

Diaconal Ministry

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Nancy Gable

Companion Partners to Nigeria Return with Joy and Hope

By Kris Perry

Transformation ministry. That is what happens when people travel to developing nations and experience a different culture filled with joy, hope and faithfulness. Seventeen members of the Minneapolis Area Synod returned November 14 from two weeks in the Adamawa State in Nigeria. As in past trips, the group experienced the presence of Christ in many ways as they traveled to various locations witnessing the deeply spiritual nature of the members of the LCCN (Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria) as expressed through music, giving generously of their time, gifts and money, and in their priority to evangelize and grow the church by 10,000 new members each month! We have much to learn from our brothers and sisters in Christ. We have been transformed!

Two years ago when our group traveled to Nigeria, we were praying for a young woman friend of Kris Perry's who had just had brain surgery which resulted in no short-term memory. Her short-term memory is still impaired, but she is alive and making slow progress. At that time, we asked our friends in Nigeria to pray for Megan and they did. Upon arriving in Nigeria this year, one of the first things I was asked was, "How is Megan doing, we have been praying for her?" I was astounded! I knew these people prayed, but I was overwhelmed that they had still been praying for Megan over these past two years. I believe one of the reasons Megan is still with us and making progress is because of their faithful prayers. One of our travelers was unable to go on the trip with us because he learned of a medical condition that prevented him from traveling that distance. We immediately requested prayers from our Nigerian partners. Not only did they pray, but they held a prayer vigil for him. At our first worship service in Abuja, he was prayed for, as well. Our friends truly rely on God for help and it was evident that God hears and responds to their prayers.

An historic event that struck all of us was that we were there during the election of our president. It was truly amazing to witness the reaction of the rest of the world to our country's election. I do not think that the majority of Americans realize how our country is viewed around the world or the hope that other nations (especially developing nations) place in our government's hands.

(continued on p.5)



Nigerian poster urging prayer for Senator Obama before the U.S. election



Shall We Wash Feet?

We are invited, once again, to get out our basins and towels and truly wash feet at the ELCA national youth gathering in New Orleans, LA July 22-26, 2009. Diaconal Ministers work aside deaconesses from the Lutheran Deaconesses Association (LDA) at many national church gatherings to refresh bodies and spirits by washing feet. If you are a diaconal minister OR a diaconal ministry candidate who will be in New Orleans for the youth gathering, plan on signing up to spend a few hours during the event in the foot-washing area off to the side of one of the main gathering spaces.

Participants at the 2008 WELCA national gathering pausing to be refreshed in the foot-washing area. Photo courtesy of diaconal minister Beth Barkau.

To get you in the mood and inspire you: A devotion from LDA Director of Education and Formation Diane Marten:

“Jesus... poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him... ‘If I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.’”

John 13:4-5, 14

I love washing feet at national church gatherings. I handle many feet. I notice their various shapes, sizes, colors and styles. So much difference in feet, yet so much the same.

Teenage feet are the most fun. Tattoos. Toe rings. Nail polish. Blisters. Sometimes, teens say, “Oooh. Isn’t it gross?” And I say, “No. Actually, it’s a pleasure to be with you.” And it is. It is a joy.

Mostly, people ask, “What’s a deaconess?” (We get asked that a lot.) Generally, I say, “We are women who serve people in need. Just as Jesus washed his disciples’ feet, we serve in ways that are not very glamorous.”

Then, silly questions: “So, do you wash feet for a living?” “Do you have to go to college?”

“Listen,” I say, “it’s just a symbol. Washing feet is a symbol of the way Jesus served. We have lots of other ways to serve people.”

By that time, bodies relax and normal conversation is irrelevant. They sigh. They smile. And when that happens, the foot washing isn’t just a symbol any more. It’s the most important thing I can do at that very moment. Christ is present, tending feet - again.

From the LSTS "Epistle" Fall 2008 edition:

In Memoriam: Connie M. Kleingartner. An article written by Kathleen D. (Kadi) Billman, dean and vice president for academic affairs says this:

"She dearly loved pastoral ministry, yet was one of the ELCA's fiercest advocates for new forms of ministry. Some of the students who most appreciated Connie were the diaconal ministry students she shepherded and whose calls to serve on the bridge between congregation and world she championed."

Connie was one of the first seminary faculty to commit to being present at summer formation events at Gettysburg. She participated in Churchwide consultations on diaconal ministry and was an advocate. Peace be to her memory.

Madelyn Herman Busse, diaconal minister

Tend Gathering Report by Joanne Otte

On November 14th there was an ecumenical gathering of the diaconate (TEND) in the Chicago area. Representatives of the diaconate from four denominations were present: Roman Catholic, Episcopal, and United Methodist Deacons, ELCA Deaconesses and Diaconal Ministers, United Methodist Diaconal Ministers and Deaconesses and Deaconesses from the LDA. This gathering happens once a year and is an opportunity for discussion, mutual work and continued education.

The first part of the morning was we had a presentation from an Episcopal Deacon and Spiritual Director. He shared his ideas on integration through life and stages that each of us go through. We start with physicality, then move to personhood, then to soul. Spirituality is the balancing of all three of these. Each is important and integral to each of us as persons. He used a triangle as a symbol for talking about these three and how some of us may lead with or focus on one aspect in life or we may fall between two of them and are weaker in one aspect. We strive toward seeing the connection of all three of these in spirituality and that throughout history some have been down-played or even belittled in importance.

The second part of the day we had presentations from people in each denomination about the uniqueness of the diaconate in that tradition, the history and how they are rostered and ordered. We were presented with a chart showing all of the rosters in each denomination and if they are consecrated, commissioned or ordained. Some groups also shared their rite of consecration or ordination. There was lively discussion as we were learning about candidacy process and call in various traditions.

The joy in this kind of gathering is seeing the diaconal vision across denominations and hearing about the ministry that is being done. It was exciting to gather in an ecumenical setting with others who share the same vision and calling in the church. I would encourage others to consider coming in future years, particularly those near Chicago.

Register Soon:

You are invited to attend

the Biennial gathering of the

Diaconal Ministry Community of the ELCA

On the Way to Diakonia

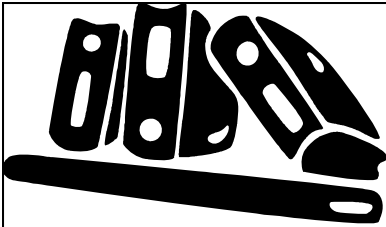
Crossroads of Grace...Revive and Reconcile

July 18-20, 2009

Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, GA

We will meet prior to the world gathering in order to welcome new members to our community, reconnect with each other, take care of community business and worship together. This year we add the joy of being host to the world DIAKONIA gathering.

For a downloadable or printable registration form, go to our website at: www.elca.org/diaconalministry/resources/ For further information, questions, or to learn of volunteer opportunities, at the World Diakonia event contact Sr. Carol Burk of the ELCA Deaconess Community at: cburk@stphilipchurchsc.org.



Keep the Stories Alive by Sue Setzer

"When stories die, we can't remember who we are or why we're here." Dr. Susan McArver quotes these words from Sue Monk Kidd's *The Secret Life of Bees* to inspire candidates at the Diaconal Ministry Formation Event to learn the history of *diaconia*. The Diaconal Ministry Community shares this conviction by appointing archivists to keep the memories of the community alive. Since the terms of co-archivists Karen White and Sue Setzer expire this summer, the community invites others to be responsible for collecting and organizing records of historical interest for the future.

Over thirty-five pounds of paper, pictures, audiovisuals, CD's and flash drives now preserve the stories of the ELCA diaconal ministry community's formation from 1988 through August 2008 in the ELCA Archives in Chicago. Video copies of many presentations from the last summertime Diaconal Ministry Formation Event in July 2008, along with a notebook and handouts, were added to the archives. Copies of key documents from DMFE's from 1995 through 2007 were also sent to Chicago. All original DMFE archives remain in the library at Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg.

Anyone may receive copies of DMC archival items by contacting Elisabeth Wittman, Director of Archives and Chief Archivist at Elisabeth.Wittman@elca.org or 773-380-2818. The DMC archives are organized into five categories: Minutes, General Subject Files, Publications, Events Files, and Audiovisuals.

If you are willing to share your gifts to preserving the ongoing stories of diaconal ministry in the ELCA for the future, please contact Kris Perry at krisp@visi.com. For additional details about the role of the DMC community archivists, e-mail Sue Setzer at suesetzer@bellsouth.net.

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

Minnesota Council of Churches

Refugee Services

Title: Organizer: Refugee Mental Health Liaison

Employment Status: Half-time, exempt, permanent

Reports to: Associate Director of Refugee Services

PURPOSE:

MCC's Refugee Mental Health Program is funded by the Office for Refugee Resettlement through one of our two affiliated national agencies. This program is designed to increase community capacity to identify and connect refugees and asylees to mental health and therapeutic services. The Refugee Mental Health Liaison will play a key role in building the capacity of resettlement and mutual assistance agencies to appropriately serve clients who are from war-torn regions of the world. This is a two phased program whose goals are to: increase knowledge and resources of agencies to better connect clients to appropriate services earlier during their resettlement period, expand the network of resources that are available to refugees and asylees by building capacity and increasing knowledge of mainstream agencies, and to identify gaps and implement programming in other service areas that will benefit refugees and asylees.

TO APPLY:

Submit cover letter, resume or CV and MCC application, found on our website at www.mnchurches.org, to Pat Sample, Coordinator for Human Resources and Ecumenical Leadership. **APPLICATION ACCEPTED UNTIL POSITION IS FILLED. REVIEW OF APPLICANTS WILL BEGIN ON DECEMBER 31, 2008.**

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Minnesota Council of Churches, 122 West Franklin Ave #100, Minneapolis MN 55404
Phone: 612-874-8605 FAX: 612-870-3622 www.mnchurches.org

(continued from p. 1) The following are some comments from members of our group and what they heard and experienced on this subject. This first comment is from the program delivered at the Todi Diocese (one of six diocese of the LCCN): *"And we are concluding by congratulating you over your new election conducted a few days ago in the States. We pray to God to give President Obama the strength and wisdom to carry the United States to a greater height for her to continue to be the world's leading nation."* The Women Leader, Mrs. Halitha J Ayuba

Another quote, nearly word for word: *"We rejoice at Obama's election because you are not only electing the leader of your country, but in many ways, the leader of the world."*

Another traveler shared the following reflection: *"I found it very interesting that the church in Abuja had been praying for our elections and country. The pastor at the Dogon Dutse Sunday service said he did not sleep from 6:00p.m. to 6:00 a.m. on the night of the American elections because he was paying attention. He said he is very grateful for our outcome... but not because Obama is black, not because he himself is a Democrat, but because the American election process is one that works. I started to lose him at this point. But later I asked Dorthea (one of our Lutheran missionaries) about his point. She said that Nigerians are very impressed by our election process because we find out results within a day, that the "loser" graciously steps down and gives a kind speech and support for the president-elect and that the transition goes smoothly from one president to another. This is the total opposite of the Nigerian elections as they are so full of corruption, they don't find out results for months, often there is looting and violence. To myself I think, "Boy, if they could only see our ads and debates during the entire campaign..." But they would probably be grateful for that process as well. Since I did not see television on election night, I found out from Dorthea who won the presidency. For me, that was actually kind of special."*

The dancing in the streets, the high-fives and congratulations we received were awe-inspiring. I think each member of the group was touched by the utter hope-filled joy and happiness that we witnessed through our friends, who are hopeful that the United States will again be seen as the leader of the world and that their country will no longer be viewed as a source of fear and misunderstanding.

Unfortunately, on Thanksgiving Day night, as we gave God thanks for our many blessings (not the least of which was a peaceful election process), our friends in Jos, Nigeria experienced a religious crisis which was attributed to an election held that day where a Christian was elected to the Plateau State government over a Muslim. The Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria (LCCN) Dogon Karfe church, who is the partner of one of our synod congregations, was burned to the ground along with the home its pastor (Rev. Danlami Elkanah), and two of their youth were shot in the riots (one is recovering well, while the other is in a coma) and another is still missing.

I ask for your prayers for the City of Jos, the government of the Plateau State, and all the people, both Christian and Muslims, that calm will return and that no more blood will be shed or buildings burned. We also pray that all future elections will be peaceful and without violence.

News about this election crisis has been sparse in our newspapers, but you can learn more by googling "Jos Nigeria Election Riots".

We will visit Nigeria again next year and will spend time at the Dogon Karfe. It will be good to see the progress as they begin to rebuild their church and lives. May the New Year bring healing and hope to our friends in Nigeria!



The burned-out Dogon Karfe church.

A Letter Regarding Possible Changes to the Rite of Consecration

Dear Community:

I strongly encourage all of you to download Part II of the new ELW Provisional Resources and look closely at the proposed rite for Consecration. While there is an official group of reviewers, this Worship News invites the participation of all in the review process. There are some fairly significant changes proposed. Note especially the changes in the initial "address" to the candidate. The original language, (prepared by Paul Nelson who prior to serving as Director for Worship in the ELCA, was the director for the Study of Ministry which carefully studied the diaconate) that included reference to the historic call of deacons to serve those most in need on behalf of the Church is gone. And an earlier redaction (July 2008) included language saying, "According to apostolic usage certain women and men - among them Stephen and Philip, Phoebe and Priscilla - have been called to diaconal ministry..." There is now no reference to the historic diaconate and the calling of those who have gone before us. Gone, too, is the language that has been embraced by this community in the formation of our ministerial identity: "In the exercise of diaconal ministry cross every barrier that stands between the Church and its ministry in the broader world. Seek out those places where the gospel of Jesus Christ meets human need." The address to the candidate in the original contained two full and rich paragraphs that were descriptive of this ministry and helped interpret the ministry to a church still unfamiliar with this form of ministry. It is now reduced to five lines.

Another change that I believe is significant is that while the original Rite stated that "The presiding minister is normally the bishop of the synod in which the candidate is called "(or another bishop of this church) in this proposal it reads: "If unable to be present, the bishop authorizes another bishop or *ordained minister* of this church to preside." The ordination rite calls for the bishop or another bishop of the church. I believe it diminishes consecrated ministry to suggest that someone other than a bishop preside. The same is true for commissioned ministries. I find this to be a disheartening and hurtful change. Additionally, I find it to be concerned ecumenically. Having been part of Lutheran-Episcopal conversations and work on the possibility of the orderly exchange of deacons and diaconal ministers, the shape and language of the rite of entry was very critical in those conversations.

One positive change is that the notes on the service no longer make any reference to the use of stoles. That issue is simply not addressed.

One final comment: In an earlier redaction, a change had been made to the original service in the invitation to other rostered leaders to place one hand on the candidate during the time when the bishop lays two hands on the head of the one being consecrated. This was removed in this later edition currently up for review. I personally find that disappointing. To invoke the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands is something we do in healing services, at confirmation and other times in the life of the church. Yes, it means something different in ordination (Apostolic succession), but, in my opinion, fear of suggesting consecration become ordination is not a good reason to deny us the opportunity to join in the laying on of hands. Perhaps liturgical scholars can convince me otherwise, but I've not heard a compelling argument on this.

Please take the time to read, reflect and offer your comments via the link provided - "participate in the survey". If you would like to write to me, I do serve as a reviewer and I would be pleased to consider your input in my review. Write to me at mbusse@rmselca.org.

Madelyn Herman Busse, diaconal minister

Assistant to the Bishop

Rocky Mountain Synod of the ELCA

Editor's Note: Madelyn and others will be meeting with the V & E unit late in January. Their date for receiving comments as reviewers is January 30.

We Need Your Articles: 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: LBulock@hotmail.com Deadline for the next newsletter is December 15. New newsletter editor Lynn Bulock is also the Community Educator for the Ventura County (CA) Homeless & Housing Coalition, and will be consecrated into diaconal ministry in January, 2009 in the Southwest California Synod.

Birthdays

January

- 2 Suzanne Rigg
- 3 Gracia Hegener
- 4 Don Burgess
- 12 Ann Myhre
- 12 (Tara Shilts)
- 14 Tammy Rade
- 17 Joyce Freund
- 17 Audrey Forbes
- 22 Patty Lee
- 27 Margaret Howell
- 28 Terri Endres
- 29 Mindy Holland
- 30 (Cynthia Jones)
- 31 (Joel Nye)

February

- 5 Bill Dahl
- 6 Mary Lasits
- 13 Linda Fox
- 15 (Jane Alder)
- 16 Sheryl Faulk
- 16 Barb Schmitthenner
- 17 David Thoresen
- 20 (Linda Davis)
- 23 Jan Johnson
- 25 Marilyn Olson
- 27 Ed Kruse
- 28 Susan Haley

March

- 2 Carole Bohn
- 4 Diane Runyan
- 7 Letha Isbell
- 10 Laurie Beckman-
Yetzer
- 11 Joy Heine
- 13 (Andrea Olson)
- 19 Sharon Biles
- 21 Barb Finley
- 21 Charles Smith
- 21 Christy Van O'Linda
- 26 Libbie Reinking
- 27 Troy Faith Ward
- 30 Julie Stegelmann
- 31 Barb Martyn

Holy God, hear our prayer

Prayers of sympathy

Mindy Holland, upon the death of John Holland, her father-in-law from a brain tumor, November 8

Prayers for healing and hope

Lillian Naber, mother of Gloria Strickert, hospice care for multiple myeloma

Charlie Smith, dialysis and awaiting transplant

Alex Herrera, husband of Sue Vogel-Herrera, 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

Prayers of congratulations

(celebrating 10 years of consecrated diaconal ministry)

Lake Lambert 02-14-09

Karen White, 02-21-09

Recent Consecrations

Ed Broestl 12-21-08 (#161)

Shirley Talbot, 12-29-08 (#162) synod call to chaplaincy at St. Anthony's Hospital, St. Louis, MO

Upcoming Consecrations

Lynn Bulock, 1-25-09 (#163) synod call to Ventura County (CA) Homeless & Housing Coalition

Pam Werth, 2-7-09 (#164)

Prayers of discernment to those approved, awaiting call

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

Data Base Administrator

We are happy to announce that Susan Lindberg Haley has volunteered to assume responsibility for our diaconal ministry community data base upkeep and maintenance beginning in March. Please send all updates to Susan at: haleysl@verizon.net so that we can keep our records up to date and accurate.

If you know of a DM candidate who has been approved for call, or an upcoming consecration, please notify Susan of that as well.

