



EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN
CHURCH IN AMERICA

DiaconNews

A Bi-Monthly Newsletter for Diaconal Ministers of the ELCA

www.elca.org/diaconalministry/

September, 2008

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New LIFE School

By Kris Perry

One of the joys of living in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis/St. Paul is that we have many diaconal ministers here as well as candidates. I have been honored to attend many consecrations of our colleagues over the years, which is always a wonderful opportunity to renew my own vows to this meaningful ministry.

Another joy is visiting various ministry sites and learning how our colleagues are living out their baptismal call to serve others. Recently I had the privilege of traveling to New York to accompany my husband on a business trip, so I took the opportunity to spend a day with my dear friend, Christine Connell, who serves as the Executive Director for Community Relations for Lutheran Social Services of New York. It just so happened that the day I had set aside to spend with her was the very first graduation for the New LIFE School.

Launched in the fall of 2006, The New LIFE School is a partnership between Lutheran Social Services of New York and the New York City Department of Education. The New LIFE School features programming that addresses the educational, psychological and socialization issues of students with special needs, (continued on p. 4)



The National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Division 2008 fall conference

“Mindful Living: Healthy Churches, Healthy People, Healthy Planet”

Learning about the world of toxins in our life

Oct 9-11 at the Lake Geneva Christian Center
Alexandria, MN

Since 1997, the NCC has hosted a series of highly informative and empowering national, ecumenical conferences on various eco-justice themes. (see p.3)

Reflections on the DMFE
DMFE 2008 Version of the Loaves and Fishes
By Roberta Meyer

It was on the van ride to the seminary from the Baltimore Airport that I experienced my first taste of physical sustenance with the diaconal community of DMFE 2008. I can't call it a feast or even a meal. It was more like the little boy sharing the loaves and fishes with the hungry crowd. Ten of us assembled at the airport, arriving from all directions in the United States. Because of the nature of the airlines industry, there were delayed flights and luggage issues. Many of us left home early in the morning and hadn't eaten anything but peanuts all day. The van trip that was supposed to begin at 7:00 in the evening on Saturday, didn't start for Gettysburg until close to 10:00. We were all hungry and after sitting in the van waiting for everyone's belongings to join us, we were thirsty, too. Our distress was felt even more by one member of the group who was carrying an extra passenger in utero demanding nutrition. It was just like the story in Matthew 14. "We have nothing except..." "Bring me what you have..."

Duffle bags and backpacks were rummaged through to produce granola bars, candy bars, and life savers. The van driver even donated four bottles of water he had in a cooler. The meal was sparse, but it did the trick and relieved the tiniest passenger in our midst until we came to a fast food store where his/her mother could give the little cherub a great American meal from the Golden Arches. In the experience we bonded. This was the beginning of our teamwork and fellowship. It tied us together for the common good. It also made me very aware of our fortunate existence. Our hunger was temporal. There are so many in this world that live daily with this hunger. I can't help but take blame for this. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's words ring out to me: So long as we eat our bread together we shall have sufficient even with the least. Not until one person desires to keep his own bread for himself does hunger ensue. (Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, Life Together)

A Clear Call to Ambiguity

You're called to be what?

A diaconal minister?

What's that?

What do you mean you are to be Christ in the world?

Doing what?

Diaconal ministers can be almost anything—have many different trained skills?

Diaconals can be teachers, medical professionals, preachers, writers, business experts, musicians—

But that sounds like anyone can be—

What do you mean, I'm right?

Actually, all baptized people are diaconals? Then why are you going to seminary?

To be something you already are.

And to teach other baptized children of God to be what they already are, too?

I'm having a hard time understanding.

You are going to seminary to study to become what you became when you were baptized?

Yeh, well—it's your money.

Roberta Meyer July 24, 2008



Roberta Meyer and her small group at DMFE 2008

Eco-Conference, continued

The 2008 conference, to be held at a lakeside retreat center in Minnesota, will present further rich opportunities for networking, empowering fellowship and worship, and loads of information about toxics.

From children's toys to water bottles to household cleaning products, the variety and quantity of dangerous toxics in our daily lives is ever increasing. Join this ecumenical gathering to educate yourself on the toxics found in everyday items. Learn what you can do to remove these chemicals from your home, your church, and your life.

For more details including agenda, speakers, registration forms and workshops see: <http://www.nccecojustice.org/mnconf.htm>

Servant Ministry Forum

A forum on servant ministry titled, "Diakonia in the World: Past, Present and Future Perspectives," was held in April 2008 at Peace, Wayland, Mass. The program considered the historical role of servant ministry (diakonia) in the Christian church through the centuries and as manifested today in the three servant ministry rosters of the ELCA - Associate in Ministry, Deaconess and Diaconal Minister. Participating in a discussion panel were Pr. Ted Asta (from left), associate to the bishop of the New England Synod, ELCA, for candidacy; Sister Carol M. Weaver, Parish Deaconess at Pilgrim Lutheran Church, Warwick, R.I.; Dr. Jeannine E. Olson, professor of history at Rhode Island College, who authored "Deacons and Deaconesses through the Centuries" (Concordia Publishing House, revised 2005), and Heather Feltman, CEO of Lutheran Social Services of New England, and a Diaconal Minister in the ELCA. The panel was preceded by a presentation by Dr. Olson, a 16th century historian and former ALC missionary to Cameroon, west Africa. The program was arranged by Susan Lindberg Haley, a member of Peace, Wayland, who has been approved for a call as a Diaconal Minister, and moderated by Pr. Jeffrey L. Johnson, Peace, Wayland. The forum opened with the singing of ELW #712, "Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service."



Wanted: Your Stories

The editorial staff of DiacoNews is always looking for fresh news to share with you. Here are some of the areas that we'd like to develop and we invite you to share: a favorite quote, a good book, creative idea for a special worship service, your call story, your faith story or where you found your towel and basin and how you use them in your call.

Entries can be sent to: LBullock@hotmail.com

Job Opportunities:

Program Coordinator: Center of Christian-Muslim Engagement for Peace and Justice Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

The Center of Christian-Muslim Engagement for Peace and Justice (CCME) at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC) seeks a highly organized, articulate, and committed person to serve as Program Coordinator. The Coordinator assumes primary responsibilities for the CCME program, under the supervision of the Director of the Center. The Coordinator is responsible for the planning and execution of programming related to the Center of Christian-Muslim Engagement for Peace and Justice, (CCME). The Coordinator serves as the office administrator, public relations coordinator, and resource facilitator for the Center so that the mission and ministry of CCME may increase.

Tasks and responsibilities include: maintenance of the program's web page, management of specific and general communications, recordkeeping, responding to phone and email inquiries, mailing, copying, faxing, filing and assembly of materials, work with the Director in planning and organizing CCME program activities and administering finances.

The ideal candidate must have ability to plan, organize and run conferences and various kinds of interfaith meetings, and have computer/IT skills such as Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Webpage maintenance software. The candidate must have a warm and welcoming office presence in order to work with a variety of people across cultural, ethnic and religious lines. The candidate must also have a desire to read and pay close attention to what's happening in the area of local, regional and global interfaith relations.

This is a full time position and the ideal candidate will have relevant experience in the areas of higher education, seminary education, interfaith relations, event planning, and/or program administration. Occasional evening and weekend hours are required.

Join our team of employees committed to serving through the ministry of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. We offer a very competitive salary and exceptional benefits including vacation, fully paid medical, dental, pension contributions for employee and family. LSTC is located in the beautiful Hyde Park neighborhood of Chicago. Mail, fax, or e-mail your cover letter and resume to: Administration and Finance Office, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, 1100 E 55th Street, Chicago, IL, 60615; fax: 773-256-0782; e-mail: bberridg@lstc.edu. The LSTC website is www.lstc.edu. You may phone 773-256-0783 or 773-256-0758 for further information.

(continued from p. 1) students falling through the cracks within the public education system. At The New LIFE School, students experience creative learning activities, positive social interactions, peer and adult relationship development, and behavior management techniques that enrich and strengthen them every day. Individually tailored learning experiences, combined with family support and assistance, engage students who can thrive in a smaller, specialized school setting. Intense classroom experiences and a low, very personalized staff-to-student ratio support this effort. Students at The New LIFE School can sufficiently stabilize during their enrollment period. This increases their choices of traditional educational programs after having gained or amplified the skills needed to further compliment their personal lifelong endeavor in learning.

It was an honor and a privilege to meet the incredible staff, the enthusiastic and excited students, and to participate in their very first graduation ceremony. I stand in awe of this wonderful program and the incredible work that Christine has accomplished over the past two years. Her love of the children and her dedication to their well-being is phenomenal.

I encourage all of you to take time out of your busy schedules to seek out one of your colleagues in ministry and spend a day in their world, learning about the fine work being done to those in need. And then, please share your story with the rest of us. We will all gain from learning about the powerful ministry taking place around the country. Thanks be to God for The New LIFE School and for Christine Connell who has led this effort so faithfully!

Regional Events Being Planned

In February 2007, 16 people from each of the Associates in Ministry, the Diaconal Ministry and the Deaconess Community rosters came together. Their final statement was the following: *We desire to speak to the church with one voice. We recommend that a conversation be furthered, among the four rostered ministries that assures participation by all and moves at a careful and deliberate pace. This conversation would attempt to develop a consensus understanding of and proposal regarding the public ministry of Word and Service.*

You are now invited to the “next step” of this journey, by coming together at one of the events listed below to continue the conversation. Goals of the event include listening to one another; understanding the present situation and the final statement of the Florida consultation; and exploring the meaning of word and service ministry and its potential impact on the future of the church. Regional Coordinators are planning these events. Some regions are still discerning dates and places, so check with your regional coordinator for information if it is missing below. It is our hope that all diaconal ministers will make an effort to attend a regional event that is convenient for you.

Proposed Preparatory Readings: Part 1 of “Together for Ministry”; Chapter 4 – “A History of the Diaconate” (Duane Larson’s book); “The Work of a Christian: Vocation in Lutheran Perspective” by Kleinhans and; LWF 2005 Brazil Consultation, page 81-88; LWF 2002 “Ten Propositions for the Discussion of Diakonia” – from Prophetic Diakonia, pgs 56-59. For a complete list of suggested readings, go to: www.elca.org/leadership.wordandservice.

Region 1

Dates/Place: TBD

Coordinators: Jan Cherry and Ethyl Mae Nelson

Region 2

Dates: 9/22-23, 2008

Place: Carefree, AZ

Coordinators: Margy Schmitt Ajer, Madelyn Busse, Agnes McClain

Region 3

Dates: 1/26-27, 2009

Place: Luther Crest Retreat Center

Coordinator: Craig Boehlke

Region 4

Dates/Place: TBD

Coordinator: Stephanie Varnum

Region 5

Dates: 4/2009

Place: TBD

Coordinator: Carl Evenson

Region 6

Dates/Place: TBD

Coordinator: Diane Schweiger-Alexander

Region 7

Dates: 5/20-22, 2009

Place: Passionist Ctr, Bronx, NY

Coordinator: Peggy Wuertele

Region 8

Dates/Place: TBD

Coordinator: Nancy Gable

Region 9

Dates: 3/22-24, 2009

Place: Atlanta, GA

Coordinators: Sandra Holland, Harvey Huntley

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

**Diaconal Ministry
Community Gathering
July 18-20, 2009
GA Institute of Technology
Atlanta, Georgia**

You won't want to miss the seventh gathering of ELCA diaconal ministers located on the beautiful campus of GA Tech near Atlanta, GA. Watch your mailbox soon for registration information and pricing! Our gathering will be attached to the World DIAKONIA gathering*, also providing time to meet with ELCA Deaconesses and hopefully members of the Lutheran Deaconess Association (LDA).

We anticipate the cost of our event will not exceed \$225 per person (does not include transportation to the event and/or participation in the World DIAKONIA event). Questions in the meantime can be directed to Linda Sprick Kruse, chairperson of the Gathering Planning Team, at: genesisrich@aol.com or 937-846-1979. Volunteers are also needed to serve in a variety of ways, so contact Linda if you would like to learn more. Registration leaflets will be sent to you this fall, so watch your mailbox and plan to attend this meaningful event.

*For information on the World DIAKONIA event, go to our website at: www.elca.org/diaconalministry/ and look at our previous DiacoNews. Sister Carol Burk of the ELCA Deaconess Community is the Communications Chair for this event. For further information, questions, or to learn of volunteer opportunities, contact Sr. Carol at: cburk@stphilipschurchsc.org.

The Ecumenical Network for the Diaconate (TEND)

Friday, November 14, 2008

9:00a – 3:30p

\$30 (includes lunch)

**Our Lady of Hope Catholic Church
9711 West Devon – Rosemount, Illinois**

The purpose of TEND is to establish connections among faith traditions for the sharing of information and resources for Diakonia groups in the USA, as well as to develop and maintain a list of available resources for study and research, provide a place for leaders to meet for conversation on the diaconate present and future, to develop a virtual connection, and to explore and encourage publication of papers and scholarship relating to the diaconate. If you are interested in participating in their annual gathering, please contact Father Mike Ahlstrom at 708-366-8900 or mahlstrom@archchicago.org.

Birthdays**September**

- 3 Lake Lambert
- 3 Tara Ulrich
- 5 Marlene Daubert
- 6 Elaine Brant
- 6 Jennifer Krueger
- 6 Sue Setzer
- 13 Suzie Everingham
- 13 Jeff Schacht
- 14 Kati Kluckman-Ault
- 19 Gerald Klim
- 20 Kelly Howard
- 22 Amy Hartman
- 22 Bruce Romanic
- 22 Mike Willis
- 23 David Glover
- 24 Michelle Willis
- 27 Gayla Crosmer
- 30 Virginia Rodriguez-Balanoff

October

- 1 Jan Cherry
- 2 Wendy Roberts
- 3 Janice Phoebus
- 4 Marvin Combs
- 9 Linda Kruse
- 17 Nancy Gable
- 17 Marilyn Hugh
- 19 Ellen Doughty
- 20 Eva Schulte
- 21 Gus Mauro
- 22 Rebecca Mastarlez
- 25 Sarah Wilson
- 28 Heather Oberdeck
- 30 Pat Gerber

November

- 2 Joanne Otte
- 3 Pat Kane
- 10 Dawn Alitz
- 12 Rachelle Gilbertson
- 14 Judy Bergeson
- 17 Rebecca Kolowe
- 18 Shari O'Brien
- 18 Anna Wagner
- 19 Catherine Smith
- 25 Kelly Wilkins
- 30 Diane Luscombe

Holy God, hear our prayer

Prayers of sympathy

Margy Schmitt Ajer on the death of her mother July 9

Jessica Nipp on the death of her grandfather in late July

Kathy Massa on the death of her brother, Philip Laufer, in late July

The family and friends of **Bishop John Schreiber**, SE Michigan Synod, August 16

The family and friends of the **Rev. Dr. Connie Kleingartner**, LSTC staff, August 21

Prayers for healing and hope

Lillian Naber, mother of Gloria Strickert, hospice care for multiple myeloma DM Candidate, **Charlie Smith**, dialysis and awaiting transplant

Alex Herrera, husband of Sue Vogel, cancer remission

DM Candidate, **Tamara Harder**, battling breast cancer

Diana Luscombe, recovering from a severe auto accident. She continues to make remarkable progress that exceeds everyone's expectations and dreams as evidenced by her taking many steps without the aid of her therapist

Magee Rehabilitation, Room 567-2

1513 Race St

Philadelphia PA 19102-1177

Marjorie Myers, partial renal failure

Pat Kane and all those recently affected by the flooding in Iowa

John Endres, father-in-law of Terri Endres, as he recuperates at her home over the next several weeks from a staph infection and endocarditis

John Holland, father-in-law of Mindy Holland, as he recuperates from open heart surgery and chemotherapy and radiation following removal of a brain tumor.

Prayers of congratulations

(celebrating 10 years of consecrated diaconal ministry)

Jennifer A. McBride, October 11, 2008

Douglas B. Spiotta, November 1, 2008

Prayers of discernment to those approved, awaiting call

Denise Benjamin, Mary Black, Joel Bradtke, Ed Broestle, Lynn Bullock, Ellen Doughty, Robert Fisher, Sue Franke, Tonya Gunton, Susan Haley, Nicole Houck, Troy Jacobson, Janet Johnson, Diana Luscombe, Rachel March, Jane Mason, Kathy Massa, Rebecca Mastalerz, Janice Miller, Richard Mohr-Kelly, Emily Myallis, Sarah Parker, Janice Phoebus, Elizabeth Rietz Pearce, Terra Rowe, Diane Runyan, Janet Schauer, Nancy Selinger, Charles Smith, Shirley Talbot, David Thoresen, Georgia Van Hoesen, Christopher Wagener, Sue Way, Loren Wehmeyer, Kelly Wilkins

Reflections on DMFE 2008

By Brigette Weier

They arrived by planes and cars. Some drove 1800 miles from their home in Rugby, ND and others simply walked a couple of blocks from their new residence. Different ages, states, nationalities, life stories and educational backgrounds. All of these "differences" converged at Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg to participate in the same experience of the Diaconal Ministry Formation Event this July. At first, there were shy "hellos" and tentative hand shakes when passing the peace during worship. Hesitancy of where to sit at meals and chapel. Slowly, stories unfolded and differences faded into common ground. Barriers were crossed and lowered. Shared experiences emerged. Short introductory conversations gave way to long walks on breaks filled with meaningful conversations about ministry, life and spiritual journeys. Large tables at meals went from quiet pleasantries, to teeming with hearty conversation and laughter. Small groups supported questions, doubts and tears. Theological concepts were hashed out and love for learning championed. Hugs to pass the peace at Chapel. The abundant love and grace of God commonly experienced and shared through each individual yet as a community.

This community was created out of a single event with a singular vision of bringing God's love and gospel message to world on behalf of the church. While each individual at this event will fulfill this vision differently, the message is the same. Living together in community for two weeks highlights the sameness and the differences of each person and can lead to friction. However, this friction never arose, as these soon-to-be Diaconal Ministers understand that differences and unique gifts strengthen and contribute to the community's oneness in Christ Jesus.

As communion was shared one last time before the community was scattered back to their different lives, that oneness as part of the body of Christ was apparent. Hugs, smiles, tearful good-byes and God blesses were dispensed for the journey. Barriers were now completely dissolved and all in the community were celebrated. Isn't that just like diaconal ministry?

DMC of the ELCA
c/o Kris Perry
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED