Ashley wants others to come to know God and experience His goodness too.



CRYSTAL (KELLEY) SCHWARTZ

is a prayer warrior and motivation coach, loves to remind herself and others that "God is good, God is great...and greater are WE that have Christ within us, than we who go against God's grace." Crystal has enjoyed the privilege of working as a performer, sign language educator, deaf interpreter, author and family involvement specialist for over 30 years. Working as an independent contractor brings great opportunities that she considers blessings from God, but they also bring great challenges. What does it mean to be a Christian today in 2021; balancing a productive life that includes distractions and still connect with God at the same time? What does it mean to be a Christian in a world where the majority are against God? How do we become one with God, and represent God if we are not fully armored? Colossians 3:12-15 is the answer Crystal continues to impart daily as she navigates through many different roles in her life. Distractions are everywhere, it is essential to stay focused and continue to represent the Good News that God is Love and that goodness comes from God. At this year's DWC conference, Crystal is excited to receive this time with you to share testimonies along with tips on how to stay on God's battlefield with a heart full of grace which promises us victory in the end. Crystal will also take this time to pray together for our strength to keep going and will also share an excerpt from one of her poems, "Blessed Victory."



TANYA POLSTRA

serves as the Executive Director of Silent Blessings Deaf Ministries. Her passion is teaching the ASL communities about the Deaf worldview, sign languages, and the intersections of theology and the Deaf. She brings a distinctly Deaf perspective to show how sign language scripture speaks to all of life. Tanya encourages ASL communities who embrace sign languages to become aware that they are a part of a movement that God is orchestrating to fulfill His command in Matthew 28, to make disciples. She holds an MA in Disabilities Studies with an emphasis on policy and advocacy in ministry from California Baptist University in Riverside, California. She was in a discipleship training program spanning four years with courses such as Grasping God's Word, Perspectives on the World Christian Movement, and Deafhood 101, and is currently in Vineyard Deaf Ministries' 2-year inner Transformation Program under Belinda McCleese. She has given workshops on Deaf-centricity and ethics from both the Deaf and interpreter perspectives at community colleges, churches, and conferences. Tanya and her husband have been married for 10 years. They have three children (2016, 2018, 2020), they live in Indianapolis, Indiana. She loves to read books about leadership, missions, and trauma healing. She has run 24 half marathons and 2 full marathons and looks forward to training again this Fall.



ANN LYNN PARKER

was born and raised in Baltimore, Ann Lynn (Smith) Parker attended Maryland School for the Deaf and graduated from Gallaudet University in 1998. When Ann Lynn met Jesus through a friend and accepted salvation in 1997, she knew she found an Everlasting Friend! She has extensive ministry experiences ranging from planning local church events to teaching small groups. Over the years, Ann Lynn has continued to preach and lead praise/worship at several Women's Retreats. As a California resident since 2007 and not missing the snow, Ann Lynn is an engaged member of the Bay Area Deaf community. Married to Pastor James, she has three blessed daughters and two dogs. Ann Lynn works as a Community Education Program Manager for a Deaf social services agency. In her spare time, she enjoys building up her event decorating business, Day to Rejoice Weddings & Events, which is based on Psalm 118:24.



LEXI HILL

Born in Dallas and raised in East Texas, Lexi is now enjoying the East Coast life in the DMV area as she navigates her second year of college life at Gallaudet University with a double major in History and Government with a minor in English. She plans to either teach or become a lawyer with the goal of focusing on advocacy for bilingualism and Deaf education. Whenever she isn't studying or working, you can easily find her cuddled up under a fuzzy blanket with a cup of creamer and a splash of coffee reading a new novel while checking out her favorite Christian artist Lauren Daigle's songs.



DR. KAREN BREGMANDMIN, M.S., B.A.

enjoys quality time with two amazing adult sons, a daughter-in-law, and a sweet Chocolate Labrador/Pit Bull, "Ellie," as the 'lights' of her life. At the end of her college freshman year in 1986, Karen accepted Jesus as her Savior. Afterward, Karen learned her decision caused a painful, bitter division between her parents' beliefs; they disowned her for several years. God's faithfulness sustained Karen through 38 years of incredible journeys and unexpected miracles. Since 2017, Karen serves as Commissioned Pastor with Rock Church Deaf Ministry and Pastoral Support Team. Karen completed mission trips to a Deaf school in Mexico, provided leadership training to Deaf Christian Leaders and Pastors in Cuba. In 2021, Karen completed her Doctor of Ministry studies from Bethel Seminary in San Diego/St. Paul. Karen coordinated a Deaf Pastors Cohort for her doctorate project that produced essential research findings toward improving Deaf pastoral self-care. Since 1993, Karen has served with the Deaf community as Leader of various organizations: Co-Founder/President of San Diego Chapter DWU. In 2006, Karen served as NAD's Chair of the Diversity Strategic Team to create initiatives to improve their efforts to become diverse-friendly and establish the standard of diversity within the American Deaf community. Since 1997, Karen serves with NADC as a Board member (President, 2004-2014, Past President, 2014-present).

COVID SAFETY

At the time of your event, we recommend that you adhere to the health and safety guidelines mandated by your local officials and your church. There is no way to know what to expect these guidelines will be the weekend of April 23-24, 2021 and later. However we encourage you to gather in person in a way that protects the women in your community.

Here are a few safety suggestions:

- Hosts and volunteers should wear masks when setting up the space
- Arrange seating in your event space with 6ft. distances between rows on each side, behind, and in front of one another
- Use ushers and greeters to help guide to seating
- Consider taping markers on the ground and/or gentle and loving signs to help remind people to stay distanced
- Supply masks and hand sanitizer for women in case anyone forgets
- Ask that women wear a mask in the building, but allow them to remove their masks when seated
- Anything you want attendees to have at their seats should be placed at the seats (with gloves) ahead of time
- If supplying food, have masked volunteers serve all of the food. Snacks should be pre-packaged in individual serving sizes
- If hosting in a large space with many women, Before dismissing women for breaks, the emcee should ask women to stay seated until the ushers come by to release row by row.
- Usher women starting from the back to the front in order to prevent crowding at the doors.

HOSTING TIPS

Established roles for people to take part of hosting!

ROLES	RESPONSIBILITIES
Hospitality	Food and beverage (remember to include volunteers in addition to your attendees)
Technical	Someone to run the livestream or videos Slides for worship and announcements
Communication	Spreading the word about your event Communicating pre-event and post-event to your attendees
Accounting	Someone who is tracking the money coming in and the money going out
Decoration	Directional signage Decor
Activities	Ice breakers, communion, alter call, take away in the end

TECHNOLOGY HELP

HOW DO I ACCESS THE EVENT?

You'll log-in to your Attendee Profile at live.deafmillennial.com on April 23rd and 24th to view the live event!

WHAT BROWSERS CAN I USE TO VIEW DWC 2021?

We recommend Google Chrome, Safari, and Firefox - we think Chrome works best with our platform. Internet Explorer is not recommended. You can also stream on iOS or Android platforms.

CAN I USE A ROKU, APPLE TV, OR AMAZON FIRE TO WATCH THE EVENT?

No, the Deaf Women Conference livestream will not be accessible from any apps. You can only watch it by logging into the link given through a computer, tablet, or phone. If you want to display it on a television or large screen, you will need HDMI cables, Chromecast, etc.

CAN I TEST MY LIVESTREAM?

Yes! We will have two livestream tests you can join:

Thursday, April 22nd at 8pm CST OR

Friday, April 23rd, at 12pm CST

HOW DO I TURN ON CLOSED CAPTIONS?

Closed captions will automatically be embedded to allow full accessibility to all.

Pro tip: *Is all of this freaking you out? Talk to a woman or man in your community who is techsavvy and put them in charge or have them coach you. This will reduce the amount of stress!*

WHAT DO I NEED TO WATCH DWC 2021?

There are a few things that you have to have in order to watch the livestream comfortably from your home, church, or venue.

You will need: Internet Connection / Streaming Device / A Way for Your Group to Watch

INTERNET CONNECTION

Best option: Network Cable aka Ethernet (fastest and most reliable)

- Please test your internet speed (use whatever device you will livestream on)
- Go to speedtest.net and click “Go”
- Download speed is the important one! You must have a Minimum of 5-10 Mb/sec

Pro tip: *Do not give out your wifi information to your attendees! Having multiple devices running at the same time will likely impact your viewing experience.*

STREAMING DEVICE

Best option: Laptop or Desktop Computer

- You can also use data from a cell service on your phone or tablet as a backup plan in case your internet gets finicky.
- To connect your computer to a TV, you may need a dongle. There are cheap options available on Amazon. Google it!

Pro tip: *We recommend starting your gathering 15-30 minutes late, but start the video on time and hit pause! This will allow the video to load and will likely limit the amount of buffering you encounter.*

A WAY FOR YOUR GROUP TO WATCH

Best option: Television or Projector & Screen

- You will need an HDMI cable or VGA cable (for older TVs)
- Chromecast, Apple Mirroring/AirPlay, or a Projector work for viewing, but you will not be able to watch the event through the internet browser on your SmartTV, Roku Streaming, or apps on your AppleTV.

LIVESTREAM TROUBLESHOOTING TIPS

Here are some tips to help you if you come across any technical issues. Please follow the tips before contacting us for assistance.

IF YOUR INTERNET ISN'T WORKING:

- When in doubt, unplug it and plug it back in.
- Have someone else connect to your internet on their phone to make sure the internet is functioning. If it works for a friend on their device it means your issue is not with the internet connection.

IF YOUR DEVICE (LAPTOP/TABLET/PHONE) ISN'T WORKING:

- Close the internet browser tab that you are using and reopen a new tab to try again.
- If that doesn't work, quit your browser, count to ten, open it up, and try again.
- If that doesn't work, shut down or restart your computer and try again.
- If that doesn't work, use a backup device (tablet, phone, another laptop, etc).

IF YOUR DEVICE AND INTERNET IS WORKING, BUT THE VIDEO STILL WON'T PLAY:

- Make sure the version of your internet browser (Chrome, Safari, Firefox, etc) is the latest one.
- The livestream might have a universal issue... Pause. You may have to wait it out. In this circumstance, you will likely get correspondence from Deaf Millennial Project with instructions or tips.

YOU MAY HAVE VIDEO BUT NO AUDIO:

- Make sure the video isn't muted (and that volume is up on both your TV and your device).
- You can unplug the HDMI cord and see if the sound will play through your laptop. If it works then you will know that the connection to the TV is the issue.
- You can always huddle around a laptop to watch as a last resort and ditch the TV entirely.

BUFFERING TROUBLES (THE VIDEO IS STOPPING AND STARTING FREQUENTLY):

- Pause it... let it buffer and "catch up" then push play again. Maybe have some time for conversation or get coffee refills while you wait for 10 minutes.
- If that doesn't work, try to close and reopen the tab again so it will reload.

CONTACT OUR TEAM

If you need further assistance, you will be able to chat live with our team on **Friday, April 23rd, from 4 pm - 10pm CST, and Saturday, April 24th, from 7:30 am - 4:00 pm CST.**

JOIN

the facebook event!

Interested in hosting for women who does not have a group? Join our **Deaf Women Conference 2021 Facebook Event Page** to plan one, viturally or locally!

