



DiaconoNews

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Candidate Support Liaison

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Director for Rostered & Authorized
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Bishop, NW Pennsylvania Synod
Bishop Liaison to DM Community

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Leadership Team meets at Churchwide Jessica Nipp, DMLT secretary

On Jan 21-23, 2009, the Diaconal Ministry Leadership Team (DMLT) met with representatives from the Churchwide Offices in Chicago. We were joined by Bishop Ralph Jones of the NW Pennsylvania Synod, and the Rev. Dr. Jensen Seyenkulo, Director of Rostered and Authorized Ministries for the Vocation and Education Unit. Following are some of the more significant items that came out of our discussions.

Support from our Bishop

Bishop Jones told the DMLT that if a Diaconal Minister is experiencing significant issues with the call process, he will be willing to speak with that person directly to discuss the situation. As the Bishop-liaison to the Diaconal Community, he is willing to mediate where possible. These requests should be made via the Leadership Team, who will forward the most urgent or complicated concerns to Bishop Jones. In unusual circumstances, if approved by Bishop Jones, there may be a conversation with a candidate's bishop.

Informational Pieces

We identified two informational pieces that we thought would further our relationships with our synods and candidacy committees. The first is a resource for bishops, synod staffs, candidacy committees, and Diaconal Ministry candidates that would serve to improve communications during the candidacy and call processes. A copy of this 8-page resource, entitled "Diaconal Ministry in the Synods of the ELCA," will be sent out separately via email to all diaconal ministers and candidates so be on the look-out for it. *This is a draft document!* We solicit your input and constructive suggestions either via our list serves or directly to Jessica Nipp at jessnipp@yahoo.com. (If you are not currently subscribed to one of our two list serves, now would be an excellent time to do so. Simply send an email to krisp@visi.com requesting an invitation be sent to you. Once you receive the invitation via email, simply follow the links to subscribe). In the future we are hoping to utilize the list serves to discuss specific topics of concern to the community, and we hope you will participate.

The second informational piece that we identified would be a manual similar to the "Manual on Rosters," which is available in every synod and contains information about the parameters for all kinds of ordained-ministry calls. So far, a similar document does not exist for Diaconal Ministry. We will make contact with the Office of the Secretary of the ELCA to begin research for this wide-reaching project. (*continued on p.5*)

DM and approved DM candidate travel to Nicaragua

By Kim Winchell

The ELCA's Washington Office and the churchwide Hunger Education Program recently sponsored a unique "study trip" to Nicaragua (Jan 19-29), comprised of a diverse delegation of fourteen members, both clergy and lay, from nine states. Diaconal Minister for Earthkeeping Kim Winchell (N/W Lower MI Synod) and approved candidate Denise Benjamin (SE MI Synod) were among those selected to be a part of this opportunity to explore the connections between climate change, poverty and hunger.

Faith communities of many denominations have, for many years, lifted up climate change as an issue with profound religious, moral, and justice implications. There are thousands upon thousands of vulnerable people – especially women and children – who are the ones who will be hurt the first, and the worst, by the effects of global warming. And, this is already happening, with erratic weather patterns and extreme weather events, the spread of certain parasitic and mosquito-borne diseases to more areas, and increased stress on water supplies.

People who are already living a subsistence type existence, and those aid organizations that strive to provide help, are stretched beyond their limits, by the added stresses that arise from the impacts of global warming. Oxfam America has produced an excellent article describing these challenges:

"Adaptation 101: How climate change hurts poor communities--and how we can help."

www.oxfamamerica.org/newsandpublications/publications/briefing_papers/adaptation-101

The delegation spent time on both coasts of Nicaragua and met with a wide range of people, from scientists and governmental officials, to church partners in the Nicaraguan Lutheran Church of Faith & Hope (near Managua) and in the Moravian Church (on the eastern coast), and from non-profit ecumenical groups working to aid women and children or to plan for natural disaster preparation.

Most powerful, though, were the visits made to rural *campesino* (or peasant farmer) communities on both coasts of Nicaragua. There, the delegates heard first hand about the daily experiences of these people who know little of science or governmental policy.

They are subsistence farmers who, for generations, were used to living with the land, simply, but comfortably and with dignity. They just know that they used to be able to rely on their two growing seasons and the predictable times that the rains would come; they used to be able to dig a relatively shallow well to find water. Now, there is often severe drought in the dry season, and flooding, erratic rains in the wet season. They have noticed these changes particularly in the last 20 years.

Despite the difficult living conditions, the people were very warm, welcoming and hospitable; and the children so very cute, precious, and smiling. Some of the travel team members will be producing a teaching resource for congregations (a 10 minute DVD of footage and interviews on the trip and a discussion guide) later this spring. Kim or Denise will pass along more information to the Community, as it becomes available; and Kim will be attending the annual "Ecumenical Advocacy Days" in DC in March. The theme will center on climate change and energy policy.



Diaconal Minister Kim Winchell (left) and candidate Denise Benjamin in Nicaragua during their study trip.

Continuing the Conversations on Lay Rostered Ministry

Conversations have been occurring throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America which intend to articulate how the theology and experience of vocation and service should define the roles of Associates in Ministry, Deaconesses and Diaconal Ministers as publicly called leaders in the 21st century.

"Calling Servant Leaders: Conversations on Rostered Ministry" is a resource designed to engage all members of the Deaconess Community, Diaconal Community and the Associates in Ministry, in this continuing conversation.

Presentations are made by Dr. Susan McArver, Lutheran Southern Theological Seminary; Dr. Duane Larson, Wartburg Theological Seminary; Dr. Kathryn Kleinhans, Wartburg College; and a panel that includes Sister Noreen Stevens (ELCA Deaconess), Krista Lund (Associate in Ministry) and Kristina Perry (Diaconal Minister). Their presentations and conversations will assist you in learning about the theological and historical development the three rosters, and the present situation of public rostered leadership in the ELCA. They tell the stories of those involved in various expressions of public ministry exploring the work of these ministries for the sake of the mission of the church and the needs of the world.

Dr. Susan McArver: 14:00

Dr. Kathryn Kleinhans: 22:08

Dr. Duane Larson: 15:24

Roundtable Discussion: 30:45

Study guide included.

To order a copy of the DVD, go to www.elca.org/diaconalministry/ and then click on Resources. Scroll down the page and click on the 6th link entitled, *DVD on Rostered Ministry*.

Regional Events Update

Thus far, regions 2, 3, 7 and 8 have held regional gatherings to further the discussions from the consultation on lay rosters held in 2007 in Florida. The DVD that was subsequently made of the three presenters is now available for purchase by going to: www.selectlearning.org or by visiting our website, listed above. This DVD has been found to be most helpful at all of the subsequent regional gatherings and participants have expressed interest in purchasing the DVD for use within their respective synods. If you are unable to attend a regional event, viewing this DVD is a must, so order your copy today.

There is still time to participate in a regional event, as listed below. Simply contact the regional coordinator in each region for further information:

Region 1: March 12-13

Region 4: Unknown

Region 5: April 19-21

Region 6: Early in the fall, dates to be determined

Region 9: March 23-24

Wanted: Your articles for DiacoNews. Please send all articles, pictures, reflections and prayer requests to editor Lynn Bulock at lbulock@hotmail.com. Deadline for the May issue is April 15.

Toiletries needed for World Diakonia Conference

It has been suggested that we offer attendees a selection of toiletries for their personal use during the assembly. Offering these toiletries may be of value to some attendees as the TSA travel restrictions may prevent them bringing all of what they need for the assembly. *(In case you are interested, there will be an opportunity to have a linen exchange mid-assembly.)*

So, as you travel between now and the when you travel to Atlanta, and as your friends travel and perhaps members of your congregation travel, would you collect unused toiletries (soap, mouth wash, toothpaste, shampoo, etc. and either arrange to ship them prior to your travel – or bring them with you to Atlanta. If you have a member in this line of business and can get some from them as a gift for the attendees – that would be great as well. (We hope to have these available at check-in and perhaps in a basket in the residence hall area during the assembly.)

A Diaconal Journey

By Charles Smith

I placed a quotation on the announcement for my consecration on December 6, 2008. It read "A sign of God is when you are led where you did not plan to go." I encountered this statement at a retreat of Penn State Campus Ministry at Gettysburg Seminary in 1972. It has always stuck with me and certainly has proved true in my life.

I began my studies at Penn State as an astronomy major. Unfortunately (or fortunately) I found I couldn't handle the required math and switched to biology. But I found another "major." I became very much a part of the Campus Ministry at Penn State. I was president of the Lutheran Student Parish, worked on social ministry projects such as glass recycling and "Oasis" a center helping students facing difficulties, and lived in a community sponsored by the Student Parish called Luther House. The campus pastors, Fred Reisz, John Wenzke, Bud Burgie, and intern pastor John Keating, carried out wonderful ministries of contemporary worship with poetry, science and social concerns of the 1970's, as well as effective service programs. Through these experiences and relationships I began to discern that I may be called to be a pastor.

After college, I applied to the Rockefeller Trial Year in Seminary Program and was named as an Alternate Fellow. I began studies at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. I was a bit different from my class mates in that I came from a science background even though I took religion courses at Penn State. But I did well at seminary, had a rewarding CPE, and was assigned to an internship. In the course of the internship I found that God was not calling me to the ordained ministry.

In time, I earned a Master of Arts in Theology degree at LSTC. I went on to teach science in public schools in Virginia, received a Masters Degree in Education from William and Mary, and then became an Education Specialist in Virginia shipyards. My life went through a number of twists and turns. However, there was a reduction in force at the shipyard and I had to consider new options.

Around that time, Professor Philip Hefner of LSTC came to my home church as Theologian in Residence. Dr. Hefner was one of my favorite professors and I studied the field of science and religion with him. Dr. Hefner and I *(cont. on p. 7)*



L-R: Larry Shoberg, dean of the Peninsula Conference, VA Synod; Bishop James Mauney of the VA Synod, Charles Smith and Assistant to the Bishop Jean Bozeman

(continued from p. 1) **Rite of Consecration** On January 22 the Rev. Jennifer Ollikainen and the Rev. Martin Seltz of the ELCA worship staff met with us to discuss the proposed changes in the Rite of Consecration. We were joined by Sister Anne Keffer and DM Ed Kruse. The Leadership Team brought to the conversation the topics that had been of most interest to all of you on DMTalk and CDMTalk: the language describing the presider, the language about the laying on of hands, and the removal of the history of the diaconate from the address to the candidate.

Objectives in the development of the new Rite

Jennifer and Martin shared with us their objectives in the development of the Rite of Consecration:

Complementarity with the Evangelical Lutheran Worship - ELW (song numbers, references, etc)

Consistency with current assumptions about rostered ministry (according to the Study of Ministry). This process did not seek to change these assumptions, but rather used them as guides.

Revisions for Clarity: the three rites appeared to have developed independently of one another, and in some places the language was very different for no theological or ecclesiastical reason. For example, in the address and questions to the candidate at the beginning of the rites, changes were made to align the questions and address.

They listened carefully to our suggestions and comments, and we brainstormed ways to meet their objectives in a way that also addressed the concerns identified by the Diaconal Community. The following are the suggestions that Jennifer and Martin will be taking with them

Presider: We suggested changing the language from “the bishop normally presides” to “the bishop presides.” Bishop Jones helped us to articulate that we want to make sure any exception is seen as an exception and not an alternative.

Laying on of hands: There was actually no change in this section from the previous Rite.

Address to candidate: We suggested that since the Word and Service roster tends to be less well-known, it might in fact be helpful to include an educational/historical component.

Scripture: currently the Scripture verses that have been selected are the same for both the commissioning and consecration rituals. We suggested some distinctively diaconal texts: John 13 (footwashing) and 2 Cor 5:14 (a verse special to the deaconesses) instead.

The Charge: they will investigate the possibility of adding “seek out those places” into the charge at the end. They may change the phrase “human need” to “the needs of the world”.

Address to candidate: they will look at the first sentence of the Address (“all baptized Christians...”) and consider adding it to the Ordination Rite as well.

The Community also expressed concern that we were not invited to the table for discussions earlier in the process. We learned the process by which the ELCA engages in these kinds of working groups and found that we were invited into the discussion at exactly the point where others were invited into the discussions (when Madelyn Busse was invited to the Review Process). While that may not be when we would have liked to have been at the table, it is consistent with how the ELCA has operated in the past.

Leadership Team Turnover

This July, the terms of service for Tim Freund and Kris Perry are up. As it happens, I (Jessica) am also unable to continue my term of service and will need to be replaced in July. Kim Winchell is in discernment about whether she will be able to continue. This means that 3, or potentially all 4, of our LT members will be turning over at the Gathering. We all pledge to keep excellent records in the coming months, and we commit ourselves to a period of training for the new team, in light of the large amount of turnover. We will all be available as long as necessary as consultants for the next team. Please pray for the Holy Spirit’s guidance in our ecclesiastical ballot process as we seek new Leadership Team members in July! We hope to see you there!

The Leadership Team appreciates the opportunity to engage in discussions with the V & E Unit each year as we continue to wrestle with concerns of the Community and dream about possibilities for the future. We are always warmly welcomed and treated with great respect and collegiality. Pastor Jensen and Bishop Jones are great supporters of diaconal ministry and we know their help and guidance in the future will be of great benefit to us all. If presented with the opportunity, please join us in thanking them for their support of the diaconal ministry community.

Region Three Gathering

by Tara Ulrich

As I hopped in my car to head home after the Region 3 Word and Service Gathering at LutherCrest Bible Camp, I couldn't help but chuckle when the song playing in my car was Matthew West's song, "Something to Say." *"You got something to say, If you're livin', if you're breathin', You got something to say, And you know if your heart is beatin', You got something to say, And no one can say it like you do, God is love and love speaks through, You got it, you got it, You got something to say (Matthew West)."* All of a sudden the song had taken on a new meaning for me. Now I wasn't laughing because it was funny but rather I was laughing at the irony of the situation. Here I was leaving a gathering of leaders who have often felt like they had something to say yet they too often than not felt like they were not being heard. However the beauty of this gathering is that it had allowed each of us to be heard as we continued the conversations that were begun in 2007 in Florida.

The three rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; Associates in Ministry, Diaconal Ministers, and Deaconesses had gathered in a room to listen to each other. We listened to each others fears. We listened to each others concerns. In small groups, we simply listened as each member took their turn to speak and tell their story. And as we listened to each other's stories, it seemed to me that each of us finally felt like they were being heard as we worked to articulate a new language in which each of us might feel included and heard yet still keep true to our own callings.

As those conversations took place, it was simply amazing to me as I watched and listened. We easily could be open and honest with each other without hesitation. Those conversations were absolutely astounding. But more than that, I truly believe our conversations together were a gift and a blessing to each of the twenty-five individuals gathered together for a day and a half. But our hope is that this conversation will continue beyond each of us to also become a blessing to Bishops, synods, congregations and others as they become more educated about these rosters and listen to our voices as they become a part of the conversations.

Back row (L to R): Nick Cordray, Krista Lind, Kris Perry, Suzanne Hansen, Sandy Hammerlind, Jodi Hanson and Laurie Beckman-Yetzer

Middle row (L to R): Tammy Devine, Susan Marone, Myrna Hanson, Signe Gray, Diane Kaufman, Lauren Wendt, Kirsten Kessel, and Deb Olson

Front Row (L to R): Brenda Bauer, Janet Schauer, Tara Ulrich, Deb Robinson, Rachel Johnson, Pat Eidsness, and Beth Anderson
Not pictured: Craig Boehlke, Noreen Stevens, Gracia Hegener



(continued from page 4) "reconnected" and he suggested I resume studies in science and religion. I was already a member of the ELCA Steering Committee on Science and Religion and had participated in a science and theology group in Virginia.

To make sure I wanted to return to academics, I enrolled in Union Seminary in Richmond, Virginia where I received a Master in Theology degree. I became interested in the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation and received a Masters in Theology. This confirmed that I was being called to be a theologian in the Church and I entered a Ph D. program at LSTC with Dr. Hefner. I completed the program with a dissertation entitled *Incarnation and Evolution* in 2003.

Around the same time, I became aware of Diaconal Ministry. I attended the Formation Event in 1998 and began the candidacy process in the Virginia Synod. The Synod didn't know what to make of Diaconal Ministry and even though I was approved I was stalled in regard to consecration until 2008. At that time, I had a chance to discuss Diaconal Ministry with an assistant to the bishop through a chance encounter at a Lutheran Men in Mission gathering and, along with others, he facilitated my diaconal call to teach religion at Thomas Nelson Community College in Hampton, Virginia. I teach New Testament, Hebrew Bible, and World Religions. I was issued a call by the Virginia Synod Church Council and installed into a ministry as a professor at Thomas Nelson.

At Thomas Nelson, I found that I could be faithful to my call in a teaching ministry that also included science and religion. The pieces fell together for me and I indeed came to see signs of God that led me where I did not plan to go. Through some sad times, some interesting side tracks, and experiences that not only built up my faith but also gave me the ability to be an effective professor, I came to see God acting in my life -- in my call, in my relationships with leaders in the Virginia Synod, and at the community college.

It's been a long and often convoluted journey with some disappointments over the years. But within the maze of time -- as I look back -- I can see the grace of God guiding me to seek my place in Diaconal Ministry. By that grace I'm able to build a special bridge between the Church and the world, to minister to my class members and colleagues, to work on science and religion projects at the College, and to be what I hope to be, a humble servant of the Gospel.

My Diaconal Journey has been long and often uncertain yet blessed with the presence of God in Christ and the Holy Spirit who would not let me go.

Job Opening

Lutheran World Relief seeks a **Parish Projects Coordinator** to be based at LWR's office in Baltimore. Lutheran World Relief's **Parish Projects Coordinator** will develop outreach and educational materials for groups and congregations, and will inform, inspire and encourage the quilters and kit-makers within Lutheran congregations. This position manages all domestic components of LWR's quilt and kit ministry, tying together its tradition and historical value with innovative new opportunities for congregations, groups and individuals to put their faith into action. Please view <http://www.lwr.org/jobs/description.asp?jobID=56> for a full position description and application instructions. Other employment opportunities with Lutheran World Relief are listed at: www.lwr.org/jobs/index.asp
Please share this announcement with interested and qualified individuals. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,
Human Resource Department
LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF
700 Light Street
Baltimore, MD 21230
Email: hr@lwr.org



Birthdays

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

April

- 1 Trink Schwartz
 11 Heather Feltman
 11 Lois Richardson
 11 Kati Miller Holland
 13 (Denise Benjamin)
 13 Kathy Massa
 13 Nancy Selinger
 15 Linda Smith
 18 (Holly Hoffman)
 19 Lisa Watson Hill
 20 Frances Victor
 23 (Lauren Wendt)
 26 Suzanne Beauregard
 27 Jennifer McBride
 30 Dahl Drenning

May

- 1 Kathy Garrison
 2 Karla Neumann
 Smiley
 3 Sue Vogel Herrera
 4 (Barry Buck)
 5 Madelyn Busse
 6 Esther Schmidt
 6 Janell Weum
 7 Terra Rowe
 8 Shirley Talbot
 9 Leslie Whited Vance
 11 Doug Spiotta
 16 Jessica Nipp
 22 (Mike Troutman)
 22 Sandra Braasch
 29 Terry Moore
 30 Judy Knapp

Holy God, hear our prayer

Prayers for healing and hope

Sandra Reback, heart concerns

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

Charlie Smith, dialysis and awaiting transplant

Alex Herrera, husband of Sue Vogel, cancer remission

DM Candidate, *Tamara Harder*, battling breast cancer

Marjorie Myers, partial renal failure

Prayers of congratulations

(celebrating 10 years of consecrated diaconal ministry)

Lake Lambert, February 14, 1999

Karen White, February 21, 1999

Recently Consecrated

Lynn Bulock, January 25, 2009, #164

Rebecca Mastalerz, January 31, 2009, #165

Pamela Werth, February 7, 2009, #166

Susan Franke, February 8, 2009, #167

Upcoming Consecrations

Diana Luscombe to St. Michael's Lutheran Church in Camillus, New York Director of Youth and Family Ministries.

Diana writes: This is a 12 hour a week position with the hope and prayers that as I get stronger the ministries will be able to grow. As you all know this has been a very long time coming, almost five years in fact. It has been with the love and support, the prayers and mentoring of all of you that have helped to make this happen. My newest walking record is 511 feet on land, I'm in the pool once a week working on all sorts of exercises, and last week I passed the driver evaluation that will allow me to begin driver training

Celebration

Patricia Gerber on her marriage to Carl Bornholt on April 19 at Lutheran Church of the Master, Carol Stream, IL. All diaconal ministers in the area are invited to attend the ceremony.

Prayers of discernment for those approved, awaiting call

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

