Diaconal Ministry Community
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

DiacoNews

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Camp Biloxi

by Beth Barkhau

In January, again in February, and once more in March of 2006, members and friends of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Aiken, South Carolina traveled to Bilxoi, Mississippi to serve amongst the hurricane survivors of the Gulf region. The St. Paul team worked in coordination with Bethel Lutheran Church (ELCA) and Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd (LCMS).

St. Paul has created a hurricane response team which consistently travels at least once during the year (usually in January around the Martin Luther King holiday weekend). The team is open and fluid, it's invitational and educational, and it is committed to advocacy. Why these five marks? As children of God the St. Paul Team reflects the diverse world we live, worship, and serve in. Made up of roofers, construction leaders, medical professionals, teachers, college age through retirees, the team is committed to engaging anyone who wants to serve – with skills or no skills at all – from many different entry points. By being committed to travel near a three day weekend, the holiday enables those who can only take a day or two off work to participate. For example, the January trip had three departure dates for three different teams, with all intersecting over the MLK weekend. One group served five days, another, seven, and still the third ten. When traveling, our team knows to look for and engage others who seek to volunteer from the base site. St. Paul key leaders sought out and engaged a youth groups from Tennessee, seminary students from Wartburg, Gettysburg, Philadelphia, and Chicago who were doing contextual experience work, and others who had arrived in Biloxi to volunteer but didn't have a skilled leader to engage them directly. To help ensure that we keep the areas of specialization open for all to come and serve, each area has a primary leader. We have our roofing expert, a lead contractor, a public health nurse, a pharmacist, and I also travel with the team to ensure that everyone has spiritual as well as administrative support.

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Candidate support team

by Mindy Holland, Liaison from the Leadership Team

The Candidate Support Team had its most recent conference call on February 28th. We have a number of committed members who are giving time and energy to support candidates and the diaconal community as a whole, whether through their presence on seminary campuses, through phone calls or email messages, or through synod candidacy committees and contacts.

Our team has also been taking turns sending out birthday cards to Diaconal Ministers, sharing the responsibility that Kris Perry had previously handled on her own. It has been great to get more people involved!

One of our current projects is to get in touch, via email or phone, with all 65 synods of the ELCA, with two goals in mind: to obtain an updated list of diaconal candidates, including contact information; and to gather information about open positions in that synod for which a Diaconal Minister could be considered. It is our hope that this will help raise the visibility of diaconal ministry and, more importantly, help us to do a better job of being in touch with and supporting our candidates.

If anyone is interested in serving on this team, we welcome new members. We are also looking for a new chairperson. Please pray about how you might be involved, and contact me if you are interested: mindy@isp.com!

Spend a week in Trinidad with DOTAC

This coming summer from July 2nd - July 6th in Port of Spain, Trinidad DOTAC will once again hold it's regional western hemisphere conference. I encourage you to visit the following web site to learn more and prayerfully consider attending — http://dotac.diakonia-world.org/conferences.html

DOTAC Regional Conferences are held every four years and they provide opportunities for fellowship, learning, celebration, international worship, and decision making time. The theme for this year's conference is "What Does The Lord require of You? Do justice, give kindness, walk humbly."

"What does the Lord require of you? Do justice, give kindness, walk humbly"

At the aforementioned site, you will find links to lodging, frequently asked questions, and much more. If you are planning on attending, the DOTAC Central Committee is seeking small group leaders to help facilitate workshops and study times. If you have questions which are not answered on the web site, do give me a call on my cell phone at 803.646.0599. I'll do my best to answer any questions you have or link you to the appropriate person for an answer.

If you would like to learn more about past events, Mindy Holland and Nancy Gable attended the most recent DOTAC event in Winnipeg, Canada. Also, to further enhance your exploration/learning about the our communities partnership with World Diakonia and DOTAC, simply go to our website or type in World DIAKONIA or DOTAC in your search engine window. You will find much information

Do consider attending the Trinidad event. I believe you will come away filled to the brim and excited to return to your settings/contexts with new awareness of the vastly diverse diaconate throughout the world and our mutual ministry together.

Blessings and Peace,
Beth Barkhau

Lord, in your infinite mercy...

Prayers for healing...
Sandra Reback, angioplasty
Martha Baker's husband, David, kidney disease
Judy Knapp, surgery recovery-March 7
Doug Knapp, Judy's husband, awaiting hip surgery
Craig Senft, husband of Ardie, esophagus concerns
Sandy's friend, Marj, kidney cancer
Krista Johnson Breuer, cancer recurrence
Doug Spiotta, surgery recovery-April 7
Sue Herrera and husband Alex, for healing
Joel Bradtke's daughter, Sarah, died suddenly and unexpectedly on April 5, leaving behind a husband and 3 children.

Prayers of discernment for those approved, awaiting call...
Lyn A'Hearn, Beth Bennett-Hill, Cynthia Bowden, Joel Bradtke, Joan Braunhardt, Bill Dahl, Ellen Doughty, Lisa Hill, Janet Johnson, Diana Luscombe, Kathy Massa, Augustus Mauro, Robert Pfennig, Tammy Rade, Nancy Selinger, Lauren Skrundz, Charles Smith, Christopher Wagner

Prayers of thanksgiving for those recently consecrated and anticipating consecration...

107	Glenda Blegen—April 2	110	Frances Victor—April 23
108	Barbara Finley—April 2	111	Margaret Howell—June 3
109	Tara Ulrich—April 23	112	Pat Kane—July 23

If you know of an upcoming consecration, a candidate who has recently been approved for call, or any other prayer concerns, please contact krisp@visi.com so that our data base can be updated.

Prayers of thanksgiving...
Doug Spiotta on his installation as Director of Crossroads Ministry—Augustana Lutheran in Minneapolis on May 7.
Joel Bradtke, approved candidate, on his synodical lay appointment to word and sacrament ministry in Merrimac, WI.

Biloxi news—continued from page 1

"God gave us a mess and out of a mess comes God's mission"
– Judy Bultman

The last mark of our team is the commitment to advocacy. After each trip we take, someone creates a Power Point, another coordinates large group presentations, we make ourselves available to our ecumenical partners, and we submit stories to our local papers. On the January team, however, we added a new element. I personally invited a Senior Writer from our local newspaper the *Aiken Standard* who traveled with us. Rob Novit not only served as a builder and roofer on the trip, he interviewed members of the team, and together he and I walked the streets of Biloxi interviewing, talking and praying with survivors. Upon our return, Rob ran two front page articles on the trip, published interviews with survivors and volunteers, and quoted every participant while identifying their places of employment. As a result of Rob's articles, his presence and clout as a Senior Writer who could get front page coverage, God's story was told. Other local churches are traveling now to provide support and each member of the team has had people at their local places of employment ask how they too can serve.

Barbara Madison, whose home received a new roof from our team, said, "I'm an emotional person, and this has really touched me spiritually. I just thank God for making it possible for these wonderful people to come to me. "

Diaconal ministry helps make it possible for God's Word to manifest itself in hammers, in sheetrock, in wheelbarrows, in stethoscopes, in prescriptions, in story time, in kitchens, in smiles, and gentle hugs. Diaconal ministry enables God's people to be the body of Christ in the world.

To learn more, contact Camp Biloxi directly at 228.267.0008, or contact Beth Barkhau at bbarkhau@bellsouth.net

A prophetic call

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness; 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight'"

The Gathering will begin with opening worship on Thursday, April 19th and conclude on Sunday, April 22nd by noon and is sure to be an excellent opportunity for continuing education, first call theological education, community-building, respite and renewal time, an opportunity for reconnecting with friends from DM Formation Events and past gatherings, and so much more!

Questions can be directed to any member of the Gathering Planning Team:

Mark your calendars!
Program your PDA's!
Set your hearts and minds on the next Gathering!

Chair: Joy Heine — joyheine@netscape.net
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Worship: Margaret Howell — knytengale@aol.com
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About Spirit in the Desert Retreat Center

Spirit in the Desert Retreat Center is a place of hospitality providing a safe environment serving diverse faith traditions, community groups, and individuals who come together for renewal, learning, spiritual growth, and moral deliberation. Spirit in the Desert is committed to providing quality and meaningful retreats and programs, opportunity for private retreats; and providing a safe and unbiased multi-faith environment for discovery and discourse. To learn more, visit their website at: www.spiritinthedesert.org

Surfing for ministry positions

By Mindy Holland

For those of you who are approved, awaiting call, or on leave from call, I offer a partial list of on-line resources that serve as clearinghouses for positions that become available in ministry settings. These can be good starting places to learn of openings, as well as to consider types of ministry roles that may be a good match for your gifts and talents. Thinking outside the box can be a blessing in diaconal ministry! Be sure to be in regular communication with your synod offices as you go forward in your search for calls.

Lutheran sites:
www.elca.org/hr/career.html—ELCA positions
www.elca.org/education/vocationalopportunities.html—open positions with ELCA colleges and campus ministries
www.lutheranservices.org/bulletin.asp—the Personnel Bulletin for Lutheran Services
www.lwr.org/jobs/index.asp—Lutheran World Relief positions

Ecumenical ministry sites:
www.ministrysearch.com www.churchjobsonline.com www.ministryemployment.com
www.churchstaffing.com

Non-profit sites:
www.idealist.org www.opportunitynocs.org www.nonprofitjobs.org

Helping others to discern God's call

Calling Leaders for a Changing World: Programs and Retreats on Vocation for Young Adults is now online. Last summer, editor John Largen invited me to write the curriculum in consultation with a planning group. The resource was initiated by Project Connect, a Lilly-funded network representing the Eastern Cluster of Lutheran Seminaries. This 61-page guidebook is designed primarily to help ministers, campus pastors, and educators challenge and nurture young adults as they discern how God's call to the church is also a call to them to live and lead as members of Christ's body. Most of these college-age adults have demonstrated potential for or interest in leadership in the church.

The series begins with a study of the first two chapters of 1 Peter. Young adults then deal with the following questions in seven sessions: What leaders will the church need to thrive in the 21st century? What voices are calling you? What kind of people does God call? What does your life say about your gifts? How may God be calling you to lead? What is distinctive about ELCA public ministry? An appendix offers rich resources for further study.

To access Calling Leaders for a Changing World, go to www.projectconnect.org/. Go to "For Leaders" on the left column and click on "Resource for Discernment Events and Retreats" on the pull-down menu. Then click on "Discernment Tool—Body" and after you read that, click on "Discernment Tool—Appendix." Leaders are encouraged to copy and paste the curriculum to a Word document, then edit the handouts to make them more relevant to each group. Errors in fonts and typos are still being corrected.

I would be interested in your feedback, particularly on pp. 50 - 57, What Is Distinctive about ELCA Public Ministers?" I based that on the services of ordination, consecration, and commissioning. Unlike printed curriculum, this online version can be edited any time. This makes it truly a work of the community. Enjoy!

Your partner in ministry,
Sue Setzer

Prayer mentor program

by Mindy Holland

Yes, it's that time again: time to sign up to serve as a prayer mentor for one or more of the candidates who will be attending this summer's DMFE. The goal of the program is still the same--to offer prayer support and encouragement to our candidates in discernment--but some of the details will be changing, in light of recent events and in hopes of gathering more volunteers!

First, the primary commitment that prayer mentors make is to send a letter of self-introduction and encouragement to a candidate that will be received during the first day of the event, as well as to hold that candidate in prayer during the two weeks in Gettysburg. In the past, we have asked for follow-up with the candidate beyond the timeline of the event; if you are interested in doing so, that will be a blessing, but it is no longer a requirement. Feel free to follow up as the Holy Spirit leads you in your particular match.

Secondly, we are willing to consider email messages that would be printed out and given to a candidate. Handwritten letters are preferred, as they have a more personal feel, but if you wish to participate and feel that having an email option would make your participation possible, count yourself in!

If you are interested in serving in this way, please contact me (mindy@isp.com or 503-644-5285) or Audrey Forbes (ADForbes@adelphia.net) by Thursday, June 1st. Please specify whether you are interested in serving as a mentor for one or two candidates. For your reference, the dates of the DMFE are Sunday, July 16th, through Friday, July 28th. Thank you very much!

Consultation on vocation and service

Tammy Devine and Kris Perry are on the planning team representing the diaconal community for the Consultation on Vocation and Service, a meeting that will bring together representatives from the three lay rosters to articulate how the theology and experience of vocation and service should define their role as publicly called leaders in the ELCA in the 21st century. This consultation may also lead to recommendations regarding these rostered ministries.

The Diaconal Ministry Leadership Team met in Chicago recently, after much prayer and deliberation, identified 15 from our roster who will represent us at this Consultation next February. Those individuals have been contacted and have accepted the invitation to be a part of this group. Criteria for selection was based on age, gender, geographic location in the U.S., area of specialization, and number of years on our roster, as well as an ability to articulate our call to the diaconate, to be a good listener, to draw out others in conversation, and to always place the needs of the church as a priority. Participants to this Consultation include:

Don Burgess, Madelyn Busse, Phil Deming, Tammy Devine, Joyce Freund, Melissa James, Judy Knapp, Terry Moore Joanne Otte, Kris Perry, Suzanne Rigg, Eva Creydt Schulte, Sue Setzer, Karla Neumann Smiley, Kim Winchell

Alternates: *Laurie Beckman Yetzer, Terri Endres, Nancy Gable, David Glover, Gloria Strickert, Trink Swartz*

The Consultation will take place at the Duncan Center in Delray Beach, Florida February 5-8, 2007. Participants have also been asked to attend our next diaconal gathering in Carefree, AZ in April 2007, so all attendees will have a chance to learn first-hand how each person experienced the consultation.

We ask for Community prayers during this time of planning, that the Holy Spirit will be present during discernment and planning, always keeping our thoughts on the mission of the church and how we might best live out that mission as well as for all of the participants as they prepare to be a part of this Consultation.

And a child shall lead them: an introduction to footwashing

By Dawn Alitz

During Holy Week, Madelyn Busse sent us a writing about the difficulty of having our feet washed. I learned firsthand how true her words could be. Maundy Thursday was an evening of firsts for Christ the King Lutheran Church in Bloomington, Minnesota: it was the first time in several years that the fifth graders gathered together to experience a Seder meal in connection with learning more deeply about the events of this evening in Jesus' life; it was the first time they saw their new Director of Children's and Family Ministries step into the pulpit and heard me preach; and it was the first time that they received the invitation to come forward and have their feet washed. I knew that the staff was excited about the prospects and possibilities for the service, but I was less sure about the congregation. How do we issue an inviting and exciting invitation for something that seems so foreign in our lives today?

I started with what I knew well – the children. A few weeks prior to the service, the preschoolers acted out the footwashing story in their classroom, and I was invited in to talk to them and wash feet. Little socks and shoes flew off and little feet dangled above my basin, the water and touch of my hand was met with giggles, sighs of joy, and an explanation of all the bandages that were uncovered. We ran out of time before all of those feet were finished, so I promised them that I would wash their feet during the worship service on Maundy Thursday. As that day approached, several of them came up and checked – will you still wash my feet? Of course, I answered, and, as a staff, we made plans to have several of us ready to wash feet during the children's sermon of the service.

We weren't disappointed. I invited the children to come forward with bare feet, and they padded up to the altar area ready to go. Three of us were busy washing feet and talking together about how this washing meant many things – care, love, and a servant life. The children just glowed. During the sermon, I issued an invitation for the rest of the congregation to come forward for foot or hand washing after the service, during a time of prayer. At first, I thought no one would come forward, but soon there was a young girl, pulling her older sister up to my chair – "You have to do this, it's so cool!"

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Birthdays

May
2 Karla Neumann
3 Sue Herrera
4 Barry Buck
5 Madelyn Busse
6 Esther Schmidt
Janell Weum
9 Leslie Whited Vance
11 Doug Spiotta
16 Jessica Nipp
18 Cynthia Bowden
22 Sandra Braasch
29 Terry Moore
31 Janet Lepp

June
5 Ardie Senft
13 Judy Rooney
14 Erin Morris
18 Linda Daugs-Deegan
22 Rowena Henry
24 Margy Schmitt Ajer
27 Judy Schroeder
29 Glenda Blegen
30 Karen White

July
6 Joan Braunhardt
12 Becky Wiese
19 Nick Wilkens
19 Kim Winchell
22 Tammy Devine
23 Martha Baker
23 Tim Freund
24 Melissa James
25 Kris Perry
30 Beth Anderson
31 Jennifer Vasquez

August
2 Beth Barkhau
10 Gloria Strickert
16 Carole Urbanski
29 Marjorie Myers

Footwashing—continued from page 6

Before long, there was a line, albeit a short line, of people, mostly led by their children who either thought this was too important to miss or thought they needed a second scrub. Some of the more shy ones started out with hands, then went ahead and took off shoes. Children left the chairs and took to the towels, begging parents to let them wash their feet. It was beautiful.

What will come of this in the future? I'm not sure. I don't know if more adults will find a desire or see the invitation in the towel and the basin, although some did come up to me later and express disappointment that they didn't come forward. But I don't think the children will be willing to give it up. This was their thing, and for our culture, for the adults to allow the children access to their feet, those vulnerable, unsightly feet, it was a holy time. May God use them to lead the way.

Community 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

Leadership team meeting in Chicago

Mindy Holland

The Leadership Team met in Chicago in early March for our annual business meeting. It was a full and productive time, including meetings with churchwide representatives, selection of the participants for the February 2007 Consultation on Vocation and Service, and discussion of community concerns and working team activities, as well as prayer and fellowship.

Since the reorganization at Churchwide, the Division for Ministry is now known as the Vocation and Education Unit. Revs. Craig Settlage and Dick Bruesehoff are the official liaisons to the Diaconal Ministry Community and Leadership Team.

We were blessed to be able to meet with Ruth Reko of the Department for Social Ministry Organizations, who works with ELCA Domestic Disaster Response, and Kathy Magnus, the Regional Coordinator for North America for the Lutheran World Federation. We learned more about the ministries of these branches of the church and how Diaconal Ministers are and can continue to support and be a part of their service in Christ's name. We shared an informal lunch with Sister Anne Keffer, Directing Deaconess of the ELCA Deaconess Community, and Ed Kruse, former member of the Leadership Team. We also met with Stan Olson, Craig Settlage, and Dick Bruesehoff of the Vocation and Education Unit during our time in Chicago. It has been clarified for us that the Leadership Team does not advise the Vocation and Education Unit; rather, we meet to share information with them about our community and its concerns.

It is a privilege to serve with the other members of this team and to see the faithful work that each of them does on behalf of our community, for their individual calls to ministry, and in service to the "least of these" around the world. We welcome your continued prayers that we may serve faithfully and well on your behalf in the days to come, especially as our community weathers changes and new beginnings. Thank you!