

DiaconNews

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June 2007

Leadership Team

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Kris Perry

Vice Chair

Kim Winchell

Secretary

Jessica Nipp

Treasurer

Sue Vogel Herrera

At-Large

Tim Freund

Director for Rostered & Authorized Leadership

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Ecumenical Relations

Beth Barkhau

DMFE

Margy Schmitt Ajer

North American Assoc of Diaconate

Margy Schmitt Ajer

Luth Deaconess Assoc

Nancy Gable

DiaconNews Editor

Jennifer Larson

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2007 Formation event

by Tim Freund

The 2007 Formation Event is just a few months away and Margy Schmitt Ajer and the teams at Gettysburg are putting the finishing touches on their plans for another great event.

As I reflect back on my own DMFE experience, I remember it fondly and the people there. Somehow, somehow, I have felt a bond for life with many of the others there in 2001 even though I do not see many of them very often.

Maybe it was the great atmosphere at Gettysburg, or the walks our small group took before the day's activities started. I remember eating together and sharing my hopes, my dreams, and my fears for ministry. I remember our times of worship and praying together. I remember being afraid that Nancy Gable and Rick Carlson might not approve my project. (smile) You probably have your own memories.

Mindy Holland has set up a great prayer mentor program and the Leadership Team intends to continue it this year. So I am requesting volunteers to be prayer mentors for the DMFE in July.

Prior to the DMFE, as a prayer mentor, you will receive a short bio about your participant so you will have some idea about whom you are praying for at the event. You will also be asked to write a letter of introduction of yourself, and affirmation for the assigned participant prior to the DMFE.

During the event, we are asking you to pray each day for the participant assigned to you. If you are able to be a prayer mentor, please contact me at jtfreund@cass.net or call me at (734) 279-1450.

Welcome new leadership team

By Kris Perry

Sometimes life takes us down a path at a most unexpected time. Such was the case with my mother's sudden illness and recent death, along with my father's decline in health and my father-in-law's admittance to hospice care. I deeply regret that I was unable to attend the recent gathering at Spirit in the Desert Retreat Center in Carefree, Arizona, especially because I was so looking forward to meeting first time attendees.

Over these past 18 months since our last gathering, I have been deeply blessed by the friendship, collegiality, support, and hard work of the Leadership Team of this Community. Words simply cannot adequately convey the joy it has been working with Beth Barkhau, Tim Freund, Mindy Holland, Dick Bruesehoff, and Craig Settlage. So many gifts are evident between all of us, and together we have complemented each other well and have served this Community faithfully. I have been blessed to work with you and I will deeply miss Beth, Mindy, Dick and Craig's presence on the Team. Thank you all from the bottom of my heart for your many contributions and faithful service!

I am pleased to announce the newly elected Leadership Team members – Jessica Nipp and Kim Winchell - who will work with current Team members Tim Freund and myself. Welcome, also, to Pastor D. Jensen Seyenkulo, who has been named Director for Rostered and Authorized Leadership and Assistant Director for Multicultural Leadership with the Vocation and Education Unit. Jensen's work will include relating to the three lay rosters, including representing the V & E Unit at our diaconal gatherings and as the Unit's relator to the Leadership Team. The new Leadership Team has been structured as follows:

Chair and Liaison to Communications Team: Kris Perry

Vice Chair and Liaison to Guiding Principles Team: Kim Winchell

Secretary and Liaison to Gathering Planning Team: Jessica Nipp

At-Large Member and Liaison to Candidate Support Team: Tim Freund

Additionally, the following persons have been appointed either by the V & E Unit or the Leadership Team to serve in the following capacities:

Ecumenical Relations (DOTAC, World Federation Diakonia, LECC): Beth Barkhau

DMFE: Margy Schmitt Ajer

North American Association of the Diaconate (NAAD): Margy Schmitt Ajer

Lutheran Deaconess Association (LDA): Nancy Gable

Treasurer: Sue Vogel Herrera

Special thanks and appreciation is also extended to Terri Endres for stepping in and chairing the Carefree Gathering and to Sr. Anne Keffer for serving as facilitator during business meeting times. From everything I've heard, the event was simply wonderful and I believe Terri deserves a round of applause for orchestrating the event. Kudos of thanks to ALL who helped make this gathering so meaningful!

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The following proposals were approved by consensus during the business meeting times:

Proposal #1: The next gathering of the Diaconal Ministry Community will be scheduled for the summer of 2009 to be held either prior to or immediately following the international World Federation Diakonia event sponsored by DOTAC (Diakonia of The Americas and Caribbean) in Atlanta, Georgia. Future decisions concerning the frequency of gatherings will be recommended by the Guiding Principles Team at the next scheduled gathering.

Proposal #3: At each Gathering, the Diaconal Ministry Community will formally acknowledge and accept approved Diaconal Ministry candidates into the Diaconal Ministry Community, recognizing and affirming their gifts for ministry. With the acceptance of this proposal, a task force will be formed to author a litany of acceptance into our Community.

Proposal #4: The term of office for Leadership Team members Tim Freund and Kris Perry will be extended an additional nine months.

Proposal #5: Discontinue the Alternate position on the Leadership Team and empower the Leadership Team to appoint a member of the Diaconal Ministry Community to complete the term of office should a member of the Leadership Team resign.

Proposal #6: The Leadership Team be empowered to appoint a member of the Community to serve as Treasurer for a three year term subject to one reappointment. This appointee would be empowered to provide reports to the Diaconal Ministry Community and to the Leadership Team and be available for consultation if necessary in conference calls.

Proposal # 7: A committee will be appointed to explore sustainable income sources for the DM community and compensation for the Leadership Team, to report back by the end of 2008 with recommendations for the 2009 Gathering in Atlanta.

One proposal was tabled until a later time, as stated below:

Proposal #2: We will encourage other denominations and faith traditions to participate as non-voting guests at our gatherings, especially those persons who are closely aligned with our six marks. Concensus was reached not to make a decision on this proposal at this time.

Feel free to contact any member of the Leadership Team if you would like further information or clarification on any of the proposals.

Lord, in your infinite mercy...

Prayers for healing...

John Kumbier, father of Beth Barkhau, continued recovery from multiple broken bones and severe osteoporosis
 D. Israel Vasquez, husband of Jennifer (currently living in Okinawa, Japan), who is a marine serving in Iraq
 Lillian Naber, mother of Gloria Strickert, hospice care for multiple myeloma
 Charles Smith, dialysis and awaiting transplant
 Alex Herrera, husband of Sue (Vogel) Herrera, cancer remission
 DM candidate Sandra Reback and her friend, Marj
 DM candidate Tamara Harder, battling breast cancer
 Judy Knapp, ongoing health concerns
 Elaine Brant, safe travels while in Tanzania February 25 through July 12
 Esther Schmidt, safe travels to Tanzania in July to visit their congregational partner
 Jennifer Larson, safe travels while in China, teaching English during the month of July

Thank You! Please accept my sincere thanks for all of the cards, emails, and prayers for my mother (Donna Utecht) and family during her short illness. We learned of her malignant spinal cord tumor known as a chordoma on March 4 and she passed away April 22. My family and I were so grateful to have seven wonderful weeks of reminiscing, pampering mom, praising God for His many blessings, and opportunities to say good-bye. Thank you as well to the Community for sending flowers to the memorial service. It was a wonderful tribute to my mom and we are grateful for all of the loving remembrances and memorials.

~Kris Perry

Prayers of thanksgiving for those recently consecrated and anticipating consecration

129	George Bennett	05/04/07
130	James Wise	05/04/07
131	Marvin Combs	06/03/07
132	Blaire Smith	06/08/07
133	Heather Smith	06/08/07
134	Anna Hollingbery	06/16/07
135	Lisa Watson-Hill	06/24/07

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 discernment for those approved awaiting call...

Cynthia Baxter, Kathleen Bonn, Joel Bradtke, Ellen Doughty, Robert Fisher, Tonya Gunton, Nicole Houck, Kelly Howard, Maria Hurni, Troy Jacobson, Janet Johnson, Rebecca Kolowe, Diana Luscombe, Rachel March, Kathy Massa, Rebecca Mastalerz, Augustus Mauro, Jeremy McElvain, Sarah Parker, Janice Phoebus, Terra Rowe, Janet Schauer, Nancy Selinger, Charles Smith, Meghan Sobocienski, Julie Stegelmann, Shirley Talbot, Georgia Van Hoesen, Peggy Vuylsteke, Christopher Wagener, Linda Zawaski, Karen Zelle

Diaconals around the world – a visioning trip to Tanzania

By Kris Perry

This past October I was honored to lead a group of 16 from my home parish on an education and visioning trip to Tanzania, East Africa to explore the possibility of becoming a congregational partner with an ELTC congregation as part of the ELCA Global Companion Program. While on this trip, we not only visited a rural parish in Kimbushi near Moshi, but we also had the opportunity to visit several other agencies/organizations who are actively involved in mission work as well as several of our Lutheran missionaries. I would like to highlight one such visit to the Faraja Diaconic Center in Sanya Juu, a village rehabilitation center for children with physical disabilities.

I learned of the Faraja Diaconic Center through the Nebraska Synod and contacted their senior deacon, Peter Barbian, who is a German deacon serving the ELCT in Sanay Juu. While Tanzania is one nation with one language, it is not one culture. There are more than 130 tribes each with its own language and traditions/customs. In most tribes, having a handicapped child is considered horrifying and always the mother's fault. For fear of being divorced, many mothers choose to give their child away or to hide them away from society (because it is believed that if one has a handicapped child, there is a curse on that family). The Faraja Diaconic Center is one of 17 special primary schools for the handicapped, all but one owned by non government agencies (4 for the blind, 7 for the deaf, 4 for the mentally handicapped, and 2 schools for the physically handicapped). It is estimated that only 3% of all handicapped children in Tanzania have access to primary school education. For most children who come to Faraja, this is their first experience with schooling, and most are in need of medical care first due to poor care at home. Approximately 40% need orthopedic shoes, 10% need a wheelchair or an artificial limb. Donors are always needed to help with these needs.

The Center also trains deacons. There are currently 18 ordained deacons and 9 in training at the center, all of whom are trained in different professions so as to best serve the entire community. They receive extensive Bible training over the six years. The difference between a pastor and a deacon is that the pastor is primarily there to serve the spiritual needs of the people, whereas deacons are there to serve people spiritually and physically. The cost to house a student for one year is approximately \$96.00. In the Barnaba Worship Center hangs a painting of Acts 6:1-7 which provides the model for their understanding of the call of deacons in the ELCT, the Seven Deacons of the Church. Each Deacon is known for a specific area of service such as feeding the hungry, welcoming strangers, healing/visiting the sick, burying of the dead, visiting the imprisoned, and clothing the naked.

We toured the children's dormitory where each child makes their beds each day and lays out all of their "treasures" on their bed. At first we thought that the decorated beds were done so on our behalf as visitors, but we soon learned that this is part of their daily routine and one which the children are extremely proud to show their handicrafts. We watched and interacted as the children were at recess time and then we each received a drawing done by the children. I presented Deacon Peter with gifts of towel/basin bookmarks to share with all of the brothers serving Faraja. We also spoke of our bond in the deaconate and our hope that a group from the USA could travel to Germany one day to learn from each other about our rosters, our communities, and the work we all do in the name of Jesus Christ. If you ever have a chance to travel to Tanzania in the Arusha area and would like to visit the Faraja Diaconic Center, please contact Peter at: barbian-mp@gmx.de.

Lutheran Volunteer Corp appoints new program director

Lutheran Volunteer Corps has named Joanne Otte Program Director. This new position was created by the LVC board and staff to further LVC's development as a national leader in full-time volunteer service. Joanne has served nearly five years as the LVC Chicago/Milwaukee Coordinator. In that position she has coordinated two Local Support Committees, led planning for national orientation, and has directly supported over 100 full-time LVC volunteers.

As LVC Program Director Joanne will lead six city coordinators across the nation as they continue to develop and strengthen LVC's partnerships with full-time volunteers, social justice ministries, and local support committees. Joanne also continues co-leading LVC's volunteer spiritual development and vocational discernment project. She will fully assume the Program Director responsibilities August 1 and will continue to have her office in Chicago.

Joanne is a graduate of Luther Seminary and Wartburg College. During seminary she interned at Chicago Uptown Ministry, coordinating a program facilitating faith story sharing among Uptown residents and ministry partners from Chicago's suburbs. Joanne is also an alumna of LVC in which she served as a youth case manager at Lutheran Social Service of MN Safe House in St. Paul. Joanne is a member of Ebenezer Lutheran Church in Chicago.

About LVC...

The Lutheran Volunteer Corps, a community of faith, unites people to work for peace with justice. A national, volunteer service program, LVC partners with full-time volunteers and nearly 100 social justice organizations and ministries in nine urban areas in the U.S. In addition to working for justice, LVC volunteers live together in intentional household communities of 4-7 people, explore their spirituality, and encourage simple, sustainable living. Living and working along side those in their placements, LVC volunteers actively respond to the gifts and needs of their communities. With partners in their placements, volunteers provide direct service, organize communities, and advocate for environmental stewardship, peace and justice

LVC is on a Journey to an Inclusive Community, forming and strengthening alliances among people of many cultures and communities, and intentionally dismantling racism in our organization, the church and society. As a Reconciling in Christ organization, LVC welcomes and encourages the full participation of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

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**Please consider submitting an article, call-story, poem,
prayer, or special announcement for the next Diaconews.**

Deadline for the next edition is August 15, 2007.

Please submit articles to jenniferllarson@hotmail.com

Birthdays

May

2 Karla Neumann-Smiley
3 Sue Herrera
5 Madelyn Busse
6 Esther Schmidt
6 Janell Weum
7 Terra Rowe
9 Leslie Whited Vance
11 Doug Spiotta
16 Jessica Nipp
18 Cynthia Baxter
22 Sandra Braasch
29 Terry Moore
30 Judy Knapp
31 Janet Lepp

June

5 Ardie Senft
5 Georgia Van Hoesen
9 Sue Setzer
13 Judy Rooney
14 Erin Morris
17 Sharon Gall
18 Linda Daug-Deegan
21 Nicole Houck
22 Rowena Henry
24 Margy Schmitt Ajer
27 Judy Schroeder
29 Glenda Blegen
30 Karen White

July

5 Janet Schauer
6 Joan Braunhardt
6 Maria Hurni
12 Becky Wiese
19 Nicholas 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
8 James Wise
10 Gloria Strickert
16 Carole Urbanski
28 Kathy Bonn
29 Marjorie Myers
31 Kristi Gullickson

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

Consultation on vocation and service

The Planning Team for the Consultation on Vocation and Service, which was held last February in Delray Beach, Florida has had two conference calls since that gathering. We continue to sort through the information from the small groups, and are planning to initiate further meetings in a variety of areas of the church. We have not finalized how those meetings will look or when they will be offered, but we do know that we will need additional help in the future. If you would like to help initiate such a meeting, please contact either Tammy Devine (tdevine@elcabop.org) or myself (krisp@visi.com). As we learn more about these future meetings, we will keep you informed.