



To Love Our Neighbours As Ourselves

A STUDY OF ORDERS OF MINISTRY IN THE ELCIC

~ INDEX ~

Preface	2
Introduction to this study	3
Notes for the leaders of this study	5
Session One – <i>A Theology of God, Mission and Church</i>	6
Session Two – <i>The Vocation of the Baptized</i>	15
Session Three – <i>Rostered Forms of Ministry in the ELCIC</i>	25
Session Four – <i>The ELCIC in Mission for Others</i>	37
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Appendix 1 – Glossary of Terms	47
Appendix 2 – <i>Evangelical Declaration</i> (1997)	52
Appendix 3 – Participants' Survey	54

(July 2016)

To Love Our Neighbours As Ourselves

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Preface

Bishop Susan Johnson

Dear members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC),

I am delighted to have been asked to write a preface to *To Love Our Neighbours as Ourselves: A Study of Orders of Ministry in the ELCIC*. I'm thankful to the Faith, Order and Doctrine Committee for their hard work in putting this study guide together.

I'm excited for our church, that we have this opportunity to reflect theologically on important aspects of our shared ministry. The study highlights our baptismal calling as the prime source of all vocations both within and outside the church. If we are to take seriously what it means to be a church *In Mission for Others*, we need to learn to live out this reality. For me, this is very much connected to the call to Spiritual Renewal and to seeing how we pray, read, worship, study, serve, give and tell as living out our baptismal calling to discipleship.

I think this study is especially timely as we are in the midst of commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. One of the gifts at the time of the Reformation was an increase in the availability of study materials for all of the baptized. At that time there was an eagerness to study and learn about all aspects of faith, doctrine and order.

I believe that eagerness still exists in our DNA as a people of faith. I urge all members of our church to take the time to read and reflect on this study material. Whether you do it as part of a congregational study group, as a cluster or area of congregations, or as individuals, please take the time to read the material, reflect and then submit your thoughts through the online survey tool as outlined in Appendix 3.

I also ask you to pray for our church as we engage in this process, that the Spirit would guide us and enlighten us, and that in studying together we may all be strengthened for service in our world and in our church.

Yours in Christ,



Susan C. Johnson,
National Bishop, ELCIC

To Love Our Neighbours As Ourselves

A Study of Orders of Ministry in the ELCIC

Introduction to this Study

Welcome to *To Love Our Neighbours As Ourselves: A Study of Orders of Ministry in the ELCIC* prepared by the Faith, Order and Doctrine Committee (FOD) of the National Church Council (NCC) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.

Background

The months leading up to the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation in 2017 afford our church the unique and timely opportunity to think about how best we might participate in God's mission in our contemporary context. We can take some time to be a little introspective about how we are doing and how we might want to change or adapt to new realities. *Ecclesia semper reformanda est. The church is ever reforming.*

In March, 2015, NCC asked FOD to work on the topic of *Orders of Ministry*. This project includes both a study guide for the whole church (which you now hold in your hands or have on your device) and a white paper of theological issues to be used as a guide for NCC reflection and decisions and in the ELCIC's dialogue with ecumenical partners in the future. The white paper will be delivered to NCC in the fall of 2017 and will focus on the whole church's *diakonia* with special attention to diaconal ministry.

The project has included consultation with scholars and practitioners. The project builds on earlier ELCIC work including the crafting of the *Evangelical Declaration*¹ in 1997 (renewed in 2007) and the more recent creation of *Authorized Lay Ministries*² in 2015.

As a participant in this study, you will be asked to provide some input to FOD via the survey described in Appendix 3.

1. *Evangelical Declaration*, ELCIC, 1997. See Appendix 2.

2. see elcic.ca/faithorderdoctrine/AuthorizedLayMinistries.cfm

Theological Framework

Lutherans hold that the church “is the assembly of all believers among whom the Gospel is preached in its purity and the holy sacraments are administered according to the Gospel.” (Augsburg Confession VII)

The purpose of the assembly of believers is to participate in God’s mission in the world. The assembly of believers includes all who are baptized and who, by virtue of their baptism, are called into the *diakonia*—the servant work—of the church.

We are called to love God with our whole being and our neighbours as ourselves (Mark 12:30–31).

Diakonia is the vocation of the baptized. It refers to our giving real-worldly expression to God’s mission in the world and to service in God’s name. We are called to love God with our whole being and *our neighbours as ourselves* (Mark 12:30–31). *Diakonia!*

In order to serve the world effectively in God’s mission the church historically has identified ways in which its ministry can be organized to focus us on our primary tasks. For example, from within the assembly of believers we have identified people to serve as pastors and called them to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments publicly. We have also identified people to serve as diaconal ministers and called them to lead us in expressing the gospel in service to people in God’s world. We also call certain pastors to serve as bishops and take responsibility along with our elected councils for leading our synods and National Church.

Lutherans also hold that the organization of the church—the assembly of believers—is open to change or rethinking. As we look to the future, we anticipate that, as the needs of the world and of the church change, the structures and ministries of the church will change in response.

Through this study guide, people in the ELCIC will have an opportunity to explore and reflect on forms of ministry in the church (which may be referred to as *Orders of Ministry*), on how the church advances God’s mission in the world, and on *diakonia*, the baptismal vocation we all share.

To Love Our Neighbours As Ourselves

A Study of Orders of Ministry in the ELCIC

Notes for the Leaders of this Study

Preparation

- Provide copies of this resource to all participants a week or two ahead of the study.
- Invite participants to read the material for each session ahead of time.
- Encourage participants to explore the material in Appendices 1 and 2.
- Allow one-and-a-half to two hours per session.

Hospitality

- Put the coffee on!
- Make sure that all participants are introduced and feel welcomed.
- At the beginning of each session, invite participants to note what caught their attention in the study material. Come back to these, as appropriate, in the course of the session.
- Try to ensure that all participants have an opportunity to participate.
- Keep an eye on the time so that the group is able to discuss all of the questions before moving on.
- As you have opportunity, thank study participants for their interest in this important work.

Feedback

After the last session, leaders and participants are invited to let the Faith, Order and Doctrine Committee know how they experienced this study and their thoughts about the future by using the survey tool outlined in Appendix 3.

Responses must be in by Easter Monday, April 17, 2017. The members of the ELCIC's Faith, Order and Doctrine Committee thank you for your participation in this study.

To Love Our Neighbours As Ourselves

- SESSION ONE - A Theology of God, Mission and Church

Session One Objectives

Our hope is that upon completing Session One each participant will:

- understand what we mean by God's mission in the world and that the church exists to serve God's mission;
- be able to explain how the church communicates the gospel in the world;
- be able to discuss with others the possibilities for mission by her/his own congregation.

Session One Preparation

- Read the **Study Material for Session One**.
- Read through the **Glossary of Terms (Appendix 1)**.
- Read through the **Evangelical Declaration (Appendix 2)**.

Opening Prayer

A member of the study group is invited to offer an opening prayer:

O God, you have called each of us to be in relationship with you, with each other and with the world. Through this relationship, you call us to discipleship in fulfilling your mission for the world. Help us to be faithful in discerning your mission as we go about our everyday lives. Through Jesus Christ, who lived this mission in relationship with you. **Amen.**

STUDY MATERIAL FOR SESSION ONE

When Lutherans first came to Nova Scotia in the 1750s, we were identified by the British establishment as "foreign Protestants." Rather than resisting this label, we embraced it. As more and more Lutherans came from Europe, we saw ourselves as the church for Germans (or Finns or Norwegians, etc.), and did not see ourselves as reaching out beyond our own cultural and language groups. We saw ourselves not only as distinctive, but as separate. The mission of our church was to assist newcomers, and preserve the language and culture from our European homelands. For immigrants who did not speak the language of the majority, this was a caring response to their situation and helped many make the transition into a new land and language.

The flood of Lutheran refugees and immigrants from the early nineteenth through the mid-twentieth centuries filled our churches, and many new church buildings were constructed. When the flow of Lutheran immigrants slowed to a trickle, by which time most of us were fully assimilated into Canadian culture, our congregations continued to see themselves as separate, and we preserved the past out of habit. We failed to see that our mission and the world around us had changed. Today, even with signs of institutional decline too serious to ignore, we continue to operate as if we are trying to maintain islands of culture in a foreign environment. When we no longer have the resources to do so, we conclude that the congregation has no future.

Since World War II, theologians and practitioners of mission have tried to help us see that mission is not first of all the mission of the church—it is the mission of God. They have also reminded us that the mission of God is not about sending missionaries to some distant place and trying to convince the people there to become our kind of Christian. We believe that the mission of God is to form loving communities or ecologies through which each and every part of God's creation is loved and valued. And the church's mission is to participate in God's mission. The purpose of this section of the study is to introduce us to this shift in thinking as we look at the mission of God in the world and the relationship of the church to God's mission of relationship and reconciliation in creation.

God is Relationship

A theology of mission begins in the nature of God. Christians believe that the nature of God is revealed most clearly in the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth and the resurrection of the crucified Jesus. The God who is revealed in Jesus is first, last and always the crucified God. Any description of who God is must take this affirmation seriously. In addition, we believe that the God we meet in Jesus is the same God encountered by Abraham and by the apostles on Pentecost.

As a result, we confess in the Apostles' and Nicene creeds that we believe that God's nature is best described with the word "Trinity."³ To say that God is Trinity and to name God as "Father, Son and Holy Spirit" is simply to say that we believe that God's inmost nature is social relationship. God is Father, Son and Spirit, a "society" in eternally intimate relationship with one another. To name God as Trinity is to say that God is most like an intimate, loving community of three persons in which there is equality, self-giving, self-relatedness and sharing of all things, even the suffering of Jesus on the cross. To name God as Trinity is also to say that the inmost nature of God is truly revealed in the Gospel's Word. The God who relates to creation is the one God. There is no division between how we know God as God relates to us and who God is internally. God is unity in diversity and diversity in unity.

3. The following is based in part on Colin E. Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993), John G. Flett, *The Witness of God: The Trinity, Missio Dei, Karl Barth and the Nature of Christian Community* (Grand Rapids; Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans, 2010) and John F. Hoffmeyer, "The Missional Trinity," *Dialog* 40, no.2 (Summer 2001):108–11.

Creation is Relationships

Relationship cannot be relationship if it does not seek expression. In God's case relationship is not limited to God's inner being—God is not self-absorbed. God's being expresses itself as an outward movement. Creation is the result. One implication of this teaching is that we do not understand God as distant from creation. Creator and creation, God and the world, are certainly distinct from each other but, since creation is the result of God's own nature, God is not distant from creation.

The creation of the universe is an outcome of the Trinity. God's loving expresses itself by choosing to relate to creation, and by constructing creation as relating sets of interlocking relationships. When thinking about our own planet, we speak about these relationships as "ecology" and we embrace the interdependence of humans, animals, plants and the earth. We believe that this is how God created us to be. Human beings are created in the image of God, that is, as beings for whom social relationships are not optional but hard-wired into our being.

The mission of the triune God in creation is to fully realize the potential which the connection between creator and creation makes possible. God desires to create ecologies of interconnected creatures which express God's social-relational being through the loving communion of partners. The purpose of these ecologies is to nurture the potential of creation toward a freedom in which each and every part of God's world is loved and valued. Being part of the church means being part of this mission.

Discussion

- *Is the idea of "God as most like an intimate, loving community of three persons" new to you? If you think about your own intimate relationships, what do you think this description of God suggests about God's nature?*
- *What does it mean to say that social relationships are hard-wired into our being?*

Disordered Relationships

We can see in the Bible the results of God's nature in history. God's relational being expresses itself in God's relationship with Abraham and all of Abraham's descendants, particularly in calling the Jews to be a witness to who God is. Such a particular witness was needed because of God's ongoing struggle against alienation and chaos. Alienation brought about by our own free choices, disrupted the connection between God and creation. This led to disordered relationships in human life and disordered relationships between humans and the rest of creation. These disordered relationships are characterized by injustice, oppression, lack of trust, treating people as objects to be bought or sold, using nature's resources for personal gain and violence, all of which wreak havoc with God's intentions for creation.

The problem is this: We are not satisfied to let God be God; we believe that we would be much better at the job, deciding what is right and what is wrong, how God ought to behave. We redirect creation away from God's intentions, but God continues to relate to creation in such a way as to reorder the future of creation toward God's intentions, characterized by relationships of care, nurture, respect, hospitality, peace and justice. God's nature means that God overcomes the tension we build between God and creation. As St. Paul says, God reconciles the world to Godself.

Reconciliation and Reordering in Jesus

We also confess in the creeds that we believe that God's reconciliation and reordering is focused in the birth, life, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. In Jesus we see the extent of the relationship that is God. In Jesus, God once again defies our expectations. God accepts death at our hands in order to overcome the very disorder that we ourselves multiply in creation. In Jesus we see that God's relationship with creation is grace, and unconditional promise, a promise which God makes in Christ, that creation's destiny is good. God's reconciliation of creation is pure gift.

Discussion

- *Often we focus only on our own relationship to God when we think of grace and reconciliation. How is it different to see God's relationship with creation as grace?*
- *How do you understand the promise that creation's destiny is good?*

The Church is Formed in Relationship

... the Holy Spirit calls and gathers the whole church into the mission of God, which takes seriously both the reality of the world, and the reality of Christ, with equal care.⁴

As a result of the triune God engaging creation directly in Jesus of Nazareth in the act of reconciliation, the church is formed. Like God, the church is the relationship of real people, witnessing in human history to God's nature as a relationship of persons. Just as God's nature expresses itself concretely in creation and reconciliation, so the church is the community of God's reconciliation and lives in communion with God's life of communion. The gospel necessarily gathers a community of gospel-hearers. Baptism, Holy Communion, preaching, worship and teaching are ways in which people are brought into relationship with Christ and one another.

Like God choosing to create the universe in love, the church chooses a life which embraces God's loving mission in the world. This is not so much a choice whether or not to be in mission, but a choice

4. *Evangelical Declaration. See Appendix 2.*

whether or not to be the church in communion with Christ. Communicating the gospel in mission is essential to the life of the church just as it is intrinsic to the life of God. Mission is never an optional part of the churches.

The act of mission and the message of mission are the same. Speaking the gospel and doing the gospel are not two different activities that must somehow be connected, but they are the same activity. The mission is communicating the gospel in the world. Mission is not propaganda, nor attempting to convert people to Christian faith.

Speaking the gospel and doing the gospel are not two different activities that must somehow be connected, but they are the same activity.

Jesus Sends the Church in the Power of the Spirit

The missionary nature and task of the church are so crucial that Jesus has promised to send the Holy Spirit so that the mission of God is carried out “in the power of the Spirit.” In Christ the Holy Spirit is poured out upon, empowers and gifts each and every follower of Christ for participation in the mission of the gospel.

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The focus of this mission is the world which God created, which God continues to sustain and which God will fulfil in the future. Like the relationship between God and creation, the church is distinct from the world but not separated from the world. Jesus does not “send” the church as if from outside, but pushes us out of our comfort zone into the challenge of the world as it exists. This is where the promise of the Spirit is fulfilled.

The church witnesses to the gospel both by speaking the gospel aloud through our words and actions, and by living the gospel in our life together. Since the reality of human brokenness is seen in the church as well as in the world, the church is a community where forgiveness and reconciliation actually happen—not just for one another, but also for anyone and everyone.

The church witnesses to the gospel both by speaking the gospel aloud through our words and actions, and by living the gospel in our life together.

Characteristics of a Church in Mission⁵

Luther held that the church (the community of Spirit-endowed gospel-hearers) is hidden within the churches (human organizations that inhabit a specific time and location). He believed that the presence of the church could be identified in the churches by certain signs of its life. A church or congregation in mission will show itself through characteristics which mark its life. These will reveal a likeness to the missionary nature of the Trinity.

The congregation in mission will speak the gospel aloud. The gospel spoken and heard is the most important and most distinctive sign of the church. The Word of God is at the heart of every missionary community of Christians. Where people are hearing the gospel and being brought into communion with Christ through the gospel, there the church is present and mission is happening in the churches.

The congregation in mission will teach, baptize and nurture people in a life of discipleship. As a result of hearing the gospel, people will desire to follow Jesus as his disciples. The church is the community where such people are nurtured and grow into the likeness of Christ. The nurturing begins in baptism of infants, children and adults. The baptized are taught the gospel which results in a new perspective on the world, and new life characterized by the living out of promise in community. The missionary Church is present where churches baptize, teach and nurture disciples.

The congregation in mission will be a community of forgiveness and reconciliation. The church may be “perfected” in Christ (as some theologians put it), but churches and Christians are not. Luther says that we are “simultaneously saints and sinners.” We are humans, subject to all of the foibles and trials of humanity, and this defines our entire being. At the same time we are justified in the death and resurrection of Jesus and are living the results of our justification. These are both true of us and of our congregations. Not only are we reconciled by God, we are in a situation where daily forgiveness and reconciliation is a necessary part of life. We who have received grace are givers of grace. The church is a community of reconciliation; its presence in a congregation is witnessed by an atmosphere of grace and reconciliation which expresses itself in concrete acts of forgiveness. These concrete acts ripple outward into the congregation’s surroundings as it becomes an agent of reconciliation in its corner of the world.

The congregation in mission will work to transform unjust structures and challenge violence in the place where it lives. This follows from the missionary church being a community of forgiveness and reconciliation. In any society it is not only individuals who are alienated from one another. We build our alienation into the institutions which we create to structure society, so that our fundamental social

5. The ideas presented here derive from several sources. Most basic is Luther’s “seven signs of the Church” from *On the Councils and the Churches, Luther’s Works* Volume 41, pages 3–178. Also informative are “Affirmations of God’s Mission” adopted by the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in 1965 (thedaystarjournal.com/1965-lcms-mission-affirmations/) and “Five Marks of Mission” from the Anglican Communion (see anglican.ca/help/faq/marks-of-mission/).

relationships exhibit the results of sin. This happens no matter how good our intentions might be. This leads to violence in society, both intentional and unintentional, both on the personal and institutional level. Thus the mission of God—and therefore the church—in the world is to participate with all people of goodwill in trying to transform the structures which propagate injustice.

The congregation in mission will work to safeguard the life of the earth. God is involved in the world not only as original creator, but as ongoing sustainer. God nurtures creation toward fulfillment. The church in mission has an important role to play here as well. We humans have put the world at risk. Whether with nuclear weapons or human-caused climate change, we have the capability to destroy the earth. The mission of God is to thwart these possibilities and to create new possibilities. The church is a witness to God's future, and the missionary congregation will express this witness in its day-to-day activities.

Discussion

- *Underline each of the characteristics of a congregation in mission in the above section. Which of these are most obvious in your own congregation? Which might present opportunities for your congregation to become missional?*

Christian Discipleship: Life in Mission

When the gospel encounters us in the grace of God, this encounter enfolds us in God's unconditional promise in Christ and places us in a relationship with Jesus and all disciples. When God encounters us in the gospel, God not only says, "Your sins are forgiven," but also "You are included." Grace not only forgives, grace also includes. God's unconditional promise includes us in a community of disciples, a community of people who follow Jesus in the world.

God's unconditional promise includes us in a life in mission. When we are baptized, the mission of God, in which all gospel-hearers have a role, becomes our mission. God's concern for creation becomes our concern for creation. We become witnesses to

When we are baptized, the mission of God, in which all gospel-hearers have a role, becomes our mission.

God's presence to redeem the world in Christ. Empowered by the Spirit we live in the world as speakers of the gospel and visible signs of what God intends for the world.

This way of life is also called “discipleship.” It is life following Jesus. God’s grace includes us in this life of discipleship. Following Jesus is both simple and complex. What makes it simple is the mission of a disciple: Live in a responsible way which reflects the love of God for all creation. What makes it complex is the complexity of a world we live in, a world that lives in the shadow of alienation from its Creator. It is not always clear exactly what we should do in a given situation. The goal is to do what is best for our neighbour—in an expansive rather than narrow definition of “neighbour.” Living as responsible witnesses might well complicate our lives in ways we do not plan. We follow Luther’s advice: “Sin boldly and trust in God’s grace more boldly still.” That is, the responsible disciple takes risks with her or his own holiness for the good of the human and natural community. The responsible disciple does what needs to be done for the future of creation, all the while trusting that the promise of God is not false.

The responsible disciple does what needs to be done for the future of creation, all the while trusting that the promise of God is not false.

Discussion

- *Is there a difference between the terms “Christian discipleship” and “a life in mission?”*
- *If yes, how do you understand the difference?*

Diakonia

The gospel includes us in a life of service in the world. Around the world, Christians use the Greek word *diakonia* (dee-ah-ko-nee'-ah) from the New Testament to name this service. *Diakonia* refers to the serving life of churches, and of each and every disciple of Jesus. This service happens at the point of the world’s needs. It includes our daily work and actions beyond our daily work as those are necessary. It includes responding to immediate needs such as sponsoring refugees and providing food for the hungry and lonely; advocating for those the world has deemed as “voiceless;” and working to change the structures that create needs and voicelessness.

We live in this way not because we are required to, but because the Spirit has included us in a way of life that is gifted to see signs of the coming reign of God. Not everyone realizes that God is at work in the world. Not everyone sees that God’s intentions for the world are good. We are gifted by grace to see and hear the small and quiet signs of God’s presence in Christ. Just as the revelation of God is hidden in Jesus on the cross, so signs of God’s action are often hidden in the world. Only the Spirit enables us to hear and see what God is doing. This is the point of Jesus’ words to the “sheep:” *you visited me, you fed me, you clothed me* (Matthew 25:31–40). It is Jesus himself we deal with every day as we go about the everyday pattern of our lives. By grace we sense what God is doing, and we give witness to what we see and hear, living as Jesus’ missionary disciples.

Conclusion

It is important that our theology of mission be expressed in the life of our denomination, congregations and people today. We are no longer “foreigners in a foreign land;” Canada is our country, and the world around us has changed. A renewed understanding of God’s mission and our part in it opens up new possibilities for how we do church today. Resources could be shifted away from just maintaining our congregations toward activities which connect us with the surrounding neighborhoods and regions through *diakonia* (service). Instead of assuming that our congregations and church are dying, we could focus on the work of the gospel to open the future to possibilities not otherwise available.

This might produce congregations and local gatherings different from what we are used to. It might involve significant risks. Are the risks worth it? Do we believe the gospel is true? If the gospel is true, if God is really the God who has promised that in Christ our destiny is good, then any risk to communicate this gospel is always worth taking. The church whose goal is to survive probably won’t; a church who sees itself as the church in mission might survive—no, not just survive, but actually thrive as the missionary people of God.

Discussion

- *As a group, try to put into words what we mean by God’s mission in the world.*
- *Is this different from your previous understanding of mission? How?*
- *How does your congregation understand its part in God’s mission today?*

Looking Ahead to Session 2

Congratulations! You have just completed the most difficult session in this study! In the next session, we will look at Luther’s understanding of the vocation of the baptized and what relevance it might have for us today.

Closing Prayer

A member of the study group is invited to offer a closing prayer:

O God, you continue to call your church and your people to be fully in relationship with you. Infuse us with your Spirit and call us to the edges of our lives to share the gospel of forgiveness and reconciliation, and then to serve with radical hospitality. This we pray, knowing that you will sustain us because you are already at work in your world. **Amen.**

To Love Our Neighbours As Ourselves

- SESSION TWO - The Vocation of the Baptized

Session Two Objectives

Our hope is that upon completing Session Two each participant will:

- experience a renewed appreciation for the gifts of baptism;
- understand what is meant by the phrase “vocation of the baptized;” and
- be able to name several ways in which his/her faith is lived out in daily life.

Session Two Preparation

- Read the **Study Material for Session Two**.
- Read through the **Glossary of Terms (Appendix 1)**.

Opening Prayer

Participants are encouraged to begin this session by gathering (around the baptismal font, if possible) to affirm their baptisms using Affirmation of Baptism (EvLW p. 234) and a baptismal hymn such as EvLW 445—Wash, O God, Our Sons and Daughters or EvLW 456—Baptized in Water.

OR

A member of the study group is invited to offer an opening prayer:

Good and gracious God, in Baptism we are redeemed into a new birth through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Just as we are given new birth and life in the waters of Baptism, so too we remember and give thanks on this day, for your call to us through our baptismal covenant: to serve one another, not as we ought, but as we are able, in response to your unending grace. Grant all the baptized your boundless strength to serve as we have been called. This we ask through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. **Amen.**

STUDY MATERIAL FOR SESSION TWO

In recent years there has been growing recognition among Christian denominations that Baptism is the core of our Christian identity and the basis of our action in the world. The call to ministry of every baptized person is found in the baptismal covenant.⁶

In our baptisms, God makes a covenant with us. God makes us God's own, calls us, enlightens us with the gifts of the Spirit, and includes us in a community of faith. We affirm that we will:

- live among God's faithful people;
- hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper;
- proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed;
- serve all people, following the example of Jesus; and
- strive for justice and peace in all the earth. (see EvLW p. 234–236)

When we are baptized, the mission of God becomes our mission. God's concern for creation becomes our concern for creation. We become witnesses to God's presence to redeem the world in Christ. Empowered by the Spirit we live in the world as speakers of the gospel and visible signs of what God intends for the world. It is through the waters of Baptism that we are connected to God's work in the world.

Discussion

- *When were you baptized? Was it a choice?*
- *What does your baptism mean to you now?*

Luther on the Vocation of the Baptized⁷

This recognition of the centrality of Baptism in the lives of all Christians is in fact a reclaiming of the insights of Luther and other reformers. In Luther's day, it was believed in the church that priests, bishops, and monastics were of a higher spiritual standing before God. In reaction, Luther argued against this distinction in the church.

When we are baptized, the mission of God becomes our mission. God's concern for creation becomes our concern for creation. We become witnesses to God's presence to redeem the world in Christ. Empowered by the Spirit we live in the world as speakers of the gospel and visible signs of what God intends for the world.

6. *Iona Report*, (Anglican Church of Canada, 2016), p.10.

7. Much of this section follows D. Michael Bennethum, *Listen! God is Calling!* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2003), pp.41–56.

For all Christians are truly part of the spiritual walk of life, and among them there is no difference except because of the office alone, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12, that we are all part of one body. Nevertheless each member has its own work so that it serves the others. This each person does, because we have one Baptism, one Gospel, one faith and are equally Christians. For Baptism, Gospel, and faith alone make a spiritual and Christian people.⁸

One of the greatest insights of the Lutheran Reformation was the recognition of the vocation of every Christian in his or her worldly occupation. Luther stated that every baptized person has a calling from God. Each is given the responsibility and the opportunity to live her/his life in response to the gifts of God's grace. Each is called to serve the neighbour in love. Living a life of service (*diakonia*) does not require a change of outward circumstances or occupation. We can respond to God's call where we are.

One of the greatest insights of the Lutheran Reformation was the recognition of the vocation of every Christian in his or her worldly occupation.

Luther's claim was that all the tasks of one's life provide an opportunity to express one's faith, no matter how mundane the task. God's calling is to and within the place where we carry out our everyday labour. Carrying out our various occupations can be honourable because they enhance the lives of individuals or the community, and in so doing, they contribute to God's intentions for the world. Luther put it this way:

A king serves God when he is at pains to look after and govern his people. So do the mother of a household when she tends her baby, the father of a household when he gains a livelihood by working, and a pupil when he applies himself diligently to his studies.⁹

We do not need to earn God's favour, which frees us to turn our attention to caring for others through the use of our gifts and the carrying out of our everyday activities. God uses the actions of people to care for the earth and provide for the needs of its inhabitants. Luther taught that all people are called to serve God in their occupations and roles, and that they respond to this call by loving their neighbours.

Discussion

- *How does it feel to know that you are an agent in God's ongoing creation and mission?*
- *Make a list of all the roles that describe your life (e.g., parent, student, plumber, teacher, Boy Scout leader, volunteer driver, etc.). Who is served as you carry out these responsibilities?*

8. LW 44:127 as quoted by Timothy J. Wengert, *Priesthood, Pastors, Bishops*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), p.7.

9. LW 3:128 as quoted by Bennethum, p.46.

Living Out Our Baptismal Vocation

...people find their true worth, meaning and purpose in life through the free gift of God's grace in Christ alone—not through their own accomplishments and efforts.¹⁰

"Life in the world is not a distraction from the pursuit of holiness; it is the place where we live out our call to holiness."¹¹ We are witnesses to the coming of the Holy Spirit into our lives, and to the knowledge that all baptized people are empowered to do God's work in the world, as we care for others and the world God made. We have been given new life in Baptism; it is a gift from God to be able to live out our faith by being in mission for and with others.

We are witnesses to the coming of the Holy Spirit into our lives, and to the knowledge that all baptized people are empowered to do God's work in the world, as we care for others and the world God made.

William Diehl, in his book *Ministry in Daily Life*, suggests four arenas of our lives where we are called to live out our baptismal vocation: our workplace or school; our family and friends; our community; and our church.¹² We live out our calling by what we say and do, and how we do it.

All of us, including bishops, diaconal ministers and pastors, have opportunities to live out our baptismal vocation **in our workplaces**. We minister by doing our work well and ethically, by being attentive and responsive to the needs and hurts of people, by building community, and by helping all people be and do their best.

Story 1—*Compassion is the Most Vital Tool of My Trade*¹³

Cashiering in a supermarket may not seem like a very rewarding position to most. But to me it is. You see, I feel that my job consists of a lot more than ringing-up orders, taking people's money, and bagging their groceries. The most important part of my job is not the obvious. Rather it's the manner in which I present myself to others that will determine whether my customers will leave the store feeling better or worse because of their brief encounter with me. For by doing my job well I know I have a chance to do God's work too.

Because of this, I try to make each of my customers feel special. While I'm serving them, they become the most important people in my life. Sometimes a sincere smile helps me to achieve this goal. More often than not, however, it takes more effort on my part

10. *Evangelical Declaration*. See Appendix 2.

11. David Saude, *Our Common Vocation-Beginning with the Call to Discipleship*, unpublished paper submitted to the Faith, Order and Doctrine Committee (2016, p.3.)

12. William Diehl, *Ministry in Daily Life* (Bethesda, Md: Alban Institute, 1996), pp.13–14.

13. Gregory F. A. Pierce (ed), *Of Human Hands* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1991), pp.49–51.

Observation and perception are the two tools I use most often to do God's work while doing mine. When I detect by the hassled expression on a customer's face that her day has been less than great or realize that she must be in a hurry by the way she keeps glancing at her watch, I try to help her by working as fast and efficiently as I can. Because I sense she's tired, I'm careful to bag her groceries lightly, keeping related items together so it'll be easier for her to put her things away later.

Compassion, however, is the most vital tool of my trade. There are many sad stories to be heard while ringing up grocery orders. Many times I find I'm called to help nurture the emotional state of shoppers—just as the food they're buying will provide nourishment to their bodies. Hearing of death, terminal illness, fatal accidents and broken homes is all part of my job. During such times I try my utmost to listen with my heart, not just my ears. Often a single word of understanding or a mere look of genuine concern is just the right dose of medicine to help heal a bruised heart. When I succeed in easing some of the pain of another human being, it is then that I realize just how important my job as a simple cashier is.

The rewards I reap from my job far exceed that of my weekly paycheque. The real rewards are invisible and intangible. They are the warm feelings that penetrate my soul and the personal satisfaction at the end of my working day. It's these that assure me that I have done God's work and have done it well!

Discussion

- *Which do you think is more important in seeing our work as vocation—what we do or how we do it? Why?*
- *Is there any kind of work that could not be seen as part of God's mission?*

Story 2—It's Tough to Find an Honest Mechanic¹⁴

I'm a used car dealer and auto repairer—trades not exactly known for their honesty. That's why I make absolutely sure that I am truthful and fair in all my dealings with customers.

It's tough to find an honest mechanic, so I try to help people by giving them free advice about their cars. When people bring their cars to me to be repaired, I make certain that the car is fixed right the first time and that the work is done at a fair price. And I never, ever use shoddy parts in a car.

14. This story is from Carol Weiser (ed.), *Working: Making a difference in God's World*. (Chicago: ELCA, 1995).

I'm honest and fair with my used cars, too. What sits on my lot is a square deal. When someone wants to buy one of my automobiles, I try to determine the buyer's needs and match the car to the person. The vehicle will be a good one, too; I guarantee that!

... I believe I serve the Lord full-time in this job. I may not be employed by the church, but I'm involved in ministry every day. I really enjoy helping people by finding cars for them and by repairing their cars. I think I set an example of what it means to be a Christian by treating others honestly and fairly.

It is possible to make a living in this business and be honest.

Discussion

- *This man feels able to do his job ethically. Have you ever faced a situation where your job asked you to do something you felt was unethical? What did you do?*

All of us, including bishops, diaconal ministers and pastors, have opportunities to live out our baptismal vocation **in our families**, not only our nuclear families, but our extended families, close friends, a foreign exchange student who lives with us, a sponsored refugee family, a widowed neighbour or others with whom we have ongoing relationships. We minister by showing commitment, respect, care and hospitality, both in our words and actions.

Story 3—Parenting as Part of God's Mission¹⁵

One night in our adult study group, we were discussing the many ways we participate in God's mission. Susan was a mother who stayed at home full-time to parent her two young children. She was apologetic that, at this time, it was hard for her to even come to the group, never mind volunteering for other committees in her congregation.

I said to her, "Susan, when you prepare nutritious meals for your children, and when you bath them with gentleness and loving care, you are doing God's work. Your parenting is one of your vocations!"

The next week, when she returned to the study group, she told us that during the week, she had been filled with an immense sense of joy, as she cared for her children.

15. Names have been changed to respect privacy.

Discussion

- *What do you think was the source of Susan's joy?*
- *What is the difference between parenting and Christian parenting?*

Story 4—Aunt Mary's Gifts for Ministry¹⁶

When I was growing up, my mother's aunt lived over the back fence from my family. Aunt Mary had never married; she had lived at home on the farm as long as her parents were alive, and then moved into town to an apartment in an old house. All the neighbourhood children knew that she made the best ginger snaps ever, and was quite generous in sharing them.

In our extended family, she was the keeper of the family history. On her walls were the formal brown-and-white photos of our ancestors, and she stayed in touch with a wide network of relatives. On our birthdays, she would call and sing to us, and often we received one of her famous orange coffee cakes or a new handmade apron.

Not only did she stay in contact with her relatives, she had a long list of elderly friends with whom she exchanged letters or telephone calls. She once rescued a friend who lived alone. Apparently, they talked by phone each day. When Aunt Mary could not reach her one day, she called the friend's daughter. When the daughter checked, she found that her mother had fallen and needed help.

My great-aunt would never have acknowledged herself as gifted, but she had a ministry of connectedness. Her thoughtfulness, her faithfulness in small things, her time and her prayers were her gifts.

Discussion

- *Have you ever heard someone say they have no gifts to serve? Have you ever said that yourself? What might our extended families need most from us?*

All of us, including bishops, diaconal ministers and pastors, have opportunities to live out our baptismal ministries **in our communities**, including our neighbourhoods, our towns, our country and the world. Through our volunteer roles, we minister to individuals and to organizations. We might volunteer at the food bank, do income tax returns for seniors and people with low income, run for public office, write letters to politicians, be a foster parent or a Big Brother, work at a breakfast program, write letters for Amnesty International and so on. The possibilities are endless!

16. Names have been changed to respect privacy.

Discussion

- *Share with the group one way that you have served in your wider community. Did you recognize it as part of your baptismal vocation? Who was helped by your service?*

All of us, including bishops, diaconal ministers and pastors, can also carry out our baptismal vocations by participating with others **in our church**, in its congregations, specialized ministries, synods and National Church, as we work to carry out God's mission in the world. Our congregations' social ministry projects and justice initiatives help us serve by encouraging us to provide care and help where needs exist, and helping us work together for social change where unjust structures cause harm to people or fail to meet their needs. In addition, our chaplains, diaconal ministers, pastors, camps, synodical initiatives and bishops also serve the world in many ways on our behalf.

Discussion

- *Share with the group one way that you have served in your wider community through a project or program of your congregation. Who was helped by your service?*

The Church has a Vocation Too!

While all baptized disciples have vocations in their daily lives and baptized disciples who have been called to be rostered ministers also have a vocation to empower faithful people to live out their vocations, the church itself is given a vocation. The institutional church knows only too well from its own history that people and the world can be hurt and broken by institutions ordered to their own well-being. As the institution that God has called to communicate the gospel and in repentance for our own history, the church has an obligation to speak the truth to all of society's institutions.

The world knows well the wounds suffered as a result of institutions, corporations and governments that too gladly sacrifice the earth and her children for their self-preservation. A church that is self-obsessed is strangling itself to death while a church that is giving itself away is on the way to resurrection and delighted to see the world rising from ashes.¹⁷

Conclusion

Perhaps the time has come (or perhaps it is long overdue) to make the vocation of the baptized explicit, visible and active in the life of our denomination, congregations and people. When the baptized see their everyday occupations and roles as vocations and as opportunities to participate in God's mission, the church's impact in the world God loves is multiplied.

17. Allen G. Jorgenson, *Vocation and the Christian Life*, unpublished paper written for the Faith, Order and Doctrine Committee (2016), p.7.

Like Susan in Story 3 above, many of us miss the joy of knowing that we are serving God's mission in our everyday lives. We miss the powerful affirmation of who we are and what we do, both within and apart from our congregational life. When we look for opportunities to serve God's mission in our homes, workplaces and communities, we can find meaning and purpose as well as many new possibilities to participate in God's mission to transform the world.

To truly embrace our baptismal vocations, all of us need others to help us discern our calls; to support us in the issues and choices we face; and to recognize and affirm our service. All of us struggle with questions of how to connect our faith to the situations we face in life. Unfortunately, in many congregations, people are trained, recognized and honoured only for the roles we carry out within the congregation and its programs, but don't seem to receive much support, affirmation or equipping to carry out our service in the world.

The *Model Constitution for Congregations of the ELCIC* describes the Service portion of the congregation's nature and mission in this way:

It shall motivate, equip and support its members to minister in daily life; to participate as members of a caring community; to serve as Christians in all the institutions and structures of the society of which they are a part; and individually and corporately to promote justice and reconciliation, meet human needs and alleviate suffering. In these efforts the congregation shall cooperate with the synod and the ELCIC, other Christian Churches and other groups in society. It shall make certain that all its functions strengthen the motivation and ability for service.¹⁸

Congregations can play an important role in helping all of us carry out our ministries in the world. The church can help us recognize that we are called in our baptisms, bring to our attention the needs of the world, provoke and challenge us to serve, discern our gifts, and support, equip and affirm us for our vocations in the world. It can do this through worship that empowers us for the rest of our baptismal life, through sermons that relate to our lives, through education that gives us skills that we need to live out our faith, by helping us discern our gifts, through small groups that provide a place for mutual support and wisdom, and by recognizing the ways we serve outside of the congregation.

Reclaiming the Lutheran understanding of the vocation of the baptized, and making it central in the life of our congregations and denomination, will help all enthusiastically embrace their role in God's mission and in *diakonia*.

18. *Model Constitution for Congregations of the ELCIC*, Article III (d). This document can be found at elcic.ca/resources/documents.

Discussion

- *What is your congregation doing or what could it do to help you minister in your workplace?*
- *Does your congregation affirm the ways you serve your family? How?*
- *Are the ways you serve in your community recognized in your congregation? How?*

Looking Ahead to Session 3

In Session Three, we will look at what we mean by rostered forms of ministry and why we have them. The functions of pastors, diaconal ministers and bishops in the ELCIC today will be described.

Closing Prayer

A member of the study group is invited to offer a closing prayer:

Awaken us, O God, to the vocations we have all been given in our baptisms, as we live our Christian faith in every time and place where we are. Use our words and actions, our attitudes and our choices, to care for our families, our neighbours and our world. Give us courage and patience, and strengthen us to serve others and to witness to your gracious love for all. **Amen.**

To Love Our Neighbours As Ourselves

- SESSION THREE - Rostered Forms of Ministry in the ELCIC

Session Three Objectives

Our hope is that upon completing Session Three each participant will understand and be able to explain:

- why we set apart people to fulfill certain functions in the church; and
- the functions of the various rostered forms of ministry in the ELCIC today.

Session Three Preparation

- Read the **Study Material for Session Three**.
- Read the **Glossary of Terms (Appendix 1)**.

Opening Prayer

A member of the study group is invited to offer an opening prayer:

Gracious God, we give you thanks for calling us into your church. We thank you for the gifts and leadership of our rostered ministers. Be with us now as we study the needs of our church and the ways in which we organize ourselves, so that the gospel may be shared. Give us open minds and hearts to hear and receive your will, so that we may all be strengthened in spirit and in ministry. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

STUDY MATERIAL FOR SESSION THREE

What Does *Orders Of Ministry* Mean?

Historically, an order of ministry is simply a group of Christians called by the church for a particular kind of public ministry on its behalf. In the ELCIC today, we have three forms of rostered ministry: diaconal ministry, pastoral ministry and episcopal ministry. People called to these ministries have different

An order of ministry is simply a group of Christians called by the church for a particular kind of public ministry on its behalf.

responsibilities and are given authority to perform those responsibilities. As well, each ministry has standards of education and conduct, and accountability to the church.

Lutherans understand that the ministry of word and sacrament belongs to the church as a whole, and this ministry is exercised in both the church and the world. In Lutheran theology, ministry is simply ordering the life of the community so that the sacraments are properly administered and the gospel is rightly preached for the sake of the world.¹⁹

Why Do We Order Ministry?

Luther and the other reformers strongly believed that in situations of chaos it became very hard for people to hear the gospel. Order is important, particularly because the gospel must be heard in public. Communities of Christians assure that the gospel will be heard and the sacraments celebrated publicly by calling specific people to fulfil that task.²⁰

As we learned in the last session, all baptized Christians have vocations in the world. Ordained and consecrated ministers are called by the community to enable the faithful to live their vocations, and for them, the call of the community is their baptismal vocation.

Ordination and consecration are the church's way of authorizing people for leadership within the life of the church and in service to the world. Those who lead are people who bring focus to the life of a community, who initiate and manage its common activities. Pastors are signs of the church's gathered, worshipping life; bishops are signs of the church's catholicity and unity; and diaconal ministers are signs of its lively presence in the world, especially where people are suffering or at risk.²¹

Discussion

- *What do you think is the most important reason to have different forms of rostered ministry (pastors, bishops and diaconal ministers)? Why is it important to you?*

Orders of Ministry in the Early Church²²

In the New Testament, we do not find one way of organizing for public ministry. At different times and in different communities, public ministry seems to be organized in ways that suit the context.

19. Allen G. Jorgenson, p.6.

20. *ELCIC Study Guide on Word and Sacrament Ministry*, (ELCIC, 2014), p.19.

21. Adapted from the *Iona Report*, p.10.

22. The following is based on *Together for Ministry*, (ELCA, 1993), p.4, and *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, (WCC, 1982), p.22.

Jesus chose and sent the disciples to be witnesses of God's Kingdom (Matthew 10:1–8). After his death the apostles in Jerusalem were witnesses of Jesus' life and resurrection (Acts 1:21–26) and led the early community in prayer, teaching, the breaking of bread, proclamation and service (Acts 2:42–47; 6:2–6).

Paul's epistles show that certain people in the church exercised varieties of leadership but do not give a picture of a highly organized ministry. First Corinthians, for example, speaks of apostles, prophets and teachers, as does the book of Romans. Romans also mentions *diakonoi*, "those who serve." This is the word that eventually was translated "deacons," but in Paul's time it does not so much refer to a title or office, but to a function carried out by a variety of people. In Philippians Paul uses the word *episcopoi*, "overseers." This word came to be translated as "bishops," but, again, in Paul's time it refers to a function of leadership rather than an office. Early reference is also made to *presbyteroi*, "elders."

By the early second century when the Pastoral Epistles (1 and 2 Timothy, Titus) were written these terms were beginning to be used in the technical sense of "bishops, priests and deacons" which they had certainly assumed by the beginning of the third century. From other second century documents we know that this process of formalization proceeded more quickly in some parts of the Church (Syria, Asia Minor) than in others (Rome).

In whatever way the early communities chose to name them, the purpose of these public ministries was to proclaim the Word of God, to transmit and safeguard the original content of the gospel, to feed and strengthen the faith, discipline and service to the Christian communities, and to protect and foster unity within and among them.

During the second and third centuries, the threefold pattern of bishop, presbyter or priest, and deacon became established as the pattern of ordained ministry throughout the Church. These three titles persisted through subsequent centuries, although significant variations in the understanding of their functions occurred, especially in Europe.

Discussion

- *Read together Acts 6:1–6. What caused the establishment of a new kind of public ministry? What might challenge us to establish a new kind of ministry today?*
- *Read Romans 12:4–8 and 1 Corinthians 12:4–11. How would you decide what functions require a public ministry?*

Orders of Ministry and the Lutheran Reformation

Just prior to the beginning of the Reformation at the end of the fifteenth century, the Church held a notion of priesthood that elevated clergy to a special status, a higher standing with God than the average Christian. The clergy were also seen as a separate order of society with special laws and courts administered by the Church. As a critique of abuses of the Office of Ministry, Luther and the other

reformers emphasized the ministry of all the baptized. Each Christian becomes a minister and missionary at Baptism. What Luther did was eliminate the hierarchical relationship between clergy and laity. Clergy are not more spiritual than the baptized; all have the same starting point for their various vocations in life—Baptism.²³

The office of public ministry is just one of the many callings/vocations from God. The need to communicate the gospel requires that there be people designated to exercise the ministry of communicating the gospel. Luther taught that the public call of the congregation is a call from God to exercise the office of ministry.²⁴ The office of ministry is distinguished from one's baptismal calling by its public nature.²⁵ A personal sense of call to public ministry must be affirmed by both the whole Church and a congregation or ministry context.²⁶

At the time of the Reformation, diaconal ministers were servants of the bishop or priest during worship. Luther suggested restoring the diaconate to a public ministry of distributing the church's aid to the poor, at the same time acknowledging that deacons would also preach occasionally and "have control in the church in external matters."²⁷ Few, if any, Lutheran Churches followed this suggestion.

During the time of the Reformation, the various churches that became Lutheran each adopted its own church order. These "orders" (*Kirchenordnungen*) contained the liturgy of that church and the structure by which that church was governed.²⁸ Though these orders were similar, they were not identical. The Reformers did not consider uniformity in liturgy and polity (how the church is governed) to be necessary to Lutheran unity.²⁹ Lutheranism has always been a *communion of churches* held together by a common confession of the gospel.³⁰

From the Sixteenth Century to Us³¹

The ways in which public ministry was carried out in the churches that adopted the Lutheran Reformation evolved over time and were affected by the context of the particular church. In all cases, the political authorities took responsibility for governing the church. Thus the Lutheran Churches of

23. Gordon A. Jensen, *Vocation and Order of Ministry in the Lutheran Confessions*, unpublished paper written for the Faith, Order and Doctrine Committee (2016), p.3; from Timothy J. Wengert, *Priesthood, Pastors, Bishops*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008).

24. Jensen, p.6.

25. AC VIII.1-3, V and XIV.

26. Jensen, p.7.

27. Jensen, pp.7–8.

28. Note that the use of the word "order" here has the sense of "rule" and is very different than it is in the phrase "orders of ministry." The *Kirchenordnungen* contained the confessional standards of the particular church and the approved liturgies of that church. They might also contain the rules and regulations for administering the church. However, these often appeared in separate laws, *Kirchenrecht* in Germany, the Protestant equivalent of canon law.

29. See Appendix 1: "Adiaphora"

30. *ELCIC Study Guide on Word and Sacrament Ministry*, p.20. The full name for the LWF is "The Lutheran World Federation: A Communion of Churches."

31. This section follows the *ELCIC Study Guide on Word and Sacrament Ministry*, pp. 21–22 and *Together for Ministry*, (Chicago: ELCA, 1995), pp. 6–7.

Europe became state churches. Clergy were appointed to parishes by the state church. As the social context changed in Europe different forms of ministry were developed to help the churches carry out their mission. In the early part of the nineteenth century Pastor Theodor Fliedner of Kaiserswerth in Germany organized an order of deaconesses to serve in nursing and other ministries. From Germany the movement spread to Scandinavia.

As Lutherans immigrated to North America, they faced a difficult transition from European ways of organizing for public ministry to forms that could serve the North American situation. No longer supported by state structures, pastors and laity developed congregational and synodical structures of church governance. The ordination and licensing of leaders for Word and Sacrament ministry was overseen by these structures. Diaconal ministry has been a part of Lutheran Church life in North America since the mid-nineteenth century. In 1849 Pastor William Passavant brought four deaconesses from Kaiserswerth to Pittsburgh, thus introducing the movement to North America. In 1884 a deaconess community was established in Philadelphia, in 1889 a second community was established in Baltimore, and in 1890 a third among Swedish Lutherans in Omaha. In the 1960s these communities came together to form the deaconess community of the Lutheran Church in America.

Lutherans in North America also needed to learn how to integrate different and sometimes divergent ideas of what it meant to be Lutheran. Lutherans who came from Bavaria where the Roman Catholic presence was dominant practised their Lutheranism differently from Lutherans from Norway where, in the nineteenth century, the Pietist movements had become important parts of the desire for independence from Sweden.

This variety led to different approaches to ministry. Some Lutherans emphasized the need for order and organization. These came to North America with a sense for the connection of the local congregation and pastor to a legitimate authority and for the dignity of liturgical worship. Other Lutherans emphasized the need for personal initiative and expressive piety. These came to North America with a sense of the need for local communities to make their own decisions and for the laity to take the lead in practising the faith. While all agreed that the main task of pastors was to preach the gospel and celebrate the sacraments, they could disagree significantly about what that meant, about how often communion ought to be celebrated, and about the way in which worship ought to be led.

Rostered Ministry in the ELCIC

The ELCIC came into being in 1986 through the merger of two predecessor bodies, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada (started in 1966 by Canadian congregations of the American Lutheran Church) and three synods of the Lutheran Church in America, called the Canada Section.

At the time of the merger, the new ELCIC accepted all rostered ministers from the predecessor church bodies. Bishops were elected from among ordained clergy. There were deaconesses serving in the

ELCIC who had been trained and publicly set apart for service in the church by their deaconess communities, but it took several years for the ELCIC to develop its own system for diaconal ministry.³²

In 1991 the ELCIC affirmed that it would have diaconal ministers in addition to ordained clergy (pastors and bishops). Deaconesses who were already serving in the ELCIC had their ministries validated by this public recognition of their call and gifts. In addition, others (both men and women) who recognized God's call to a ministry of Word and Service would now have a path to public affirmation of their gifts and call. Although the Task Force recommended that diaconal ministers be *ordained* by the church,³³ the ELCIC at its 1991 convention chose that they be *consecrated*. By 1995, *Guidelines for Diaconal Ministry in the ELCIC* were in place.

Called To Full Communion (The Waterloo Declaration), as approved by the National Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada in Waterloo, Ont. in 2001, declared the two churches to be in full communion. In preparation for full communion, the 1997 National Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada agreed that it was "prepared to take the constitutional steps necessary to understand the installation of bishops as ordination."³⁴ The ELCIC now rosters people serving as diaconal ministers, pastors and bishops.

Discussion

- *What stands out for you with regard to this brief history? Did you learn anything helpful to understanding how ELCIC rostered ministry has come to be as it is?*

The Functions of Rostered Ministry

Ordination and consecration are the church's ways of authorizing people for leadership within the life of the church and in service to the world.³⁵ God has called all Christians into mission in the world. The mandate from Jesus is to love our neighbours as ourselves. The purpose of rostered ministry is to enable the baptized to exercise their gifts effectively in God's mission.

The purpose of rostered ministry is to enable the baptized to exercise their gifts effectively in God's mission.

Within this common purpose, various public ministries should have different foci, in order for the church to be most effective.³⁶ Pastors, diaconal ministers and bishops are ordained or consecrated for

32. *Ministry in the ELCIC: Its Forms and Practice*, (ELCIC, 1991), section 3.7, Background.

33. *Ministry in the ELCIC*, p.iii.

34. *Called to Full Communion (The Waterloo Declaration)*, July, 2001 can be found at www.elcic.ca/resources/documents.

35. adapted from *IONA Report*, p.10. The Anglican Church ordains deacons rather than consecrating them.

36. Jensen, p.10.

different public functions. This does not mean that there is always complete clarity about the boundaries of each function or the roles of each type of public minister. But it is still helpful to describe the intended focus of each, while recognizing there may be exceptions.

Diaconal Ministers

Diaconal Ministers are baptized people who are called by the ELCIC to a public ministry of service and witness, often described as a ministry of “Word and Service”, although neither the *Candidacy Manual* nor the *Consecration Rite* uses this term. A diaconal minister offers a ministry of Word that is embodied; he/she embodies the gospel in service.³⁷ Diaconal ministers train both theologically and for a particular service. For example, a diaconal parish nurse would be trained both in theology and as a nurse.

Diaconal ministers, together with pastors and bishops, carry public responsibility to speak for the needs of God’s world to the church as well as taking God’s saving gospel to the needs of the world through the actions of God’s people, both individually and collectively. They are trained to analyze the needs of others, and to advocate for those who are unable to speak on their own behalf. They serve as the church’s agents in interpreting and responding to needs, hopes and concerns within church and society.³⁸ Diaconal ministers serve in the intersection of church and world, especially where people are suffering or at risk. They embody the gospel in service. They carry out a public ministry of service and witness which is normally intended to be outside the congregation. Whatever the setting, they bear responsibility for making connections between church and world.

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An important part of the diaconal vocation is leading and equipping all the baptized for *diakonia*, by helping people to discern gifts for service, by encouraging awareness of the world’s brokenness, and by forming supportive community in the midst of ministries.³⁹ “The diaconal minister serves, but also intentionally prepares and leads others in service.”⁴⁰

Being a diaconal minister means providing leadership for the diaconal mission of the church. Both active “hands on” care giving and the hard work of advocacy are [*diakonia*]. A diaconal minister motivates, provides the education, support and guidance to equip members of

37. Cam Harder, *The Relationship Between the Work of Diaconal Ministers and the Diaconal Ministry of the Laity: Some Reflections*, unpublished paper written for the Faith, Order and Doctrine Committee (2016), p.3.

38. *Candidacy Manual*, (ELCIC, as amended March 2015), p. C-1.

39. www.elcic.ca/Leadership/For-Ministers/default.cfm

40. *Candidacy Manual*, p. C-1.

congregations for their serving, thus multiplying the ministry.⁴¹

Being a diaconal minister means providing leadership for the diaconal mission of the church.

To make this a little clearer, here is a description of the ministry of a diaconal minister who was the director of a children’s daycare centre that integrated special needs children. In the classroom, it meant helping young people achieve their potential. In the community, it meant ensuring there were adequate resources so the children were clothed and fed. It meant raising awareness within the congregation and the community, advocating for social change, pursuing grants and funding resources and developing social partnerships.⁴²

The church should not forget that opportunities for the public proclamation of the gospel through Word and Service are incredible. As the church recognizes that it exists, not for itself, but for society and all God’s people, more diaconal ministers will be needed to publicly engage in and minister to society and outside of the church.⁴³

There are only a small number of diaconal ministers in the ELCIC today, but diaconal ministry holds important promise, the promise to lead the ELCIC and its members, “into enacting more clearly and dynamically the full mission given by Jesus Christ, to respond to the needs of God’s beloved creation—of both this world and the people in it.”⁴⁴

Pastors

Pastors are baptized people whom the ELCIC calls and ordains to the public ministry of Word and Sacrament.

On behalf of the church, pastors give leadership and vision to Christian communities of faith. Pastors are called to provide faithful preaching, teaching and witness to the Scriptures and the doctrinal teaching of the ELCIC. They work in intentional partnership with bishops, other pastors, diaconal ministers, lay leaders in congregations and synods, synod and national staff, and ecumenical partners in common mission.⁴⁵

41. Anne Keffer, *The Diaconal Ministry As An Order Within The ELCIC*, unpublished paper written for the Faith, Order and Doctrine Committee (2016), p.2.

42. *The Nature of Diaconal Ministry in the MNO Synod*, unpublished report for the Faith, Order and Doctrine Committee, (2015), p.2.

43. Jensen, p. 10.

44. Keffer, p. 5.

45. *Candidacy Manual*, p. B-1.

Pastors, together with diaconal ministers and bishops, enable the baptized to exercise their gifts effectively in God's mission. They normally serve in congregations, through preaching and teaching, by presiding at baptism and communion, and by offering prayerful spiritual care. Baptism, Holy Communion, preaching, worship and teaching are ways in which people are brought into relationship with Christ and one another. The church speaks the gospel in the world, through our words and actions, and by the witness of our life together. Since the reality of human brokenness is seen in the church as well as in the world, the forgiveness and reconciliation that happen in the congregation is also part of God's mission.

Ordained pastors help to strengthen and support all the baptized for *diakonia* through faithful and prophetic preaching and worship, through community building and support within the congregation, through challenging education, and through opportunities for reflection and spiritual growth. They offer pastoral care and listening. With lay leaders in the congregation, pastors nurture the faith of individuals and families, and encourage generous support for and participation in the ministries of the congregation, the synod and the National Church.

Some rostered pastors also extend the ministry of Word and Sacrament into institutional chaplaincies; colleges and seminaries; camps; and synodical and national offices.

Bishops

Bishops are rostered pastors whom the ELCIC elects and ordains to provide oversight for the church, and to ensure good order and pastoral care within the synod or the National Church for the sake of God's mission.

Bishops, together with diaconal ministers and pastors, play an important role in the *diakonia* of the church by providing vision and leadership for congregations and all the baptized. Their voices are prophetic voices, and they engage in advocacy for the voiceless, and in speaking the truth to all of society's institutions, governments, and corporations. They encourage all the baptized to risk new ventures.

The National Bishop provides leadership for the entire ELCIC and serves as its counsellor, seeking to preserve its peace and order. The bishop is called to speak publicly and witness for the gospel on behalf of the whole church, and serve as its representative in dialogue with other churches, government and other associations such as The Lutheran World Federation.⁴⁶

Each synod also has an elected bishop who provides pastoral leadership and counsel to ordained and diaconal ministers, congregations, synodically-recognized ministries, and ministry areas or conferences within the synod. In addition the synodical bishop ordains and consecrates approved candidates for rostered ministry and oversees the call process.⁴⁷

46. *Administrative Bylaws* (ELCIC, as amended July 2015), p.17.

47. *Bylaws of the Eastern Synod*, ELCIC, 2014, Part VII, Section 1. The description of the duties of the synodical bishop is very similar in the bylaws of each synod.

Is There One Right Way to Order Our Ministry?

We commit ourselves as church to respond faithfully, promptly and flexibly to the many opportunities for mission. We will pursue creative and effective ways for mission and ministry in our local, national, and global communities.⁴⁸

Unlike the other reformers or traditionalists, Lutherans decided that issues of liturgy or polity ought not to be church-dividing—the Lutheran definition of *adiaphora*. For Lutherans the gospel is central and all other questions are secondary. It follows then that the best organizational structure is the structure that most effectively communicates the gospel. The best rules are those that limit the freedom of the gospel the least while providing an orderly and stable platform from which the gospel can be communicated through Word and Sacrament.⁴⁹ What structure enables the most effective participation in God’s mission?

As the church in this time and place, we are deeply aware of our need to become more mission-focused. We are not tied to a particular way of organizing ourselves for ministry and mission. We must continually discern whether our organizational structure helps or hinders our effective communication of the gospel.

We must continually discern whether our organizational structure helps or hinders our effective communication of the gospel.

Discussion

- Do you think that the gospel is effectively communicated with our current structure? Why or why not?
- Should there be other forms of rostered ministry? See, for example, “Evangelist, Catechist” in the *Glossary of Terms* (Appendix 1).

Hierarchy, Power, Authority and Accountability

When we create orders of ministry, we establish categories or boundaries between one embodiment of public ministry and another. Kayko Driedger Hesslein reminds us that we need to be ever mindful that all embodiments are part of the same ministry, God’s mission in the world. Unfortunately in our sin, when we categorize people, we tend to see a hierarchy. We recognize that sometimes we esteem bishops over pastors and pastoral ministers over diaconal ministers and all of them over lay people.⁵⁰

48. *Evangelical Declaration*. See appendix 2.

49. Robert A. Kelly, *Some Thoughts on Orders of Ministry*, unpublished paper written for the Faith, Order and Doctrine committee (2016), p.5.

50. Kayko Driedger Hesslein, *Power and Orders of Ministry*, written for the Faith, Order and Doctrine Committee (2016), pp.3–4.

In her paper *Respect and Recognition: We are All in this Together*, Lois Knudson Munholland emphasizes the importance of respect for and among rostered ministers and lay people.⁵¹

Ordering our public ministry provides clarity of roles, and makes explicit who has the authority to carry out various tasks on behalf of the church, and to whom the minister is accountable. "The orders of ministry, insofar as they establish the limits and responsibilities of power amongst the various ministers of the church, are of great benefit to the church."⁵²

The dilemma the church faces is how to recognize the call to public ministries, with the appropriate responsibility, authority and accountability, in a way that does not portray the church as valuing ordained and consecrated ministry above the ministry of the baptized. "Despite our assertion that ordained ministry is simply one order of the ministry of all the baptized ... we treat it as if it is a lifelong bestowal of power and authority that is seldom rescinded. Our practice contradicts and undermines our theology in this respect..."⁵³

Discussion

- *What evidence have you seen that people perceive a hierarchy in the church today?*
- *How could the ministries of all the baptized be elevated in the church today? Do people recognize and respect their own ministries and the ministries of others?*

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to help the whole church reflect on how we organize ourselves to better carry out the mission of the church and our vocations as baptized Christians. Sessions One and Two helped us understand the Lutheran theology of mission and of our baptismal vocation. This session explained why we set some people apart for certain functions in the church, and what the functions of our rostered ministers are.

Looking Ahead to Session Four

In Session Four of this study, we will be looking at some recent initiatives in the ELCIC that help us recognize and engage in God's mission, and some current challenges and opportunities for the church. Possibilities for promoting the enthusiastic embrace of each person's role in God's mission will be explored in light of the ideas presented in the previous sessions of this study.

51. Lois Knudson Munholland, *Respect and Recognition: We are All in this Together*, submitted to the Faith, Order and Doctrine Committee (2016).

52. Driedger Hesslein, p.3.

53. Driedger Hesslein, p.5.

Closing Prayer

A member of the study group is invited to offer a closing prayer:

O God, you continue to call your church and your people to be fully in relationship with you. Infuse us with your Spirit and call us to the edges of our lives to share the gospel of forgiveness and reconciliation, and then to serve with radical hospitality. This we pray, knowing that you will sustain us because you are already at work in your world. **Amen.**

To Love Our Neighbours As Ourselves

- SESSION FOUR - **The ELCIC *In Mission for Others***

Session Four Objectives

Our hope is that upon completing Session Four all participants will understand and be able to describe:

- how the ELCIC sees its place in God's mission today;
- some of the challenges facing the ELCIC; and
- some possibilities for promoting an enthusiastic embrace of everyone's role in the mission of the church.

Session Four Preparation

Read the **Study Material for Session Four**.

Review the **Glossary of Terms (Appendix 1)** as needed.

Review the **Evangelical Declaration (Appendix 2)**.

Opening Prayer

A member of the study group is invited to offer an opening prayer:

Gracious God, we have come to the last session in our study and we are grateful for our time together. We are now invited to reflect on where we are and where we've been, and to think about how we might engage in your mission now and into the future. Bless us in our continuing journey. Give us wisdom and insight as we turn our hand to the work of an ever-reflective and ever-reforming church. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

STUDY MATERIAL FOR SESSION FOUR

God calls us, through Word and Sacrament, to be disciples and to make disciples. Our discipleship is defined by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Our mission is to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with people in Canada and around the world through the proclamation of the Word, the celebration of the sacraments, and through service in Christ's name....

We, as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, will celebrate and rejoice in the gifts which God has given us to carry out our mission in the world today. Where we see need, we will take action. We will use our gifts deliberately to be the people of God for others.⁵⁴

Where we see need, we will take action. We will use our gifts deliberately to be the people of God for others.

Twenty years ago, the young ELCIC expressed its understanding of the theology of mission in our context with these words from the *Evangelical Declaration*. In 2007 our church celebrated and reaffirmed this declaration of our mission, with a new emphasis, *In Mission for Others: A Theology of Mission*. As we approach the twentieth anniversary of its adoption “as our church’s vision for life and mission... and as a source and guide for goals, objectives and strategies,”⁵⁵ it still stands as an important expression of our understanding of the theology of mission.

In the first years of the ELCIC’s existence, much of the church’s reflection was focused on who we were, and how we would be the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. Our *Statement on Sacramental Practices*, adopted in 1991, provided theological foundations and practical guidelines for Baptism and Holy Communion, and led Lutherans worldwide in reclaiming the practice of communion of the baptized.⁵⁶ The diaconal order of ministry was affirmed as part of the new church in 1991, as explained above in Session Three. The ELCIC moved into a full communion relationship with the Anglican Church of Canada with the signing of *The Waterloo Declaration* in 2001.⁵⁷

Living into our *Evangelical Declaration*

In the last ten years, there have been many occasions to celebrate as the ELCIC has worked hard to live into its call to participate in God’s mission in Canada and around the world. Here are some important highlights:

1. Working Toward Right Relationships with Indigenous people and Repudiation of the *Doctrine of Discovery*.⁵⁸

The ELCIC has made the following statements:

- *2011 Convention Resolution Encouraging Right Relationships with Indigenous Peoples*. This includes an endorsement of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP).

54. *Evangelical Declaration*. See Appendix 2.

55. elcic.ca/What-We-Believe/Evangelical-Declaration.cfm

56. elcic.ca/What-We-Believe/Sacraments/Sacramental-Policy.cfm

57. elcic.ca/In-Convention/2001-Waterloo/The-Waterloo-Declaration/default.cfm

58. see elcic.ca/news.cfm?article=436 and elcic.ca/Documents/documents/DoctrineofDiscoveryMotionFINAL.pdf

- *2013 Joint Assembly Declaration*. This includes an expressed commitment to free, prior and informed consent for Indigenous people and to addressing issues of responsible extraction.
- *2014 Expression of Reconciliation*. This includes a commitment to a long-term journey of reconciliation.
- *2015 National Convention Resolution Repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery*.

2. The Adoption of our Reformation Challenge⁵⁹

As the Lutheran Church worldwide approaches the commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, we have taken up the challenge to:

- sponsor 500 refugees to Canada;
- provide 500 scholarships for Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Holy Land schools;
- plant 500,000 trees; and
- give \$500,000 to The Lutheran World Federation Endowment Fund.

3. *2009 ELCIC Resolution on Peace in the Holy Land*⁶⁰

The 2009 National Convention committed the ELCIC to supporting and working for justice and peace in the Holy Land, by praying and educating for peace, by accompanying peace builders and advocating for peace.

4. *2011 ELCIC Social Statement on Human Sexuality*⁶¹

This three-part social statement names some of the current issues of sexuality that face our world, articulates the faith and theology which guides our life together and seeks to stimulate conversation about mission and ministry at the local and global level, as well as expressing the commitment of the ELCIC to addressing issues of injustice as identified in the statement.

These statements and resolutions describe some places where the ELCIC hears its call to participate in the mission of God in our time and place.

59. see elcic.ca/reformationchallenge/default.cfm

60. see elcic.ca/CompassionateJustice/PeaceintheHolyLand.cfm

61. see elcic.ca/CompassionateJustice/humansexualitysocialstatement.cfm

Discussion

- *Are you familiar with all of these statements and actions of the ELCIC? Which do you feel most passionate about?*
- *How is your congregation participating in the Reformation Challenge?*

The Call to Spiritual Renewal⁶²

Pray, Read, Worship, Study, Serve, Give and Tell—these seven verbs describe a life of mission, nurtured by worship and the sacraments and by study and prayer.

Pray, Read, Worship, Study, Serve, Give and Tell—these seven verbs describe a life of mission, nurtured by worship and the sacraments and by study and prayer.

Over the past number of years, Bishop Susan Johnson has been passionately encouraging all members and communities of the ELCIC to strive for a deeper discipleship, which includes regular attendance at worship, daily prayer and Scripture reading, yearly involvement in a program of study, regular service to the community, regular and proportional giving, and commitment to sharing the good news with those around us. “I feel strongly that God is calling us to a closer daily walk with our Lord,” she said. “And I invite each of you to participate in this *Call to Spiritual Renewal*.”⁶³

What Reformation Churches Do

This anniversary of the Reformation is an opportunity for all of us to affirm that the church must be open to constant renewal, always seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit in face of contemporary challenges... We are all in this ongoing reformation together.⁶⁴

This is what churches of the Reformation do: continually seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to meet the challenges of our own context, open to change and renewal, while staying connected to the best of our tradition.

This is what churches of the Reformation do: continually seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to meet the challenges of our own context, open to change and renewal, while staying connected to the best of our tradition.

In recent years the ELCIC has demonstrated openness to reforming some of our own structures through changes to the constitution

62. elcic.ca/csr

63. elcic.ca/news.cfm?article=273

64. 2017.lutheranworld.org/content/reflecting-131

and bylaws, intended to give ourselves more flexibility to respond to the needs of our context in a timely way.

In 2012, the ELCIC Faith, Order and Doctrine Committee began work on a *Study Guide on Word and Sacrament Ministry* that explored the current reality for congregations in Canada with respect to Word and Sacrament ministry. It reflected on how our Lutheran understanding of Word and Sacrament, and of ministry, might shape future options for the provision of ministry, especially in underserved communities. In 2015, after consultation across the church and with partners, the church adopted the *ELCIC Policy on Authorized Lay Ministries*,⁶⁵ providing for the option of authorized lay ministers to serve in special circumstances.

As we look to the future, we anticipate that, as the needs of the world and of the church change, the structures and ministries of the church will continue to change in response.

Touchstones and Trail Markers

We commit ourselves as church to equip all of us to be people in mission and to live as faithful disciples. We will emphasize ongoing learning for both laity and clergy. We will make full use of the resources of the people in our congregations, schools, seminaries and leadership positions in the church. We will also work intentionally with other churches.⁶⁶

The previous sessions of this study have suggested some important and helpful principles to guide us as we explore how the ELCIC will meet the challenges of its current reality.

Session One presented a strong reminder that it is God's mission that is central to the church; when we are baptized, God's mission becomes our mission. The church whose goal is to survive probably won't; a church who sees itself as the church in mission might survive—no, not just survive, but actually thrive as the missionary people of God. When we are focused only on the survival of our congregations, we most resemble the disciples after Easter, locked in a closed room, fearful and wondering what will happen next. But we are a Pentecost people; the Holy Spirit is poured out upon us. Empowered and gifted, we live in the world as participants in God's mission.

One of the greatest insights of the Lutheran Reformation was the recognition of the vocation of every Christian in her or his worldly occupation. In Session Two we were reminded that all the baptized are empowered to do God's work in the world, as we care for others and the world God made. We concluded that when the baptized see their everyday occupations and roles as vocations and as opportunities to participate in God's mission, the church's impact in the world God loves is multiplied.

65. see elcic.ca/faithorderdoctrine/AuthorizedLayMinistries.cfm

66. *Evangelical Declaration*. See Appendix 2.

In the third session, we were reminded that, as Lutherans, we are not tied to a particular way of organizing ourselves for ministry and mission. We must continually discern whether our organizational structure helps or hinders our effective communication of the gospel. God has called all Christians into mission in the world. The purpose of rostered ministry is to enable the baptized to exercise their gifts effectively in God's mission; this is their vocation. We are all in this together!

What might this re-examination of our theology of mission, our theology of the vocation of the baptized, and our theology of forms of ministry contribute to a conversation about future leadership for the ELCIC?

Some Challenges Facing the ELCIC

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada is Canada's largest Lutheran denomination with about 114,500 baptized members in some 525 congregations. Both the ELCIC and its congregations are facing declining numbers and attendance. More and more congregations also face financial difficulty. Some smaller ones can no longer afford to call a full-time pastor, or even a part-time one. Many of the larger urban congregations that once had teams of rostered leaders, both diaconal and pastoral, now have one pastor. In many areas of the ELCIC, part-time calls are becoming or, likely, have become the new norm.

At the same time, candidates for rostered ministry still have hopes and expectations of full-time calls and help from their synods in finding such calls. Many candidates cannot afford to serve in part-time calls; how can they support themselves, and repay student debt on a part-time salary?

Candidates for ministry are uncertain that there are placements for them, uncertain that they can support themselves and a family, uncertain that they can work "full time." And if not working full-time in ministry, what else can an individual do? How does one juggle ministry and a part-time position elsewhere, given the need for training, and the responsibilities required, and the demands on time within ministry? ⁶⁷

What kind of leadership is needed at this time to promote an enthusiastic embrace of everyone's role in the mission of the church? What training or skills might be required to help with this?

67. David Saude, *Our Common Vocation*, unpublished paper submitted to the Faith, Order and Doctrine Committee (2016), p.1.

Glimpses of the Future

Lisa Janke's year-long internship is part of her preparation to become a pastor. She serves halftime at St. Luke's Zion Lutheran Church in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and the other halftime in youth and young adult ministry for Manitoba/ Northwestern Ontario Synod. "We're just trying to be creative about how to manage schedules," says Janke, who will graduate from Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota this spring. "I'm learning how to say no, learning what to take on, and how to balance." MNO Bishop Elaine Sauer designed Janke's internship as an experiment in forming adaptable leaders for the future. "In these challenging times of the church, we find that [rostered] leaders may have to serve a congregation part time and another ministry or job, juggling two relationships or ministries," says Sauer.⁶⁸

Discussion

- *What benefits do you see in forming adaptable leaders for the future?*
- *What challenges or concerns do you see in rostered leaders balancing two ministries?*

After many years as a church music director, Scott Knarr was recently consecrated as a diaconal minister. During his diaconal internship at Mount Zion Lutheran Church in Waterloo, Ont., he spent a great deal of time with the people of the Anglican Parish of the Six Nations, where he taught music in an elementary school, organized a summer music camp and worked with the Suicide Awareness and Prevention Group. On completion of his internship, he accepted a halftime call as diaconal minister of music at Mount Zion.

One challenge for Scott has been to differentiate his new role as "deacon" with a music specialty from his previous role of "director of music." What is different for him? "The deacon is always looking outward to the needs of the world," says Scott, "What I've been called to do in my context is music." One example of his new role at Mount Zion is his leadership of "Hymn Sing" events held in partnership with Mount Zion's Health Council. Seniors from Mount Zion's neighbourhood and busloads from several local retirement and nursing homes join members of Mount Zion for a regular afternoon of singing. Also, choir members and musicians from Mount Zion have been enabled and encouraged to work with the people of the Six Nations to provide a summer music camp for youth and children at Six Nations. He works to build community within the choir in their support of each other and in their serving.

Inspired by Scott's internship at Six Nations, the Eastern Synod's Two Rivers Ministry Area applied for and received an Eastern Synod grant to partner with the people of Six Nations Anglican Parish. Since January 2016, Scott has been engaged by Two Rivers in halftime ministry, to educate and raise awareness among Two Rivers faith communities about our respective histories and the realities facing Indigenous people in Canada today, to embrace the openness of the Six Nations Anglican Parish to be

68. 2015 ELCIC Annual Report, at elcic.ca/news.cfm?article=442

in relationship by providing opportunities for people to develop connections, and to strengthen and develop opportunities to walk together toward a future of hope and healing through concrete actions. "I'm acting as a living bridge." he says of his role.

Discussion

- *How do you see Deacon Scott's role as leading and equipping the baptized for diakonia (service)? Who is being equipped and supported?*
- *How does Deacon Scott's ministry compare to your understanding of the role of diaconal ministers? How is it different?*

Multi-point parishes and wide-area ministries are not new concepts, but the idea of a group of small congregations agreeing to call and share a team of pastors and diaconal ministers may be worth consideration as smaller congregations are unable to support a full-time call. Sometime in the 1970s, a team of three pastors and one deaconess served a thirteen-point parish in rural Lunenburg County, N.S. In this model, each congregation retains its own identity, and often education, visitation and administration are shared with lay leaders, or may be offered as combined ministries in the parish. Rostered ministers, both pastors and diaconal, might move about the congregations, enabling, equipping and training all the baptized to participate in God's mission.

Discussion

- *What special skills or training might rostered leaders need to work in this type of call?*
- *Do you think that this way of providing leadership might better encourage all the baptized to serve in their communities? Why or why not?*

Because diaconal ministers are trained for a particular service in the world, as well as receiving theological education, they may be already equipped to balance two ministries. Diaconal Minister Faith Nostbakken is a spiritual director with a call to the specialized ministry of spiritual direction for the Synod of Alberta and the Territories. She also offers spiritual direction through an ecumenical retreat centre. Diaconal Minister Pam Harrington provides counselling ministry at St. David's Anglican-Lutheran Church in Orillia, Ont., and has a private counselling practice in downtown Orillia.

Discussion

- *Do you think that it is important for diaconal ministers to be trained for service in the world? Why or why not?*
- *Some people study to be pastors and social workers at the same time (joint Master of Social Work—Master of Divinity). How might this be helpful?*

Tentmaking refers to “the activities of any Christian who, while dedicating him or herself to the ministry of the gospel, receives little or no pay for church work, but performs other tentmaking sorts of jobs to provide support. The term comes from the fact that the apostle Paul supported himself by making tents while living and preaching in Corinth (Acts 18:3).”⁶⁹ Authorized lay ministers serving in remote *authorized lay ministries* could be seen as tentmakers, insofar as they are not paid by the church, but must have some other way of providing support for their families.

In early twentieth century France, when the church was losing touch with the working class, priests worked in factories and experienced life as workers. These were called “worker priests.” Other churches used this approach as a way to reach people in subcultures that were hard for the church to serve or who had become alienated from the church over time.

Discussion

- *Can you envision situations or ministries where tentmaking or worker priest sorts of calls might serve God’s mission in the ELCIC?*
- *What challenges and/or benefits do you see in these models?*

Ecumenical Possibilities

In the 1960s, the Second Vatican Council restored the permanent diaconate to the Roman Catholic Church after 1500 years. At the present time, the Diocese of Hamilton has 39 deacons. They are non-stipendiary (unpaid). Essentially a ministry of service and charity, the deacon serves the church and the diocese in a designated service in a hospital, or prison, or other forms of charitable outreach. In addition, the deacon is assigned to a parish, as his liturgical base, where he assists the pastor, as needed, in liturgical ministry which may take the form of preaching, baptizing, presiding at weddings or funerals, or in other capacities within the parish. He also helps church members to discover their participation in the ministry of Christ.

The Anglican diaconate is a separate, distinct, and equal order of ordained ministry dedicated to serving, and enabling others to serve the needy, the weak, the sick and the lonely, and holding before the church the needs of the world. In the Anglican Diocese of Toronto, the ministry of the deacon has two parts: ministry within the parish and ministry in the world beyond the parish, such as social ministry (with people in hospitals, homes for the elderly, prisons, in shelters or with young people as doctors, teachers, nurses counsellors, companions or assistants); pastoral care including chaplaincies; or advocating (assisting the diocese and the bishop on behalf of disadvantaged). Deacons are not ordinarily paid as they have other sources of income.

69. *Tentmaking*, Wikipedia, 2016.

Discussion⁷⁰

- *What might be some of the advantages or disadvantages of these ecumenical models?*
- *Are pastors presently serving in roles which might be more appropriate to diaconal ministers?*
- *How might diaconal ministers be better utilized in chaplaincies—whether industrial, campus, nursing home or active treatment hospitals?*
- *In what ways might a diaconal minister be a more effective representative of the church in social or secular institutions or organizations?*

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to help the whole church reflect on the mission of the church and our vocations as baptized Christians. Sessions One and Two helped us understand the Lutheran theology of mission and of vocation. In Session Three the rationale for rostered ministry and its functions were explained. In Session Four, we marked how the ELCIC sees its place in God's mission today, acknowledged some challenges facing the ELCIC, and looked at some possibilities for promoting an enthusiastic embrace of everyone's role in the mission of the church.

Online Survey

We now invite participants to tell us how you experienced *To Love Our Neighbours As Ourselves: A Study of Orders of Ministry in the ELCIC* and what thoughts you might have for the Faith, Order and Doctrine Committee. A survey is described in Appendix 3 and must be completed by Easter Monday, April 17, 2017 at surveymonkey.com/r/OrdersofMinistry

We are grateful for your participation in the important reflection and conversation surrounding our church's participation in God's mission in the world. Thank you.

Closing Prayer

A member of the study group is invited to offer a closing prayer:

Stir us, O God, so that all the baptized are willing to participate in your mission in our world. Teach us to encourage one another. Help us to give thanks for all the baptized who respond to your call to discipleship and service in your name. Help us to give thanks for who have responded to your call to rostered ministry. May our collective work be pleasing to you for the sake of the gospel. In Jesus' name, we pray. **Amen.**

70. These questions are raised in *The Nature of Diaconal Ministry in the MNO Synod*, pp.10–11.

To Love Our Neighbours As Ourselves

- APPENDIX 1 - Glossary of Terms

Adiaphora

From the Greek word for “indifferent things,” in Lutheran theology “adiaphora” refers to those things which are not necessary for salvation and those things about which Christians are free to have differing opinions without threatening church unity.

Bishop

In Lutheran usage a bishop is the chief administrative officer of a regional expression of a church, whether called synod, diocese, or national church. Bishops are normally elected by a convention from within the roster (see “roster” below) of pastors for a set term of office. In other churches, bishops may have a different list of duties, method of selection and length of tenure. In some churches the bishop is considered the chief pastor of the diocese.

Call

The word “call” is used in several contexts to mean somewhat different things. One can speak of the Holy Spirit calling us through Word and Sacrament to follow Christ. One can also speak of the calling to every Christian to serve Christ by serving the world through vocations (from the Latin word for “call”) in daily life (see vocation). One can also use the word “call” to refer to a more specific call from the Holy Spirit to someone to enter the specific vocations of pastor or diaconal minister. When used in this sense Lutherans speak of “internal call”—the inner sense that God is calling me—and “outer call”—in which the church discerns whether someone actually has the aptitudes and abilities to be a pastor or diaconal minister and a congregation or synod issues a public “call” to a qualified person.

Cleric/Clergy

In the ELCIC, ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament. Such persons would need to be on the *Roster of Ministers* of Word and Sacrament in order to be considered clergy. Historically other ranks of ordained ministers were considered clergy and still are in some churches.

Consecration

See “Ordination”

Deacon, Deaconess, Diaconal Minister

Historically, from the third or fourth centuries, “deacon” is a term used to refer to a particular order of clergy. Early on there are references to bishops, priests, and deacons, with deacons serving the bishops. In the middle ages deacons were one of seven orders of clergy. Along with bishops and priests, deacons were considered a major order. Generally people who were in the process of becoming priests spent a time as deacons first. At the time of the Reformation, most Lutherans eliminated the hierarchical ranking of clergy, and the order of deacons was discontinued. Anglicans continued with a reformed version of the medieval practice. In current Lutheran usage, these designations are used for persons who have been certified and called by the church to serve in specific ministries for specific purposes. In Lutheranism the term “deaconess” has been used since the nineteenth century to refer to women who belong to associations and orders devoted to diaconal ministry and who serve in the church. “Diaconal minister” is the term used in the ELCIC’s official documents as a blanket term for all who serve in diaconal ministry. Those who serve in such a ministry can be referred to as “the diaconate.”

Diakonia

Diakonia is the Greek word referring to “service.” It is used in the New Testament to refer to a variety of services which Christians provide for one another and the world, rather than to a specific office. Recently the word has been resurrected in ecumenical theology to refer to the ministry of service which the church undertakes in the world. In this context it is understood that the whole church and each Christian are called to a ministry of *diakonia* or service.

Episcopacy

This word refers to a system whereby bishops are the chief administrators of regional church structures. In some churches, such as the ELCIC, the authority of bishops is limited by constitutional provision and synod conventions, and councils have the ultimate authority. In some churches bishops have more authority and in the Roman Catholic Church the authority of bishops is limited by the authority of the Pope.

Evangelist, Catechist

“Evangelist” is derived from the Greek word *evangelion* or “good news.” The word “evangelist” can have a variety of meanings. The authors of the four Gospels in the New Testament are referred to as “evangelists.” In North America well known preachers such as Billy Graham are often referred to as “evangelists.” In many churches in developing countries “evangelists” are persons who are specially prepared and certified to serve in congregations where pastors cannot always be present in the community. Their primary responsibility is to preach the gospel. Such churches also have people designated as “catechists” to teach the basics of Christian doctrine and life in local congregations.

Gospel

The word “gospel” can refer either to the four Gospels in the New Testament or to the core Christian message. In Lutheran theology, when the word “Gospel” is capitalized it refers to the core message of justification by grace alone through faith alone. Lutherans speak of “the proper distinction of Law and Gospel.” In this context “Law” refers to conditional promises—that is, a statement in the form “If you [insert condition here], then God [insert reward or punishment here].” “Gospel” refers to the unconditional promise of God in Christ—because of what God has done in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, therefore your destiny and the whole world’s destiny is good. Note that in the Law, the focus is on us and what we must do; in the Gospel, the focus is on what God does. The subject of a Gospel sentence is always God and never us.

Laity

In the church we often distinguish between “clergy” and “laity.” Among Lutherans the word “clergy” usually refers to pastors and the word “laity” to all Christians except pastors. In usage it is ambiguous whether diaconal ministers are “clergy” or “laity.” Christians who are not pastors or diaconal ministers are often referred to as “laypersons.”

Minister

The word “minister” is often taken to mean a member of the clergy. Theologically every Christian is a “minister,” that is, one who serves. See “*Diakonia*.” In like manner, the word “ministry” is often used to refer to one’s service as pastor or diaconal minister, while it properly refers to the vocation of service of every Christian.

Order(s) of Ministry

The term “orders of ministry” is used in ecumenical discussion to refer to the offices and roles of bishops, priests/pastors, and deacons/diaconal ministers. Lutheran theology hopes to avoid dividing Christians into different “orders” or ranks. To facilitate discussion with other churches we use the terminology for convenience. See “Roster.”

Ordination/Consecration/Setting Apart

Historically, liturgies to dedicate people who served in the church to the service of God, and to pray for the presence of the Holy Spirit in their ministries, have been a part of the church almost from the beginning. Over time these liturgies came to be understood in a sacramental sense and ordination became one of the seven medieval sacraments. In the middle ages it was believed that ordination permanently set a person apart into a separate order in society. Once ordained, even in one of the minor orders of clergy, a person was no longer subject to secular law or courts. In the Reformation, Lutherans denied that ordination was a sacrament and that clergy were a separate order of society. The priority was placed on public call rather than ordination, and ordination was seen as a public, liturgical recognition that a qualified person had received and accepted a public call to the vocation of pastor. Since, in Lutheran theology, a bishop is simply a pastor who has been elected to be chief administrative officer of a synod or national church, no specific word was used for the liturgy which inducted a bishop into office. As associations and orders of deaconesses arose in the nineteenth century there was a desire to show liturgically the significant commitment which

the office of deaconess required. Because the word "ordination" had become so intertwined with the office of pastor, the word "consecration" was used for the liturgy recognizing that a qualified person had accepted a call to the office of deaconess.

Oversight

This word simply means administration.

Pastor/Presbyter/Priest

In the New Testament the Greek word *presbyteros* means "elder." "Presbyter" can be used in a variety of ways. By the third century it had come to have a more technical use, referring to those who led congregational-sized groups of Christians. Because of the influence of Roman religion on early Christians, these individuals also came to be known as *sacerdotes* or priests. Originally the word "pastor," derived from the Latin word for "shepherd," meant the senior priest of a parish. During the Lutheran Reformation the title "priest" was dropped and the title "pastor" was applied to all clergy. This is the term in widest use in Lutheranism, but other denominations use other titles such as "priest," "minister," or "preacher."

"Priesthood of All Believers"

During the Reformation Luther wanted to emphasize that all Christians had the responsibility to function as "priests" for their neighbours. That is, every Christian had the responsibility to pray for the sick, to care for the needy and to offer a word of forgiveness to the person who had offended them. By the seventeenth century clericalism (meaning the rule of the church by clergy and a strong distinction between clergy and laity) had come to dominate the Lutheran state churches in Germany. In that context, Philip Jacob Spener, the "father" of Pietism, used the term "priesthood of all believers" to emphasize the equality of clergy and laity in the church.

Roster

In the ELCIC "the roster" is the official list of all pastors and diaconal ministers maintained by the synod. In order to be eligible for call a pastor or diaconal minister must be "on the roster." Bishops, pastors and diaconal ministers are all referred to as "rostered ministers."

Sacrament

The New Testament does not speak of "sacraments," but simply speaks about certain central things which the church does when it gathers. Early on certain of these key activities came to be understood in a unique way. In Greek the word used for these actions was "mysteries" and that is the word used in Eastern Orthodox churches. In Latin the theologian Tertullian used the word *sacramentum* and so in Roman Catholic and Protestant churches the word "sacrament" is used. Augustine defined a sacrament as "the visible sign of an invisible grace." This definition allowed early medieval theologians to find hundreds of "sacraments" in Christian worship. In the twelfth century Peter Lombard limited the sacraments to seven: Baptism, confirmation, penance, Holy Communion, marriage, ordination, and extreme unction. With revisions to penance and unction, this is the list of sacraments in the Roman Catholic Church. At the time of the Reformation Luther defined a "sacrament" as an action involving a material substance which had been commanded by

Christ and which communicated the gospel. By this definition the Lutheran movement decided that there were two sacraments, Baptism and Holy Communion. In Lutheran theology we often speak of "Word and Sacrament" as the "means of grace," that is, as the means by which the Holy Spirit "calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies" Christians.

Vocation

"Vocation" comes from the Latin *vocatio*, or "call." It refers to one's calling in life. In medieval theology the word "vocation" was used to refer to one's call to be a priest, monk, or nun. In the Reformation, Luther extended the concept of vocation to all Christians. In Luther's understanding of "vocation", each and every Christian was called to serve Christ by serving the world and the neighbour in the various occupations and activities of daily life. Since the activities of our lives and the roles we fill are various, we do not have only one vocation: for example, a person who holds a particular job can also be a parent and/or a spouse as well as hold a public office. Each of these is a vocation. "Vocation" has a more theological tone than "career" since it implies a calling from God rather than a plan for one's work life.

Word, Word of God

"The Word" is the primary means by which God communicates with us and by which the Holy Spirit implants the gospel in our hearts and minds. In Lutheran theology "Word of God" refers to several things, often simultaneously. The primary referent is Jesus Christ, the incarnate (in flesh and bones) Word of God. The Word is also the creative Word by which God created the universe. It is also the oral, preached Word, the speaking of the gospel aloud, first of all by the prophets and apostles, but also by people today. Finally, we refer to the Bible as the Word of God because it contains a record of the preaching of the prophets and apostles and because it communicates the gospel.

To Love Our Neighbours As Ourselves

- APPENDIX 2 - **Evangelical Declaration (1997)**

God calls us, through Word and Sacrament, to be disciples and to make disciples. Our discipleship is defined by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Our mission is to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with people in Canada and around the world through the proclamation of the Word, the celebration of the Sacraments, and through service in Christ's name.

On the basis of the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, we believe, teach and confess that:

- God is revealed in the incarnation, the scandal of the cross, and in the wonder of the resurrection of Jesus Christ—not in human power and glory.
- People find their true worth, meaning and purpose in life through the free gift of God's grace in Christ alone—not through their own accomplishments and efforts.
- The crucified Christ calls us into a life of discipleship in which we are to be persons for others.
- In the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we face the future with a hope and confidence that is based on Christ alone.
- Everything we have is a gift from God entrusted to our nurture and care, and that the Christian life is a life of stewardship.
- The Holy Spirit calls and gathers the whole church into the mission of God, which takes seriously both the reality of the world, and the reality of Christ, with equal care.

We understand that the present reality of the world involves significant changes in our society, economy and culture. Technological innovations, globalization, economic and political uncertainties, and shifting morals and values have increased the sense of insecurity for many people. We have been falsely taught to derive our identity only from our work—yet jobs are not secure. These changes confront us with the reality that the needs of the world and our opportunities for mission are found on our doorsteps and not simply at a distance.

We believe that the reality of Christ is that God promises to be with us unconditionally in the midst of the changes in our world. The church is called to name those things which cause us to be less than human. The church is called to proclaim the truth of the Gospel to others and to live according to it ourselves. The church is called to stand in solidarity with, and to welcome into our midst, all those who are marginalized because of sin and who experience injustice. The cross of Christ stands opposed to any ideology which proclaims that people can earn salvation by hard work or positive thinking. The cross of Christ stands opposed to any ideology which treats people as commodities.

We, as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, will celebrate and rejoice in the gifts which God has given us to carry out our mission in the world today. Where we see need, we will take action. We will use our gifts deliberately to be the people of God for others. Over the next decade we will be involved in mission by focusing on the following:

We commit ourselves as church to worship the Triune God through Word and Sacrament. Our worship will be faithful to Scripture and tradition, celebrating diverse forms of worship and speaking to our context. Our worship will strengthen us to be God's people in mission in all of our vocations.

We commit ourselves as church through prayer, study, and conversation, to discern what it is for us to live faithfully under the cross in this time and place, seeing the world through the event of the cross. We will enter into the lives of people in our local, national and global communities.

We commit ourselves as church to equip all of us to be people in mission and to live as faithful disciples. We will emphasize ongoing learning for both laity and clergy. We will make full use of the resources of the people in our congregations, schools, seminaries and leadership positions in the church. We will also work intentionally with other churches.

We commit ourselves as church to encourage companionship and advocacy with those who are treated unjustly, whether in our local, national and global communities. We will do this ecumenically in as many ways as possible.

We commit ourselves as church to share our gifts with the whole people of God beyond our specific denominational and national context. We will seek ways of working cooperatively wherever we are able.

We commit ourselves as church to communicate clearly with one another and with society. We commit ourselves to openness and trust. We will listen to the voices of our church and society, and respond to their needs.

We commit ourselves as church to respond faithfully, promptly and flexibly to the many opportunities for mission. We will pursue creative and effective ways for mission and ministry in our local, national, and global communities.

*Future Directions Task Force on Mission, ELCIC
March 7, 1997*

To Love Our Neighbours As Ourselves

- APPENDIX 3 - Participants' Survey

At the conclusion of this study, leaders and participants are invited to let the Faith, Order and Doctrine Committee (FOD) know how they experienced this study and their thoughts about the future using the survey tool located at surveymonkey.com/r/OrdersofMinistry.

A—TELL US ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE OF THIS STUDY

In addition to some identifying information, these questions are included in the survey:

1. How many Sessions of this study were you able to attend? (1 / 2 / 3 / 4)
2. How much of the prepared material did you read?
(all / more than half / half / less than half / none)
3. How did you find the information and ideas presented in each session?
(too much, about right, too little)
4. How did you find this study?
(very helpful / somewhat helpful / neither helpful nor unhelpful / somewhat unhelpful / very unhelpful)
5. How do the issues presented in this study affect you and your congregation?
(constantly / much of the time / occasionally / not at all)

B—THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE

1. How could lay people be encouraged to embrace and live out their call to *diakonia*?
2. How might the church use the gifts of our diaconal ministers to better meet the needs of the world?
3. Is there anything else you would like to tell the Faith, Order and Doctrine Committee?

Responses will be considered by FOD as it prepares a white paper to be delivered to National Church Council (NCC) in the fall of 2017. Responses must be in by Easter Monday, April 17, 2017.

The members of the ELCIC's Faith, Order and Doctrine Committee, together with all members of the ELCIC's National Church Council, thank you for your participation in this study.