



DiaconoNews

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Conference slated—October 13-16

"Woven Together in Love" is the theme of the 5th gathering of ELCA diaconal ministers in Norcross, Georgia. We are delighted to have 35 diaconal ministers registered for the event along with five guests.

Rev. Craig Johnson, Bishop of the Minneapolis Area Synod, will serve as our bishop in residence, while Rev. John Largen will refresh us with meaningful Bible study. In addition, we welcome Rev. Stan Olson, Executive Director of the ELCA Vocation and Education Unit and our diaconal ministry liaison, Rev. Dick Bruesehoff as well as Sister Anne Keffer, Directing Deaconess, to be with us. We are particularly excited to have a special time set aside on Friday afternoon where our guests will be available to enter into discussion on topics our Community deems appropriate.



Simpsonwood Conference Center, Atlanta, GA

Sr. Anne Keffer will open the formal conference by bringing the message at our Friday evening worship service and each member of our Community will serve at some point during worship throughout the weekend.

Members of our Community participated in the creation of a quilt which began our theme of *"Woven Together in Love"* and which will be carried forth at the conference through the creation of prayer shawls and prayer pillows as well as an offering of gifts to the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

All participants will receive final instructions via a letter which will be mailed by September 30. Please keep this conference in your prayers just as we will keep all those unable to participate in prayer throughout the conference.

Katrina aftermath

During the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, several of our diaconal colleagues have been asked to help in the relief efforts - Elaine Brant serving through the Red Cross, P. Morgan Gordy returning to Biloxi where she served Christus Victor Lutheran Church, Heather Feltman, ELCA Director of Domestic Disaster Relief, and Sheryl Faulk, Chaplain at Saddleback Memorial Medical Center in Laguna Hills, CA. Read what Sheryl recently shared, and please keep all of our colleagues in prayer during these difficult and challenging days.

Hurricane continued on page 4

Deaconess celebrates 50th anniversary of consecration

On August 14, 1955, Hulda Simenson was consecrated as a Lutheran Deaconess and became Sister Hulda. On Sunday August 14, 2005, a celebratory worship and a reception were held at Augustana Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, MN to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Sister's consecration.

Attending were Sister Hulda's family members (representing several generations), former colleagues spanning her pre-consecration service in Brooklyn, N.Y. and from her later years of service as a chaplain with the Ebenezer Society located in Minneapolis. Members of Augustana Lutheran Church as well as neighbors and friends from the Augustana Care Corporation, Minneapolis were also present. Representing the ELCA Deaconess Community were Sister Ginger Patchen of Winnipeg, Sister Davia Ann Baldauf of Mt. Holly Springs, PA and Sister Noreen Stevens of Centerville, MN. Sister Noreen read a letter of greeting and warm wishes from the Directing Deaconess of the ELCA Deaconess Community, Sister Anne Keffer. Also in attendance representing the Diaconal Ministry Community of the ELCA were Douglas B. Spiotta, diaconal minister, and Kirsten Kessel, an endorsed diaconal ministry candidate.



Sister Hulda

Weary feet refreshed

by Beth Barkow

From July 5-10, 2005, ELCA Diaconal Ministers, the Deaconess Community of the ELCA, and the Lutheran Deaconess Association (LDA) – three forms of diaconal expression in the Lutheran Church today (ELCA and Missouri Synod) served together at “Act Boldly” – the Sixth Triennial Gathering of the Women of the ELCA’s convention in San Antonio, Texas. Throughout the gathering, delegates, participants, vendors, and guests were invited to sit and rest in an area known as “The Garden” – a quiet, lush green space located in the convention arena. Here in one corner of “The Garden” chairs and benches filled quickly with women seeking relief from the heat and respite from the long convention center walkways. Hundreds of women stopped to rest. Hundreds of feet were washed, dried, and massaged with cooling creams these five days by deaconesses of the ELCA and LDA as well as diaconal ministers of the ELCA. Basins were continuously being refilled with the refreshing waters. Spirits were renewed. During this time of servanthood, the three United States Lutheran expressions of diaconal service and partners in World DIAKONIA lived out the gathering’s theme verse: Acts 14:3 – “So they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who testified to the word of his grace by granting sign and wonder to be done through them.”

**Basins were continuously
being refilled with the
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Theological hunger

Throughout history, lay schools of education have existed in the life of the church. Numerous church bodies, regions and synods have sought ways to train, promote advanced learning, open doors for inquirers, and engage leaders at various stages of life.

Diakonia is the name of one such lay education program in certain ELCA synods which provides a spiritual journey to those who wish to become more involved in their church and who want to better understand their faith. Individuals are joined by students and pastors from around the synod to talk about the Bible, Christian Doctrine, Christian Ethics, Church and Society, and other topics, as well as to discern what spiritual gifts each may have.

Lay school continued on page 4

Oh Lord, hear our prayer

Prayers of concern...

Sandra Reback's good friend, Marj, who has lung cancer and is undergoing radiation treatments
Leslie Whited Vance and family at the death of her father, Jesse Duane Willoughby, August 27
Charles Smith for surgery Sept 22 to insert a connection for upcoming dialysis as a result of kidney dysfunction
Sue Vogel Herrera, as she recovers from hip replacement surgery, September 19
Alex Herrera, husband of Sue Vogel Herrera, in remission from cancer, for continued healing and health
Craig Senft, husband of Ardie, continued healing during cardiovascular rehab
Victims of Hurricane Katrina as well as for all those who are serving in the relief effort, and particularly our colleagues in ministry: Elaine Brant, Sheryl Faulk, Heather Feltman, and Morgan Gordy

Prayers of discernment to those approved awaiting call...

Beth Bennett-Hill, Glenda Blegen, Cynthia Bowden, Joan Braunhardt, Barry Buck, Bill Dahl, Lisa Hill, Margaret Howell, Janet Johnson, Jennifer Larson, Diane Luscombe, Kathy Massa, Tammy Rade, Nancy Selinger, Charley Smith

Prayers of thanksgiving...

Diana (York) Luscombe and husband Mark at the birth of their daughter, Hannah Janine Luscombe, August 15
Laurie Beckman Yetzer, as she begins a new call at Richfield Lutheran Church, and was installed September 18
Jennifer Larson as she assumes the role of editor for our quarterly DiacoNews and chair of the Communications Team

Diakonia around the globe

by Elaine Brant

My first official delegate duty and privilege to represent you was at the opening worship service of the DIAKONIA World Federation Conference in Durham, England July 20-27, 2005. Along with from 35 countries, I was one of the water bearers who started at a font at the back of the ancient Durham Cathedral, processed up the long aisle together and pooled our water into a beautifully improvised "well" near the main altar at the front.

The theme of the conference was "Diakonia at the Margins – Challenge and Hope." We were assigned to small groups, of diverse nationalities. The groups met in daily sessions to get acquainted and reflect on portions of the Gospel story of Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well and on the day's activities as we saw how they related to our own diaconal call to reach out into the margins of society.

During informal conversations it became clear that ELCA Diaconal Ministry is not the only diaconal organization struggling with issues such as titles or stoles for its servants. One man was officially a "deaconess" for years before his denomination sorted out consecration, ordination, and title's procedures.

It was truly a privilege and a wonderful experience to serve as your delegate at this ecumenical world conference. As caregivers, we may need to learn to accept that sometimes we need help ourselves, and we need to receive help graciously as God's gift to us through God's other helpers. Just as we feel blessed when we help someone, when we allow someone to help us, we are giving them the opportunity to feel that same kind of blessing when we say, "Thank you, God bless you."



Louise Williams, Exec. Dir., Luth. Deaconess Assoc.; Elaine Brant; Sr. Ulrike Kellner, DIAKONIA Secretary from Kaiserwerth, Germany

For Elaine's complete report, log on to www.elca.org/diaconalministry/news/diakoniafederation.html

Birthdays

October

9 Judy Knapp, Linda Sprick Kruse
17 Nancy Gable, Marilyn Hugh
20 Eva Creydt Schulte
25 Sarah Wilson
30 Patricia Gerber

November

2 Joanne Otte
4 Morgan Gordy
10 Dawn Alitz
12 Rachelle Gilbertson
14 Judy Bergeson
18 Shari O'Brien
30 Diane Luscombe

December

5 Harry Hiltner
6 Beth Bennett-Hill
15 Joel Bradtke
23 Chris Connell
28 Barb Koch
29 Terri McMaster

Consecrations

Rebecca Wiese, August 6
Harry Hiltner, September 25
Kim Gonia, October 16
Terri Endres, December 4



Mission statement

As a covenanted community, centered in the Word, grounded in the biblical call to diakonia and brought forth by the ELCA, we seek to encourage and support one another, and partner with others to address the emerging mission and ministry needs of the church and our world. As called and consecrated diaconal ministers, we covenant to:

- Be prayerfully centered and rooted in the Word
- Speak the truth in love
- Identify, mentor and assist with discernment and formation of prospective diaconal candidates
- Engage in ongoing spiritual formation, continuing education and formation designed to strengthen the mission and ministry of the diaconate
- Partner proactively with the structures of the ELCA, for the purposes of interpreting diaconal ministry and guiding its development
- Be in relationship with other diaconal communities both in the ELCA and ecumenically

Hurricane continued from page 4

"I have been in New Orleans\Baton Rouge ministering to Hurricane victims with my medical center team, providing crisis intervention debriefing to military who were doing search and rescue, and recovery, then to Superdome for military...and was asked to provide a blessing inside the superdome.....now have been deployed by Red Cross to Montgomery area...possibly going to Mobile, Biloxi, Gulf Port...Please pray. Blessings, Sheryl"

Lay school continued from page 2

In response to specific needs and opportunities across various synods of the ELCA, the Diakonia Program began in Metro New York about 20 years ago, spread to New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Illinois and perhaps some other places as well. Similar programs may have other titles or are known as synodical lay schools of ministry which, like those mentioned, utilize the gifts and talents of regional seminary and synodical leaders. The Diakonia Program and the Lay School of Theology are designed to broaden the theological education for those already doing volunteer ministry in congregations who are not looking for a vocation as a rostered leader of the ELCA.

These programs were not designed to automatically transfer from one synod to another. Rather, programs like Diakonia are really only recognized within the synods in which they exist, so there is not the kind of national recognition given to ELCA Diaconal Ministers.

Those in New York are sometimes employed as and called "Deacon" borrowing from the old sense of deacons in congregations, often part of the structure of ALC and LC-MS. The bishop in New York has also been very adamant that these are synodical deacons; however, none of those kinds of titles transfer across synodical lines.

Dick Bruesehoff, Vocation and Education Unit, teaches one of the five-week courses in one of the Metro Chicago Diakonia sites. The program is a good one, with a well thought-out curriculum and lots of very dedicated people who are essentially looking for training to take back to their congregations and to the other places in which they live their own diaconal callings.

As a diaconal community, we can rejoice and celebrate the various lay schools of the ELCA and our ecumenical partners which help build up the body of Christ. All rostered leaders can pray for our ELCA lay, non-degree schools which open doors for the curious, the seeking, and the theologically hungry of our congregations, for their efforts enhance the entire church. So, too, all rostered leaders can strive to learn more about such programs in our various synods, support them through availing ourselves as rostered Word and Service or Word and Sacrament leaders. As a community, let us rejoice in the vision and creative ministries which help bring Christ's love to the world.

To learn more about the Metro Chicago Synod Diakonia Program, visit their website at: www.mcselca.org/diakonia/index.html