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Repacking for the journey

By Nancy Gable

I awoke a bit early Thursday morning and reached over to turn on my clock radio... immediately I heard the news of the uncovered terror plot in Great Britain. As if I were a child on Christmas morning I sprang from my bed to learn more. You see, I was scheduled to depart for O'Hare airport in a few hours and suddenly my travel routine was interrupted. I did the typical US citizen thing and turned on CNN; I listened for a few minutes and realized that it was important to learn how the news would impact my travel plans. Television coverage at 4:15 a.m. Eastern Time was coming from BBC and focused on what was taking place in Heathrow Airport. I did another typical US citizen thing, turning on my computer and logging into the internet. United Airlines (my airline of the day) had nothing posted; US Airways (another of my typical airlines) had nothing posted; I checked Harrisburg International Airport (my airport of departure) and saw nothing posted; I tried the Homeland Security web site and found nothing posted. Frustrated, I took a shower to bide time, debating all the while whether I should quickly dress and depart for the airport or simply bag the trip to Chicago.

I decided to quickly depart for the airport, and, at 5:00 a.m. as I was turning off the television, I finally heard the US impact of the world events. I dumped body lotion, moisturizer, shampoo, hair mousse, hair spray, mascara, and hand sanitizer out of my purse and carry on luggage. It never dawned on me that I should simply pack heavier for my overnight trip and check-in a bag that included these personal toiletries! Talk about being a creature of habit...

Clearing security at the airport I immediately inquired if it was safe to purchase the personal toiletry replacements that I required. The TSA worker simply said, "Don't bother to do it here, wait until you are at O'Hare; in five minutes the whole thing could change." Throughout the flight to O'Hare the pilot simply informed us that everything was on schedule, that we continued the journey to O'Hare correctly, and correctly anticipated that very turbulent pockets of air stood between our cruising altitude and a gentle landing.

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From Wall Street to diaconal ministry

By Mike Troutman

A few months ago Jennifer Larson asked me to share my story of becoming a candidate for diaconal ministry. After cogitating (or perhaps simply procrastinating) on this request, I began to suspect that the initial seeds were planted as long ago as my high school years, when I was involved in organizing events for Earth Day (yes the original one in 1970) and protests against Vietnam War. These diaconal seeds were watered in the mid 1990s when our family served as ELCA lay missionaries in Nicaragua and I worked with several micro-lending programs there.

Significant cultivation occurred in 2000, when I participated in a four month long Spirit and Work program offered through Wisdom Ways, a program of the Sisters of Carondelet at the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul, MN. I joined a dozen women, from various backgrounds and life stages and together we explored how our faith journeys entwined with our vocational journeys. At that point I had already spent almost 20 years in investment management, the majority of which was with the Board of Pensions of the ELCA, managing pension funds for ELCA pastors and lay workers. While I found the work fulfilling and rewarding, the Wisdom Way program led me to begin some very part-time seminary study.

A few years after that, my diaconal sapling was pruned and directed by three diaconal ministers here in the Twin Cities. Within a four-week period, Amy Hartman, Eileen Olson and Tammy Devine, in separate conversations, all shared a bit of their diaconal stories with me. This coincided with my decision to switch from “free agent” status to enrolled student in the Master of Arts in Religion and Theology at United Theological Seminary in New Brighton, MN.

Although I was aware of the lay rostered category called diaconal minister, I had not seriously considered this path for myself, until these three diaconal gardeners shared their stories with me. With this encouragement, along with that

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Resolution on diaconate

On September 25 -26, 2006 representatives from The Episcopal Church (TEC) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) gathered in Chicago to address elements of the Lutheran - Episcopal Coordinating Committee Resolution on Diaconate, which was passed in February 2006.

The working group consisted of churchwide staff and deacons, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers. Representatives from TEC include The Rev. Lynne Grifo, Associate Coordinator, Office for Ministry Development and two TEC Deacons, Rev. Carol Borne Stewart, Executive Director of Lutheran Episcopal Service in Mississippi, and Rev. Warren Frelund, Coordinator of Deacons for the Episcopal Dioceses of Iowa, in Des Moines. Rev Craig Settlege, Director for Rostered and Authorized Ministry, Sr. Janice Painter, retired deaconess at Calvary Lutheran, West Chester, PA, and Beth Barkhau, diaconal minister at St Paul Lutheran, Aiken, SC represented the ELCA.

Our task as representatives from TEC and the ELCA was to:

- a. review the concept of orderly exchange allowing service of deacons, diaconal ministers, and deaconesses in our respective churches
- b. review new patterns of stipendiary and non-stipendiary ministry, shared theological education, formation and continuing education as they relate to deacons, diaconal ministers and deaconesses.

Discussion centered on affirming the role of deacons, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers in TEC and the ELCA as well as the call of each church body to diakonia. The document *Called to Common Mission*, adopted by the 1999 ELCA Churchwide Assembly served as the guiding resource as well as the LECC Resolution of February 7, 2006,

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Lord, in your infinite mercy...

Prayers for healing...

Charles Smith, undergoing dialysis and awaiting a transplant
 Martha Baker on the death of her husband, David, December 13
 Kris Perry, on the death of her mother-in-law, Ethel Perry, December 2
 Pat Gerber's daughter, for successful invitro pregnancy with twins
 Krista (Johnson) Breuer, cancer recurrence
 Alex Herrera, husband of Sue, cancer remission
 Tamra Harder, battling breast cancer
 Judy Knapp, ongoing health concerns
 Continued prayers of healing for DM candidate Sandra Reback and her friend, Marj

Prayers of discernment for those approved, awaiting call...

Cynthia Bowden, Kathy Bonn, Joel Bradtke, Ellen Doughty, Amy Hartman, Lisa Hill, Anna Hollingbery, Janet Johnson, Diana Luscombe, Rachel March, Kathleen Massa, Gus Mauro, Elaine Olson, Robert Pfennig, Janice Phoebus, Nancy Selinger, Blaire Smith, Charles Smith, Heather Smith, Shirley Talbot, Peggy Vuylsteke, Christopher Wagener

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

118	Tammy Rade	10-14-06	122	Harry Prim	01-14-07
119	Eric Price	11-12-06	123	Pat Kane	01-20-07
120	Bob Pfennig	11-26-06	124	Amy Hartman	01-28-07
121	Bill Dahl	12-03-06			

"...and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'" Luke 3:22

Shelly Cunningham—God Pause at www.luthersem.edu/godpause—writes:

One of the symbols of baptism is the dove—the dove that floats down from the sky and embodies the Holy Spirit. As a bird of the air, it reminds us that God will meet our every need. It recalls God's promise to protect his creation. And though the dove in this story doubtless soared away in minutes, when the Spirit lands on Jesus it does not leave. It permeates his being and fills his heart, his soul, his mind, his bones with its power. Through our baptism that power is in us, too – equipping us to witness our-faith to others. Live out your baptismal promises each moment of every day.

Prayer: Lord, help me to claim the power you give me in my baptism. Fill me with your Spirit, and lead me to do your will. Amen.

Twin Cities' diaconals share in monthly fellowship

Diaconal ministers, candidates, and other lay rostered folks in and around St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minnesota are encouraged to attend monthly gatherings held at Luther Seminary to promote community, pray, and learn about each other's ministry areas. Meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month in the Olson Campus Center cafeteria at Luther Seminary. Times vary to allow for differing work schedules. For more information, contact Terri Endres at Terri@endresweb.com

MONTHLY DATES and TIMES (All dates are on Thursdays):

January 11	Dinner: 6:00 pm
February 15	Lunch—11:30a with guest Rev. Craig Settlage
March 15	Lunch: 11:45 am
April 26	Dinner: 6:00 pm
May 17	Lunch: 11:45 am



Got retreat?

Sunny Arizona is the location for the 2007 ELCA Diaconal Ministry Gathering, *Voices in the Wilderness: A Prophetic Call*, to be held April 19-22 at Spirit in the Desert Retreat Center, Carefree, AZ.

If you haven't received information for the gathering of diaconal ministers and approved candidates, please contact Terri Endres at terri@endresweb.com or 952-949-0147 or visit our website for current updates.



We gather...
to rest, pray for Sabbath, worship in community, fellowship and encourage each other, further our vision, learn and study the Bible, share our joys and stories...



Voices in the Wilderness: A Prophetic Call

The 2007 ELCA Diaconal Ministry Gathering
Spirit in the Desert Retreat Center
Carefree, Arizona, April 19-22, 2007



**Got a picture to share or a story to tell?
Contact Diaconews editor Jennifer Larson at jenniferllarson@hotmail.com or 715-497-6145.**

Dealing with spiritual and psychological issues of war

As Veteran's Day passed by in December, diaconal ministers should be aware that a small percentage of our citizenry – military personnel serving in Iraq and Afghanistan and their families – are making great sacrifices. Many soldiers are returning from the Middle East with combat stress syndrome that has the potential to impair them for life. The civilian helping network – the church especially -- needs to prepare to help these soldiers and their families deal with their spiritual, moral and psychological issues towards the aim of healing.

Plan now to attend the ELCA Minneapolis—St. Paul Joint Synod Ministerium on Thursday, January 18 at Calvary Lutheran Church in Golden Valley, MN. Participants will learn about the challenges soldiers are experiencing as they come home from their Middle Eastern deployments. Referral information and shepherding-to-care techniques will be taught. The free morning of training will feature experts in combat stress syndrome and crisis intervention. For more information, contact Amy Blumenshine (612) 822-6059 or ablumenshine@unitedseminary.edu or the Minneapolis or St. Paul ELCA synod offices.

Let the little children come

By Amy L. Hartman

People were bringing little children to Jesus in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it." And Jesus took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them. Mark 10:13-16

This story appears in all four Gospels, and we hear a version of it whenever someone is baptized. As I read this text again to prepare for this reflection, I noticed the emphasis on Jesus touching the children. People wanted him to touch the children. He welcomed them, took them in his arms, and laid his hands on them.

There is much in the news of late about the inappropriate sexual behavior of adults towards children. Our hearts have been broken by the loss of children's lives because someone did not know how to relate to them in a healthy way. The political powers of our country have been jilted by scandal from the inappropriate behavior of one of their own, who as we have learned, had been molested by a church leader in his own life. Weekly, almost daily, there is a story in the newspaper about a trusted adult sexually exploiting a child.

Jesus would certainly be indignant by all of this mis-behavior directed at children!

And he provides a way for all of us to follow as we also become indignant by this mis-behavior. As congregations, we need to always remember that parents bring their children – or children come on their own – because they want to have Christ in their lives in some way. We can work at being more welcoming of children. We can have many kinds of arms of loving protection – prayer, good boundaries and policies, frank conversations, accountability – which recognize the importance of children's safety. We can bless our children, bless their gifts, bless their dreams, and nurture them into the blessing they were meant to be in the kingdom of God. We can touch our children and one another in healthy, appropriate ways that say, "You are a cherished child of God."

Discussion—continued from page 2

toward a Theology of Ministry prepared by the Standing Commission on Ministry Development, TEC, May 2000. TEC and ELCA Concepts for the exchange of Deacons and Diaconal Ministers Under Called to Common Mission (draft version) April 2003, The Diaconate and Called to Common Mission: Continuing Exploration, February 2005. Representatives from both bodies will continue the work via conference calls and electronic communication, with a formal response in the form of a paper, presented back to LECC by April 2007.

As challenging as the task was, it was invigorating to affirm our mutuality in diakonia. In our time together we acknowledged both the desire and excitement for shared ministry, so too, we identified those places where our formation, liturgical roles, and stipendiary practices present challenges.

How can you help the ongoing discussion? Share examples of your fruitful encounters and collaborations. Submit examples of current ecumenical (TEC and ELCA) servant ministry stories to Beth Barkhau at barkhaurbpe@aol.com. It is the hope of the working group that many vibrant examples of deacons, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers in TEC and the ELCA will promote greater understanding and equip the baptized in both TEC and the ELCA to diakonia.

As a member of the DM Leadership Team, know that it is a privilege to represent you at such gatherings. I am available if you wish to speak beyond email messages at 803.646.0599 and would welcome your calls.

Blessings and Peace—Beth Barkhau

Birthdays

January

2 Suzanne Rigg
3 Gracia Hegener
4 Don Burgess
12 Ann Myhre
14 Tammy Rade
17 Joyce Freund
17 Audrey Forbes
22 Patty Lee
27 Margaret Howell
29 Mindy Holland

February

5 Bill Dahl
6 Mary Lasits
13 Linda Fox
16 Sheryl Faulk
16 Barb Schmitthenner
20 Linda Davis
23 Janet Johnson
25 Marilyn Olson
27 Ed Kruse

March

2 Carole Bohn
7 Letha Isbell
10 Laurie B. Yetzer
11 Joy Heine
19 Shari Biles
21 Charles Smith
21 Christy Van O'Linda
26 Libbie Reinking
31 Barb Martyn

April

1 Trink Schwartz
11 Heather Feltman
11 Lois Richardson
11 Kati Miller Holland
13 Kathy Massa
13 Nancy Selinger
19 Lisa Hill
27 Jennifer McBride

Don't see your name?
Send your birthdate to
krisp@visi.com



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

Cruising—continued from page 1

At times my ten years of service as an ELCA diaconal minister parallels this early morning travel experience. Instead of a well-planned excursion I am jolted into a new, confusing, and troubling reality that ultimately puts me into turbulent air. No official provides me quick access to how to navigate the journey. So much of what I know, the creature comforts, sits discarded waiting for my return. All too often I don't give the slightest thought to totally re-structure or re-pack my approach to this journey, I'd rather keep it as I have previously lived it. After passing the first check-point I attempt to make the routine return, I look for comfort to re-appear in life. But along the journey, I experience the presence of the Holy Spirit providing me the security of knowing that my faith and life journey continues, through the rough places, to a gentle landing or rest in the love of our Triune God.

It's been a whale of a ride – wait, I am mixing metaphors here! It's been a heck of a trip through these ten years and I wouldn't trade the jolts, the searching for clarity, the loss of what makes me a comfortable creature, the challenge to re-think and re-structure the various bumps and jostles along the way for any other experience. Thank you all for being colleagues on this adventure!

Gardeners—continued from page 2

of my 30-year partner, Amy Blumenshine, I was committed to beginning the candidacy process. In a few months, we took off to Gettysburg for the 2005 DMFE event. (Amy having also decided to be a diaconal candidate--with her own story to tell.)

After two amazing weeks at the seminary and along the Gettysburg battlefield, I realized that diaconal ministry could offer me a path for intersecting my economic and finance training and experience in new ways with the mission of the church. I now look forward to completing my degree program and the diaconal ministry process, and finding a place to apply myself to the ongoing struggle for economic justice and to other faith and money intersections.