

**AN UNDEFINITIVE HISTORY OF THE
LUTHERAN CANADIAN DIACONAL MINISTRY
A Work in Progress**

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for
Theology 551
Theology of Diaconal Ministry
Valparaiso University
Valparaiso, Indiana

April 30, 2007

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Introduction

This paper will trace the history and origins of diaconal ministry in Canada. The paper will explore the two different Deaconess Communities from the United States, which train and send consecrated deaconesses to serve in Canada. These are the Diaconates of the Lutheran Deaconess Association and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Deaconess Community. Next, the paper will trace the development of the Evangelical Lutheran in Canada Diaconal Ministry program, its training and candidacy requirements. Included within these three sections will be brief histories about the various deaconesses/diaconal ministers who have served or are serving in Canada. The paper will conclude by examining the similarities and differences between the different Deaconess/Diaconal Ministry training programs.

By no means is this paper meant to be a definitive history of Canadian Lutheran Diaconal Ministry. Nothing has been previously written on the subject to the best of my knowledge. What started out to be the fulfillment of an assignment for a course has now turned into something much bigger. Knowing this, and the fact that many have requested a copy of the paper when it is finished, has filled me with trepidation. So with that in mind, I shall begin.

Quite a bit of the information presented in the paper has been collected from the anecdotal remarks or e-mails of those whom I have interviewed. As a result, some information may differ from another's, depending on a person's memory, personal experience, or interpretation. Therefore I apologize in advance if some of the information I have presented is inaccurate. I would also like to apologize to those deaconesses or diaconal ministers whom I have inadvertently omitted or about whom I have made errors in their own personal histories. I have tried my best to verify the research for this paper. It is my hope that the paper will provide a basic framework from which to continue developing a history of diaconal ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to the many people, both in the United States and Canada, who have assisted me in gathering and/or compiling information for this paper. It has been affirming of my own calling to become a deaconess to have the type of support from others involved in diaconal ministry in both Canada and the United States. Without their dedicated support, this paper would not have been possible.

**BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ELCA AND LDA DEACONESSES AND THEIR
RESPECTIVE COMMUNITIES AS RELATED TO THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN
CHURCH IN CANADA**

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Deaconess Community

I have chosen to begin with the ELCA Deaconess Community, because of its long connection with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. As far as I have been able to ascertain, the ELCA Deaconess Community, because of its history with the Baltimore Deaconess School, was the first to send Deaconesses to Canada.

The ELCA Community of Deaconesses had its origins in Germany. The following information was taken from the ELCA website.

Seven deaconesses arrived in Philadelphia from Germany in 1884, and established the first motherhouse of deaconesses in the U.S. The first U.S.-trained deaconesses from this motherhouse were consecrated in 1887. Previously, trained deaconesses were "borrowed" from Germany and Norway to staff hospitals and other social welfare institutions. Eventually there were 12 motherhouses developed by ELCA predecessors. In 1910 the Board of Deaconess Work opened the first specialized school to prepare women for full-time service in the church, affiliated with the Baltimore Motherhouse. More than 1,000 women would train at the school for service in parish work, Christian education, and health and welfare services. The Baltimore Motherhouse continued operating until 1965, by which time deaconess candidates were attending seminaries across the United States.

<http://www.elca.org/communication/timeline/18.html> - 1884 In 1960 The American Lutheran Church was founded by merger of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church (UELC) (1896), the American Lutheran Church (ALC) (1930) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELC) (1917).

In 1962 The Lutheran Church in America resulted from a merger of the Augustana Church (1860), the American Evangelical Lutheran Church (AELC) (1872), the Suomi Synod (1890) and the United Lutheran Church in America ULCA (1918). The Baltimore Motherhouse and the Philadelphia Motherhouse joined together and moved to Gladwyne, PA. The Community joined the Lutheran Church in America (LCA).

In 1966 The Canada District of the American Lutheran Church was formed and became the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, a separate autonomous church.

The Philadelphia Hospital and Motherhouse (originated in Islerlohn, Germany), the Immanuel Deaconess Motherhouse at Omaha (where Sr. Frieda Kiel and Sr. Helen Erikson trained) and Baltimore Deaconess Motherhouse and Church Workers

Training School (where Sister Anne Keffer trained) merged to form the Deaconess Community of the LCA.

The ELCA formed in 1986. Prior to that the Deaconess Community was part of the Lutheran Church in America (both Canada and the USA). Both of these (ELCA and ELCIC) originated with the traditional motherhouse system.

www.elca.org/communication/timeline/1884.html

Prior to 1970, most women who were married did not work outside of the home because it wasn't an accepted societal norm. Because of this deaconesses did not marry. If a deaconess did choose to get married, then she left the diaconate. However by 1976 Deaconess Students in the ELCA could be married and continue to remain in active diaconal service.

Other changes followed for the diaconate. In 1993, an ELCA Task Force for the Study of Ministry recommended the establishment of diaconal ministry as a new roster in the ELCA. The 1993 Church wide Assembly meeting in Kansas adopted this recommendation. In 1995, the Church-wide Assembly approved the Rite of Consecration for both Diaconal Ministers and Deaconesses. www.elca.org/diaconalministry/history/

Sister Anne Keffer, Directing Deaconess for the ELCA (serving both ELCIC and ELCA) shared that there have been many Canadian deaconesses who have become a part of the ELCA Community. She wrote that while some have lived out their lives in Canada, others have lived as Canadians working in the United States and some have become U.S. citizens. This paper will primarily address those Sisters who have served in Canada.

Sister Florence Weicker (1907-1977) was probably the first deaconess sent to serve in Canada from the Baltimore School for Deaconesses. Sister Florence was born in Edmonton, Alberta and served as a Parish Deaconess at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in Kitchener, Ontario from 1949-1972.

Sister Alma Hartwig, entered the Philadelphia Motherhouse in 1944. Although she was born in Emerson, Manitoba in 1915, Sr. Alma primarily served in the United States and the Virgin Islands.

The remainder of the ELCA Deaconesses highlighted in this section of the paper are not listed in chronological order, as I did not have access to that information for all of them.

Sister Esther Brose was born in Quebec and graduated from the Baltimore Deaconess School. Although she served in the United States, she returned home to Pembroke, Ontario where she died in the mid 1990's.

Grace Saabas was a deaconess for many years before marrying Pastor Helmut Saabas in Montreal. Sister Ruth Poetzch served as a nurse in Langenburg, Saskatchewan. Sister Minnie Carlson served the Good Shepherd Lutheran Home in Wetaskiwin, Alberta.

Sister Anna Brandt was born in Darwin, Saskatchewan. In addition to serving various ministries in the U.S., Sr. Anna was a nurse at the hospital in Landenburg, Saskatchewan and at St. Pauls Home in Melville, Saskatchewan. The Lutheran Theological Seminary in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan awarded an Honorary Doctorate to Sister Anna.

Sister Helen Eriksson's ministry involved her in church survey work in preparation for new mission congregations in both Canada and the United States. Sister Velma Pomrenke was born in Manitoba. She served at St. John Lutheran Church in Waterloo, Ontario before moving to Ohio to serve at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church.

Sister Helen Forler was born in New Hamburg, Ontario. She served as a deaconess at St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Kitchener, Ontario for a brief time and then resigned.

Sister Sheila Radtke, originally of Pembroke, Ontario served as Director of Christian Education at St. Mark in Kitchener, Ontario. She later moved to the United States where she resigned and married a Pastor.

Edna Monk (born in Bruce County, Ontario) served congregations in the US, then served St. Peter's in Kitchener from 1951-1955. She resigned from the diaconate.

Sister Frieda Gatzke was born in Edmonton, Alberta. She began her ministry in 1959 as an itinerant parish worker for the part of the church, then called the "Board of American Missions" – ULCA (later LCA). Sister Frieda became the Directing Deaconess of the LCA (later ELCA) Community from 1983-1991. She was the first Canadian elected to that position. Sister Frieda

retired to Victoria, B.C. where she served as pastoral assistant at Luther Court until 2001. She is currently residing in Victoria in assisted living at Luther Court.

Sister Frieda Kiel was also born in Edmonton, Alberta. In addition to serving parishes in the United States, Sr. Frieda also served in the Tri-Parish of Wetaskiwin, Alberta area. Sister Frieda is retired in Edmonton.

Sister Margaret Keller was born in Kitchener, Ontario. She graduated from the Baltimore Deaconess School in 1963. Sister Keller served as a social worker in the United States and in the Kitchener-Waterloo Hospital in Ontario. She was a Deaconess-Missionary to Chili, later resigning from the Diaconate and completing her M. Div. degree. Margaret was ordained a pastor and was a Missionary Pastor in Peru. Margaret retired to Bridgeport, Ontario in the 1990's.

Sister Linda Wedman began her ministry in 1971 as a Youth and Parish Worker. She was born in Edmonton, Alberta and has served many congregations across Canada. Sister Linda's family established the Good Samaritan Society in Edmonton.

Sister Sue Lembke is from Owen Sound, Ontario. Sister Sue was severely injured while serving at St. Agatha's Children's Village in Ontario. She continues to be an active volunteer as health permits. Sister Jean Widmeyer, although born in Hanover, Ontario, served in the United States.

Sister Anne Keffer graduated from Waterloo College and the Baltimore Deaconess School. She was "set apart to the Office of Deaconess" September 13, 1964 at Trinity Lutheran Church in New Hamburg, Ontario. Sister Anne served parishes as Director of Christian Education in Kitchener, Waterloo and Nova Scotia. Sister Anne was a Chaplain at Luther College/University campus, Regina and at the Lutheran High School in Outlook, Saskatchewan. Sister Anne served as Director for the Prairie Centre in Ecumenism in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. She was elected in 2004 as Directing Deaconess for the ELCA (serving both ELCIC and ELCA). She was called to this position by the National Church Council, ELCIC as a member of the Saskatchewan Synod.

Sister Ginger Patchen, although born in the United States has spent most of her ministry in Canada as a pre-school educator. She has been Head of the Epiphany Children's Centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba since 1976. Sister Ginger was invested as a Deaconess April 1, 1973 and consecrated as an LCA deaconess July 17, 1977. She also holds degrees in social work,

psychology and mental health and has completed Graduate Studies in Religion. Sister Valerie Sander, born in Philadelphia, also has worked at the Epiphany Children's Centre in Winnipeg since 1976.

Sister Monica Denk was born in Edmonton and served as "Intentional Interim Minister" for several congregations in Alberta. She is currently the International Volunteer Coordinator for the ELCIC/Canadian Lutheran World Relief in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Since the late 1940's, approximately seventeen Deaconesses of the ELCA Community or its predecessor bodies have served in Canada.

The Lutheran Deaconess Association

The following historical information was gathered from a paper written by Wilma Kucharek, titled A History of the Lutheran Deaconess Association. Valparaiso University, 1976.

"The Lutheran Deaconess Association was a late-comer on the scene of the deaconess movement in America. The seed of the LDA began when the Reverend F. W. Herzberger, a city missionary in St. Louis, Missouri, saw the need for trained women workers in the fields of missions and charities. At the Associated Lutheran Charities Convention in Fort Wayne, Indiana, in 1911, Herzberger presented an essay on the female deaconate. He suggested that special training be given to student nurses in Lutheran Hospitals as a preparation for this work. The Reverend Philip Wambsganns, president of the Associated Lutheran Charities, became a chief founder in the endeavour to train deaconesses.

In July of 1919, a resolution was made by the members of the Associated Lutheran Charities to organize the Lutheran Deaconess Association; a petition was then sent by them to the Lutheran Hospital in Fort Wayne requesting permission for deaconess students to take nurses training at the hospital.

The hospital agreed, and on August 14, 1919, the Lutheran Deaconess Association was established as an independent corporation.

From 1919 through 1935, the education of deaconesses took the form of a three year hospital course in nursing taken concurrently with instruction in Bible, catechism and diaconics.

In 1934, a Deaconess Conference was established for the continuing fellowship of Deaconesses of the LDA. The conference resolved to meet annually in the summer, its purpose being to "discuss matters of interest to deaconess work, to keep alive and deepen the spirit of consecration and to strengthen the bond of sisterly love among deaconesses." The Conference asked for the establishment of

an advisory committee composed of five deaconesses. The advisory committee served as a means by which the Conference could present items, through the superintendent to the Board of Directors. This action showed an interest by the Conference in using “democratic process in the LDA. The Board granted the request.” (p.8)

In 1943, at the invitation of President O.P. Kretzmann, the training school for deaconess was transferred to Valparaiso University. The Lutheran Deaconess Association stated that the Training School for Deaconesses was a separate entity and not a department of Valparaiso. The training program has since retained its own identity, educating deaconesses for service in the LC-MS, ELCA and the ELCIC as well as others who were interested. In 1946, the Deaconess Training course at Valparaiso University was extended to a four year B.A. degree, except for those women with professional training or those planning to work in the mission fields. Until the 1950’s, marriage for the deaconess meant giving up service in the capacity of a deaconess.” (Kucharek. 1976)

The Lutheran Deaconess Association prepares women for ministries of service to those in need in the church and in the world, supports deaconesses in their varied ministries, affirms the whole people of God in their own Christian service and assists the church in its diaconal mission. The LDC (Lutheran Deaconess Conference) is the Community to which the Deaconesses of the LDA belong.

The first deaconess to come from Canada to the LDA was Deaconess Ruth Berg (now Finkelstein). Her first call was to St. Pauls Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tremont in the Bronx, New York. Deaconess Ruth served four to five years when she married a parishioner and left the diaconate.

Deaconess Jean Hoover (Schneider) also came from Canada and graduated in 1955. She was the first LDA deaconess to serve in Canada, ministering to the people of St. John’s Lutheran Church in Toronto, Ontario. Jean was President of the LDC several times.

Deaconess Joan Cole-Heine was consecrated August 13, 1961. Deaconess Joan served various ministries in the United States before receiving a call to Canada on August 9, 1979 to Inuvik in the North West Territories. Deaconess Joan remained in Inuvik for fifteen years in the role of Parish Minister and receptionist for Doctor/Pastor C. Heine, whom she married. Deaconess Joan’s last call before she retired was at the Lutheran Senior’s Care Hospital in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan where she was a chaplain.

Deaconess Lucy Radtke was consecrated on July 25, 1961. She served Christ Lutheran in St. Catherines, Ontario from 1961-1963 as a Parish Deaconess. Deaconess Lucy then served as Field Secretary for the LDA from 1963-1965. Her last call, before retirement, was at the Lutherwood Child Center, Kitchener, Ontario from 1990-1996.

Fay (Weams) Reinhart was also from Canada. She was consecrated on July 23, 1963. She and her husband were missionaries in Papua, New Guinea for fifteen years. Her last position before she retired was from 2000-2005 for Lutheran Bible Translators.

Deaconess E. Louise Williams was consecrated August 21, 1967. Deaconess Louise served in Edmonton at St. Peter's Lutheran Church in general parish ministry: pastoral care (hospital and shut in), youth ministry, Christian education, ministry with women and neighbourhood outreach from 1967-1972. In 1972 Deaconess Louise worked part time in the Parish and full time as a psychiatric social worker at the Alberta Hospital. She currently is the Executive Director of the Lutheran Deaconess Association Valparaiso, Indiana, adjunct assistant professor of theology at Valparaiso University and President of the Diakonia World Federation, an ecumenical organisation for diaconal associations and communities.

Deaconess Faith Reiner is also a Canadian. She was consecrated July 16th, 1968. Her first position in Canada was in 1975 at Lac La Biche, Alberta in a government Family Services position. She was later called to work for LAMP (Lutheran Association of Missionaries and Pilots) as the Director of Christians in Service Program in the LAMP office in Edmonton, Alberta. Deaconess Faith is retired.

Eleanor Brennenstuhl was a member of St. John's Lutheran Church in Toronto, Ontario. She was the LDA treasurer and on the Board of Directors for many years. Eleanor also faithfully attended the annual LDC meeting (now called RAM – Regular Annual Meeting). She was made an honorary Deaconess in 1971.

Deaconess Jan Drews was consecrated in 1972. Her first call (or placement) was at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Redondo Beach, California as a parish deaconess. Although not officially called as a Deaconess, Deaconess Jan currently works at Canadian Lutheran World Relief as the Refugee Coordinator for the Toronto Office.

Deaconess Pam Harrington came from Canada and was consecrated in 1981. Her first call was to Ascension Lutheran in Edmonton. Deaconess Pam's current position is Diaconal Minister at Holy Cross Lutheran Mission in Orillia, Ontario.

Deaconess Beth Chittim's initial training was in social work. She studied at Regent College in Vancouver, receiving a certificate of Christian Studies. Deaconess Beth completed a one-year diaconal training program at Valparaiso as a Plan 3 student in 1985-1986. She was consecrated June 28, 1987 in Montreal where she worked as a deaconess until funding for the position ran out. Since then Beth has worked in a variety of social work positions where she has always felt "that her work has a diaconal flavour". She writes "A common thread of her work is that it has mostly been with displaced people, the stranger among us."

Deaconess Julie Hink, also from Canada, was first consecrated by the LDA on August 4, 2001 and then consecrated in the ELCIC March 3, 2003. Her first call was in January 2003 at Mt. Zion in Edmonton, Alberta as a Parish Nurse and Worship and Music Coordinator. Deaconess Julie's second (and current) call is as a Chaplain at the Good Samaritan Care Centre in Edmonton.

Judy Whaley, LDA Deaconess Student, originally hailed from St. Mark Lutheran Church in Toledo, Ohio where she strongly felt the call to serve God early in elementary school. Although she has spent a great part of her life in diaconal service, Judy is finally following her heart by becoming a deaconess. Judy has been living in Canada for almost thirty years and is a Canadian citizen. Currently, Judy is a teacher working with special needs students who are primarily of Aboriginal heritage in Prince Rupert, British Columbia.

Since the 1950's, the LDA has trained and consecrated eleven deaconesses who have served in Canada with one student currently in the Formation Process. The LDA contributes to the ELCIC by training and consecrating deaconesses to serve in Canada and by providing a strong supportive diaconal community to which the deaconesses belong.

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DIACONAL MINISTRY PROGRAM IN THE
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA**

As stated in the earlier parts of this paper, Deaconesses began serving in Canada from the ELCA and their predecessor bodies as early as the late 1940's and from the LDA in the 1950's.

The following information was taken from a paper by Pastor Richard Stetson who wrote it for a presentation during a 2007 J term at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Columbia, South Carolina.

“In 1960 The American Lutheran Church is founded by a merger of the UELC (1896), the ALC (1930) and the ELC (1917). The Canada District of the American Lutheran Church was formed during this time. In 1966, the ALC – Canada District became the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, a separate autonomous church.

The current Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada was formed through a merger of the ELCC and the LCA-Canada Section (three Canadian Synods) in 1986. Shifts from “divisions” of the church to “interim working groups” and finally “program groups” during this time period resulted in many programs, including those involving diaconal ministry having a start and stop type of development due to this church re-structuring.”

An officially recognized Diaconal Ministry program is relatively new in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. The initial push for diaconal ministry came from many people – mostly in the Synod of Alberta and the Territories who were serving as Parish Workers and who wanted some formalisation of standards but who didn't want to become deaconesses.

For instance, Lila deWaal, a Diaconal Minister serving at Lord of Glory Lutheran Church in Lac La Biche wrote the following to me, “Before the ELCIC had a Diaconal Ministry track, there were some women who served as Deaconesses and belonged to religious communities [my note: these primarily would have been the LDA and the ELCA Communities]. Then there were those of us who felt a call to some form of ministry that did not involve ordination. In Alberta, there were many people serving in a variety of different types of ministries. Their calls were confirmed by the congregations they were serving but not acknowledged by the larger church. The Certified Lay Professional track was set up in order to connect all of these people whom God was calling to ministry to the larger church and to provide accountability and community for them. There was also a desire to have some minimum standard of Lutheran theological education for those who were serving in our church. This program was piggy backed onto the National ELCIC Diaconal

Ministry track at a later date.” The Certified Lay Professional track began to be developed in the 1980’s.

“In 1993, an ELCIC Task Force for the Study of Ministry in collaboration with DTEL (Division for Theological Education and Leadership) created a status for diaconal ministry within the larger framework of a discussion on a three fold ministry. In 1995, the ELCIC in convention approved the following motion (NC 95-50) “That those persons who have been set apart as deaconesses and currently serve in the ELCIC be considered diaconal ministers and included in the diaconal ministry roster.” In 1997, course requirements for the Diaconal Ministry program were developed by the National Church. (Stetson, 2007.)

By 1999, Pastor Richard Stetson, then Assistant to the Bishop in the ELCIC National Office (with the Diaconate and enacting its roster being a major part of his portfolio), developed a standards document with the assistance of Dr. Joe Wagner and Ms. Carol Schickel (Division for Ministry of the ELCA).

Sister Monica wrote, “Many of the standards developed for the Diaconal Ministry program were borrowed from the ELCA. These standards are met by both the Lutheran Deaconess Association and the Diaconal Community of the ELCA. Because of these shared standards, Diaconal Ministers can be rostered ELCIC Diaconal Ministers and members of our respective diaconal communities.” However, she noted that, “The ELCA and LDA standards exceed those of the ELCIC.” One of the key areas where the standards exceed those of the ELCIC is in the area of purposeful emphasis on a distinct diaconal community.

Sister Monica wrote, “This establishment of a Diaconal Ministry track within the ELCIC means that the church has made a commitment to this expression of diaconal ministry and Community. This pledge also involves commitment of its deaconesses to the church. The Deaconess organization agrees to establish some kind of relationship with the church. It means mutual accountability and responsibility.”

“The intent behind the Diaconal Ministry program was not to be a Community, but a roster, similar to the clergy. Diaconal Ministers who are rostered may be members of the Lutheran Deaconess Association, The Deaconess Community of the ELCA and/or ELCIC Diaconal Ministers.” (Sister Anne).

“A rite was accepted for the consecration of Diaconal Ministers. The term consecration was chosen to differentiate the rite from the ordination of ministers of Word and Sacrament and because of its historical usage. The rite may say as much from a different perspective about the intention of this ministry in the church as the church’s constitution, by laws and Candidacy Manual. The consecration rite speaks the language of the heart. Diaconal Ministers may not serve without a formal call from a church body that is authorized to extend a call: congregation, Synod or National. Students who are consecrated through the LDA must have a second consecration through the ELCIC in order to take a call in the ELCIC and be rostered, or they must have a formal call in order to be consecrated and rostered.” (Stetson. 2005) The term Diaconal Minister was chosen as a gender inclusive title for the roster – a title used by the ELCA and the United Church of Canada.

Currently, the “Lay” qualifier (for Diaconal Ministry) is still written into the ELCIC Constitution (Article VIII and Part III of the Administrative bylaws), but was dropped in most other documents, including the consecration rite by 2005. The change to drop the word “lay” is currently in the process to be changed in the Constitution and should occur June 2007.

In August 2000, the first Diaconal Retreat was held in Calgary, Alberta with Sr. Anne Keffer and Gordon Jenson leading sessions.

The Diaconal Ministry program was approved by the Lutheran Theological Seminary in May 2002. It was developed as a one year diaconal ministry certificate program, using standards developed by the church. Dr. Gordon Jensen, Associate Professor at Lutheran Theological Seminary in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan wrote that to the best of his knowledge, “There have been no diaconal ministry graduates from LTS yet, although some students have taken courses on the Lutheran Confessions and the history the Lutheran Church in Canada for the Diaconal Ministry requirements as set out in the Candidacy Manual. There was one student from Saskatchewan who started the program but switched to the ordained track halfway through the year.” At the time of this paper there were three people taking the Diaconal Ministry Certificate Program. One is an Alberta student who is currently on field placement at Camp Kinasao in Saskatchewan. Another student, from Saskatchewan is a part time student. Lee Robertson is the first person to go through the process

to become eligible for consecration as a diaconal minister and has been approved for consecration since December 2004. He is still waiting and searching for a call.

The following individuals are or were rostered as Diaconal Ministers in the ELCIC. As I wasn't able to connect with most of them, I have presented them in alphabetical order.

Karen Belcourt has an undergraduate degree in Christian Studies from Taylor University (affiliated with North American Baptists). She has Master Level courses through Concordia Seminary in Edmonton, Alberta and the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Saskatoon. Karen is currently a Diaconal Minister at Trinity Lutheran Church in Edmonton, Alberta. Karen was consecrated in 2002 however already held that position as a parish director for seven years before that. She is responsible for programming, administration and youth, assisting with hospital visitation and counselling when needed.

Cameron Befus

Signi Bruner received a Bachelor of Religious Studies from Augustana University College, Alberta. She also holds a Teaching Certificate from the University of Saskatchewan which she earned in 1962. Signi completed the Diaconal Ministry requirements of the ELCIC. Her internship was in Camrose, Alberta at Bethel Lutheran Church where she was involved in mediation and counselling for battered women. Signi was consecrated on December 3, 2006 and is currently involved in Pastoral Care at the Bethany Group Seniors Residences in Camrose, Alberta where her ministry includes visiting, counselling, worship, hymn sings, Bible studies and prayer groups.

Eleanor Damkar

Marie Frick

Pam Jackson took some courses from LTS to complete requirements from the diaconal ministry program.

Connie Landstrom

Jane Olson

Lawfey Olson of Manitoba is deceased.

Margaret Olson was consecrated in 1994. She entered the Diaconal Ministry program with a Bachelors of Education, taking further training at New Theological Seminary in Edmonton and Concordia College, Edmonton. Margaret was commissioned by the Bishop to serve in a pastoral capacity in Inuvik, N.W.T.

Bonnie Peattie

Lily-Linda Slobod

Bev Swanson was consecrated in April of 2006 and received her training through various institutions including Lutheran Theological Seminary in Saskatoon. She received her counselling

certification through CAPPE. Bev has worked at the same church for almost eight years as a Pastoral Counsellor. She also leads pre-marriage workshops, preaches occasionally and teaches confirmation. Another part of Bev's ministry is to counsel and support Pastors in their ministries.

Elsa Tober

Jane Tze completed a Parish Nursing Program in 1996 followed by a Masters Degree in Biblical Counselling. Many of these courses counted towards her Diaconal Ministry program requirements. Jane was consecrated in April 2006 and is currently serving as a Diaconal Minister at the Chinese Christian Wing Kei Care Centre, a long-term care senior's home in Calgary.

Lila de Waal received her Master of Theological Studies rather than the Diaconal Ministry certificate. She entered the Certified Lay Professional track in 1988. At that time she was serving full time as ministerial assistant at Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church in Sherwood Park, Alberta. Lila then served Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Calgary, Alberta for 5 ½ years with the title Ministerial Assistant. She was consecrated (commissioned) in 1996. Lila served part time for one year at Augustana in Saskatoon and has been part time at Lord of Glory in Lac La Biche for the past five years. Lila graduated from Briercrest Bible College with a Bachelor of Theology in 1988. She took additional courses from various theological institutes to fulfill CTCL requirements for Certified Lay Minister.

LDA Deaconesses/ELCIC Diaconal Ministers

1. Joan Cole-Heine
2. Julie Hink
3. Pam Harrington
4. Judy Whaley - student

ELCA Deaconesses/ELCIC Diaconal Ministers

1. Sr. Monica Denk
2. Sr. Ginger Patchen
3. Sr. Anne Keffer
4. Sr. Val Sander

If my information is correct, then there are currently twenty-one Diaconal Ministers in Canada with the ELCIC, with one student in formation through the Lutheran Deaconess Association in Valparaiso, Indiana, three students in the Diaconal Ministry Certificate program at Lutheran Theological Seminary in Saskatchewan and one seeking a call making a total of twenty-six individuals involved in ELCIC Diaconal Ministry.

A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE PROGRAMS OF THE LDA, ELCA AND ELCIC

There are several commonalities in requirements between the Lutheran Deaconess Association, the Deaconess Community and the Diaconal Ministry Certificate Program of the ELCIC, due to

the fact that many of the standards were modeled after the ELCA Deaconess program. All three programs place a strong emphasis on theological education for their student candidates, requiring Old and New Testament courses, studies in Lutheran and Church History, and Lutheran Confessions. All three programs require their student/candidates to take at least one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education and participate in a twelve-month internship

However, individual programs do differ in other requirements that are directly connected to their own experience. For example, the ELCIC Diaconal Ministry Certificate Program requires students to take Ethics and Canadian Church History courses whereas the ELCA and the LDA have other courses for their requirements. For example, the LDA requires their students to complete the “Theology of Diaconal Ministry”. The LDA requires that their students attend all Regular Annual Meetings, whereas, the ELCIC, because there is not a community, only requires their students to attend one Formation Event.

However, one of the primary differences between the programs lies in the emphasis on Diaconal Community. Sister Anne, of the ELCIC/ELCA Deaconess Community wrote, “At the time of the beginning of the discussions for an ELCIC Diaconal Ministry Program, there was little understanding about the need for a Diaconal Ministry Community, although an awareness of the importance and need for Community within the Diaconal Ministry program is beginning to take shape.” The ELCIC Diaconal Ministry Program is therefore in the early stages of developing a sense of intentional community among the Diaconal Ministers, using the Lutheran Deaconess Association and the ELCA communities as examples.

Deaconess Julie Hink, stated, “The challenge for the development of a distinct community for Diaconal Ministers in Canada will be for the National Church to recognise that the gift of “community” is at the heart of diaconal ministry. Recognising the idea of community as a gift, the National Church will then work to support the idea of a distinct Diaconal Community.”

The aim of the Diaconal Ministry Certificate program offered through Lutheran Theological Seminary is thus:

- To meet the academic expectations for diaconal ministers as set by the ELCIC.
- To assist participants in the program to grow in a deeper understanding of and commitment to the liberating Gospel of Christ and the life of the Church.
- To enable all participants to appropriate and introductory understanding of the primary sources and classic traditions of the Christian faith.

- To develop and to foster in all students the specific practical skills necessary to relate the Gospel of Christ effectively to the challenges of diaconal ministries in our church.
- To produce not only well trained diaconal ministers but also curious students, encouraging participants to commit to build upon the basic foundations of this program and develop an on-going process and reflection in their work and service to the church.

As one can see in the LTS standards, there is no mention of educational goals to incorporate teaching about the importance and need for Community, which is so integral to the LDA and ELCA programs.

In the LDA, there is a definite emphasis to develop and maintain a strong sense of Community among its diaconate. For example, the IFC (Individual Formation Covenant) covers four areas of education and formation. These are 1) spiritual life, 2) theology, 3) work/ministry, and 4) diaconal community.

The study of and connection to the diaconal community (IFC goal #4), includes focus on:

1. attending area deaconess conferences
 2. completing Theology of Diaconal Ministry
 3. attending Regular Annual Meetings
 4. meeting regularly with an assigned mentor
 5. attending annual seminars during educational formation
- Goals from the Diaconal Community competency section:
 1. Demonstrates a commitment to community.
 2. Values own and other's strengths.
 3. Accepts own and other's faults and limitations.
 4. Respects individual differences, including theological and cultural differences.
 5. Opens self to compromise, mutuality, and giving and receiving forgiveness.
 6. Lives graciously with diverse expressions of common values.
 7. Persists in the midst of difficulties with community life.
 8. Participates in community activities such as area conference and regular annual meeting.
 9. Acts in a hospitable manner, especially to those different from one's self.
 10. Does not think of oneself more highly than one ought nor deprecate oneself in unbelief.
 11. Demonstrates an awareness of cultural differences.
 12. Demonstrates an awareness of other diaconates.
 13. Demonstrates a familiarity with class writings on community.
 14. Demonstrates an understanding of group dynamics.
 15. Demonstrates an understanding of the dynamics of this diaconal community.
 16. Understands own and others' needs in community, and how those needs might be met.
 17. Demonstrates knowledge of the LDA and LDA's history, structure and polity.

18. Demonstrates leadership as well as willingness to follow in activities including problem solving, decision-making, consensus building, and conflict management.
19. Demonstrates relational skills, including giving and receiving.
20. Demonstrates initiative and leadership fostering community.
21. Articulates deaconess identity.

As the reader can see by these goals, the Formation requirements for LDA deaconess students exceed educational requirements in the ELCIC Diaconal Ministry Certification Program by including and emphasizing diaconal community. These goals extend past the requirements for theological training, CPE and internship to emphasize, build and develop a student's sense of connection to the Deaconess Community.

Sister Anne wrote that the overall objectives of the ELCA Deaconess Community Formation training are:

So that each woman will:

- Discern the ministry to which God has called her.
- Explore her identity in the call to diakonia
- Deepen her relationship with God through prayer, theological preparation, spiritual direction and retreats.
- Articulate *diaconal* theology
- Learn the history of the diaconate from biblical times to the present
- Grow in her understanding of and membership in the Deaconess Community, ELCA and ELCIC
- Grow in relationship with members of the Community
- Experience the breadth of the diaconal call through the ministries Sisters live.
- Interpret *diakonia* to others.

Fundamentals of the process include:

1. Discernment (being aware of God's activity)
2. History of the diaconate
3. Spirituality – Spiritual Practises
4. Deaconess Community Identity
5. Diaconal Theology
6. Diaconal Identity
7. Theological Formation (including Lutheran Confessions)
8. Interpretation of *diakonia*
9. Applied learning (CPE, Internship, Contextual Education etc.)

Similar to the LDA program, the development and nurturing of a deaconess' sense of belonging to a wider diaconal community through experiences, reading and dialogue is an essential component in the ELCA Deaconess Formation training.

It is the instruction about “Community” through deliberate experience, training, reading and dialogue in both the LDA and the ELCA Deaconess Community Deaconesses that marks the difference between these programs and the Diaconal Ministry Certificate Program of the ELCIC.

CONCLUSION

Since the late 1940’s, women have been serving in various ministries as Deaconesses in the Canadian Lutheran Church. At first they came from the United States, many from the ELCA or predecessor Deaconess Communities and the Lutheran Deaconess Association. More recently, however, with the development of the Diaconal Ministry Program, men and women are beginning to follow their own personal call to serve as a Diaconal Ministers in the ELCIC.

As stated by Sister Anne, the ELCIC Diaconal Ministry Program is still in its infancy. Although there is talk of building and being part of a community, it is still unclear as to what is meant by this by those who use the term. The development of a distinct Community of ELCIC Diaconal Ministers is still in its own Formation process. Much depends on the willingness and attitudes of the Diaconal Ministers to work toward creating a more deliberate Community among themselves. And much depends on the willingness and attitudes of the National Church office to recognize the gift that Community can bring to those who have been called to Diaconal Ministry in the ELCIC.

However as the discussion and development of the ELCIC community continues to evolve, it still remains that for the past fifty-eight years, women have been called to Lutheran diaconal service in Canada. For the past fifty-eight years, Canadian people have been served by these Sisters, Deaconesses and Diaconal Ministers in the parish, in Social Services, in the Mission field, in hospitals and care-facilities and in schools. We thank God that each of these women answered God’s call to serve and we continue to pray for them as they journey in their individual ministries and in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.

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