2021 Deaconess Community Assembly Packet

April 7-11\textsuperscript{th}, 2021 via Zoom
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>April 7</th>
<th>April 8</th>
<th>April 9</th>
<th>April 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zoom Open 10:30 am</td>
<td>Zoom Open 10:30 am</td>
<td>Zoom Open 10:30 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10:45 am Morning Prayers</td>
<td>10:45 am Morning Prayers</td>
<td>Morning Prayer On your Own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11:00 am-12:15 pm Plenary</td>
<td>11:00 am-12:45 pm Plenary – Elections and Resolutions</td>
<td>11:00 am-12:15 pm Plenary Regional Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Minute Break</td>
<td>15 Minute Break</td>
<td>15 Minute Break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12:30-1:15 pm 1. Community Partner 2. Community Prayer</td>
<td>1:00-1:45 pm 1. Community Partner 2. Community Prayer</td>
<td>12:30 pm Closing Worship Including installations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Hour Break</td>
<td>30 Minute Break</td>
<td>30 Minute Break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2:15-5:00 pm Breakout Session R&amp;R – Membership Conversation</td>
<td>2:15-5:00 pm Breakout Session Bias Training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 Minute Break</td>
<td>30 Minute Break</td>
<td>30 Minute Break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5:30 pm Open Zoom 5:50-4:00 pm Breakout Session Directing Deaconess Question &amp; Answer</td>
<td>5:50-4:15 pm Breakout Session Community Partner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Hour Break</td>
<td>One Hour+ Break</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00-7:30 pm Opening Worship</td>
<td>6:00-7:00 pm Community Time</td>
<td>5:50 – 7:00 pm Community Celebrations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evening Worship On your Own - using resources provided</td>
<td>Evening Worship On your Own – using resources provided</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** All Times on the Schedule are Central Time
2021 Assembly Table of Contents

Deaconess Community of the ELCA
2021 ASSEMBLY
Love WALK Flourish
Table of Contents

Assembly Schedule
Table of Contents

1. Assembly Information
   a. Welcome Letter page 5
   b. Assembly Committees page 6 & 7
   c. Celebrants page 8

2. Plenary
   a. Proposed Business Agenda page 9 - 11
   b. Robert’s Rules chart page 12 - 13
   c. Making a Motion Guide page 14
   f. Guide to Writing a Resolution page 15 & 16

3. Leadership Team & Staff Reports
   a. Directing Deaconess page 17 - 19
   b. Director of Vocation and Education page 20
   c. Communications page 21

4. Board Officer Reports
   a. Chair of the Board of Directors page 22
   b. Report of the Secretary page 23-27
   c. Report of the Treasurer - presented during the Assembly

5. Committee and Task Force Reports
   a. Committee on Finance and Audit page 28 & 29
   b. Committee on Mission Support page 30 - 32
   c. Committee on Vocation and Education page 33 - 35
   d. Responsibility & Reconciliation Team page 36 - 38
   e. Nominating Committee page 59
      i. Elections – Board of Directors page 40 & 41
      ii. Elections – R&R Team page 42
iii. Elections – Directing Deaconess  

6. Partnership Reports  
   a. DIAKONIA of the Americas and Caribbean (DOTAC)  
   b. DIAKONIA World Federation - presented during the Assembly  
   c. Kaiserswerth General Conference  

Additional Attached Documents:  
   a. 2019 Assembly Minutes  
   b. By-Laws Deaconess Community of the ELCA  
   c. Deaconess Community Handbook, including the Community Covenant  
   d. Roster Minister Profile – Sr. Noreen Stevens
February 3, 2021

Dear Sisters, Candidates and Guests,

Greetings and welcome to the 2021 Deaconess Community Assembly, April 7-10, 2021. The theme of this Assembly is **Love Walk Flourish**, based on the Bible verse Micah 6:8: *What does the Lord require of us? To do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with our God.*

It seems to have been a long time in coming, but on Wednesday, April 7, the Deaconess Community will gather together electronically for several days of worship, business, learning and community. Yes, it will be different, but as we found through the successful Gathering this past November, it can be a meaningful time of devotion, fellowship, celebration and fun.

As a Community, we will celebrate anniversaries; the opportunity to welcome new candidates through the Rite of Accompaniment and new Sisters through the Rite of Reception; elect new members of the Board of Director, R&R Team and the Directing Deaconess. We’ll walk alongside each other as we study Micah 6:8 to discover how we can flourish together in this coming year and share the love of God with one another.

Yes, it will be “different”, but that’s exactly what a Deaconess is, right? Unique and special with boundless love for God’s creation! We’ll go into the Assembly with open minds and finish with full hearts to share with the world.

Looking forward to seeing you all! Keep your eyes open for Assembly news, materials and weekly updates! If you have any questions or concerns about the 2021 Deaconess Assembly, please send an email to deaconess.community@elca.org You will also find Assembly information on our website: [https://deaconesscommunity.org/internal/2021-assembly/](https://deaconesscommunity.org/internal/2021-assembly/)

Much love and blessings,

Sister Diane Solmonson
Chair, 2021 Assembly Planning Team
2021 ELCA Deaconess Assembly Planning Team

Chairman  Sr. Diane Solmonson
dianensteven@aol.com  763-245-0763

Co-Chairman  Sr. Karie Hamilton
karie@kariehamilton.com  253-973-0200

Logistics  Sr. Dottie Almoney
dottie@stpeterslutheran-lanc.org  717-725-2380

Celebration Dinner  
Deacon Rachel Bailey
Rbart7387@yahoo.com

Sr. Davia Evans
sisterdavia@gmail.com

Mindy Shively
mindyshively@gmail.com

Sr. Jean Widmeyer
srjw@rogers.com

Hospitality  Sr. Le Brandes
lkbrandes@outlook.com  425-489-4036

Jan Quirl
jquirl@austin.rr.com

Cora Rose
rosecora@gmail.com

Sr. Jane Amiotte
janeamiotte@hotmail.com

Sr. Joy Hovis
imsisterjoy@gmail.com

Sr. Deb McClellan
sisterdebmcc@comcast.net

Sr. Virginia Strahan
deaconess.acts26.16@gmail.com

Sr. Jean Widmeyer
srjw@rogers.com
**Worship**  Sr. Stacie Lightner
stacielightner@hotmail.com  612-597-0625

Sr. Ramona Daily
ramonacecille@gmail.com

Sr. Melinda Lando
melindalando@msn.com

Kaye Mills
kayeismills@gmail.com

**Memorials Team**  Sr. Carol Burk
carolinasister1949@hotmail.com  843-556-1632

**Community Time**  Sr. Jennie Myers
Srjennie.myers@gmail.com  540.682.4042

Sara Gaylon
Sara.r.palm@gmail.com

Sr.  Sarah Hausken
sarah.hausken@swmnelca.org

Sr. Deb McClelland
sisterdebmcc@comcast.net

Sr. Jessica Zimmerle
Zimmerle.jess@gmail.com

**Staff:**

**Accountant -** Yvette Newberry White
Yvette.newberrywhite@elca.org  312.523.3182

**Administrative Assistant** – Delisa Perry
Delisa.perry@elca.org  562.689.9346

**Communications and Public Relations Coordinator** Jan Rizzo
Jan.rizzo@elca.org  708.856.9652

**Directing Deaconess**  Sr. Noreen Stevens
noreen.stevens@elca.org  651.815.1145

**Interim Director of Vocation and Education** – Sr. Sylvia Countess
sscountess@aol.com  865.441.6890

**Office - 773.380.1705**  Deaconess.community@elca.org
Community Celebrations

At this year’s Assembly we will celebrate anniversaries from 2020 and 2021, welcome Sisters through the Rite of Reception and welcome candidates through the Rite of Accompaniment ~

2020 Celebrations

10th Anniversary
Sister Diane Solmonson & Sister Barbara Collins

25th Anniversary
Sister Laura Mankivsky

40th Anniversary
Sister Donna Font

2021 Celebrations

10th Anniversary
Sister Michelle Collins & Sister Deb McClellan

20th Anniversary
Sister Mary Julia McKenzie

40th Anniversary
Sister Carol Burk

NOTE: We encourage you to send cards and/or gifts directly to the celebrant. However, clearly marked packages and/or cards sent to the office by April 1st will be mailed to the celebrants!
2021 Assembly – Love Walk Flourish

Proposed Agenda
Deaconess Community of the ELCA, also serving in the ELCIC
April 7-10, 2021 via Zoom

NOTE: All times on the schedule are Central Time

Wednesday, April 7th

5:30 pm    Zoom open – informal gathering
6:00 – 7:30 pm    Opening Worship with Rite of Reception and Rite of Accompaniment
                  Opening of the Assembly
7:30-8:00 pm    Zoom open – informal gathering

Thursday, April 8th

10:30 am    Zoom open – informal gathering
10:45 am    Morning Prayer
11:00 am – 12:15 pm    Plenary Session #1
                       Including Welcome, Introductions, Affirmation of Covenant,
                       Parliamentary Procedure, Reports
                     
15 Minute Break – Zoom will remain open
                        Singing out of the break – Sr. Ramona and Katie
12:30 - 1:00 pm    Community Partner
1:00 - 1:15 pm    Community Prayer

One Hour Break

2:15 – 3:00 pm    Breakout Session led by R&R Team – Membership Conversation
                     Singing into the break – Sr. Ramona and Katie
Thirty Minute Break – Zoom will remain open
                        Singing out of the break – Sr. Ramona and Katie
3:30 – 4:00 pm    Breakout Session – Question & Answer for Directing Deaconess election

Two Hour Break
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5:30 pm</td>
<td>Zoom open – informal gathering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00 – 7:00 pm</td>
<td>Community Time – all guests are welcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00 – 7:30 pm</td>
<td>Zoom open – informal gathering</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Friday, April 9th**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:30 am</td>
<td>Zoom open – informal gathering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45 am</td>
<td>Morning Prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 am – 12:45 pm</td>
<td>Plenary Session #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Including Resolutions, Elections – Board/R&amp;R/Directing Deaconess Handbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 – 1:30 pm</td>
<td>Community Partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30 - 1:45 pm</td>
<td>Community Prayer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**15 Minute Break** – Zoom will remain open
Singing out of the break – Sr. Ramona and Katie

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2:15 – 3:00 pm</td>
<td>Breakout Session – Bias Training led by Aubrey Thonvold, ReconcilingWorks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**30 Minute Break** – Zoom will remain open
Singing out of the break – Sr. Ramona and Katie

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3:30 – 4:15 pm</td>
<td>Breakout Session – Community Partner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**One Hour+ Break**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5:30 pm</td>
<td>Zoom open – informal gathering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00 – 7:00 pm</td>
<td>Community Celebrations – all guests are welcomed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00 – 7:30 pm</td>
<td>Zoom open – informal gathering</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Saturday, April 10th

Morning Prayer – on your own
10:30 am  
Zoom open – informal gathering

11:00 am -12:15 pm  
Plenary Session #3
Including Continued Business and Regional Breakout Sessions

**15 Minute Break**

12:30 pm  
Closing Worship
Installation of newly elected and Closing of the Assembly

*what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness,*

*and to walk humbly with your God?* Micah 6:8
## Robert’s Rules Charts

### Ranking Motions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Motion in Order of Rank</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Interrupt?</th>
<th>Second?</th>
<th>Debatable?</th>
<th>Amendable?</th>
<th>Vote</th>
<th>Reconsider?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Privileged</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fix the time to which to adjourn</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO*</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjourn</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO*</td>
<td>NO*</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take a recess</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise a question of privilege</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>CHAIR*</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call for the orders of the day</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO*</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidiary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lay on the table</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>YES(-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous question</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO*</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>YES*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit or extend limits of debate</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postpone to a certain time</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>M*</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commit or refer</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>YES*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amend</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES*</td>
<td>YES*(x1)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postpone indefinitely</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>YES(+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main motion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main motion</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Motion</td>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Interrupt?</td>
<td>Second?</td>
<td>Debateable?</td>
<td>Amendable?</td>
<td>Vote</td>
<td>Reconsider?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Incidental</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeal</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider by paragraph/seriatim</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division of the Assembly</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>DEMAND</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division of a question</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominations and polls (reopen)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>YES ( - )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominations and polls (close)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objection to consideration of a question</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>YES ( - )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary inquiry</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO-CHAIR</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point of information</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO-CHAIR</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point of order</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO*</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO-CHAIR</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratify/confirm</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requests to withdraw a motion, read a paper, etc.</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO*</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>M*</td>
<td>YES*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspend the rules</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>2/3*</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voting</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO*</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>M*</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bring Back Motions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discharge a committee</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>2/3*</td>
<td>YES( - )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconsider</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>YES*</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rescind or amend something previously adopted</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>2/3*</td>
<td>YES( - )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take from the table</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Robert’s Rules – Language for Introducing Motions

For clarity and consistency, voting members should use the standard language of parliamentary procedure when introducing motions on the floor of the assembly. The chart below offers standard phrases used when introducing motions for various purposes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If you wish to . . .</th>
<th>You say . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Close the meeting</td>
<td>I move to adjourn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take a break</td>
<td>I move to recess for [specify time duration] OR until [time certain].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Register a complaint</td>
<td>I rise to a question of privilege.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Require the assembly to return to its agenda</td>
<td>I call for the orders of the day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lay a matter aside temporarily</td>
<td>I move to lay the question on the table.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close debate</td>
<td>I move the previous question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit or extend debate</td>
<td>I move that debate be limited to . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postpone to a certain time</td>
<td>I move to postpone the motion to [time certain].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refer the motion to a committee</td>
<td>I move to refer the motion to [committee name].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modify wording of the motion</td>
<td>I move to amend the motion by . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kill the main motion</td>
<td>I move that the motion be postponed indefinitely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring business before the assembly</td>
<td>I move that . . OR I move to . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enforce the rules</td>
<td>Point of order.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit a matter to the assembly after a ruling from the chair</td>
<td>I appeal the decision of the chair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspend the rules</td>
<td>I move to suspend the rules.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid a main motion altogether</td>
<td>I object to the consideration of . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divide a motion</td>
<td>I move to divide the question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demand a rising vote</td>
<td>I move for a rising vote.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask a parliamentary law question</td>
<td>Parliamentary inquiry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request for information</td>
<td>Point of information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take a matter from the table</td>
<td>I move to take from the table . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconsider a motion</td>
<td>I move to reconsider . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancel a previous action</td>
<td>I move to rescind . .</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Guidelines for Resolutions

Resolutions may be submitted by:
- Five (5) voting members (their signatures, typed names, and phone numbers must be submitted with the resolution, or
- A committee/task force/team of the Deaconess Community (meeting minutes indicating the resolution may be required.

An effective resolution will:
- Help clarify our beliefs/values; and/or
- Propose a method for resolving an issue; and/or
- Give direction to the Deaconess Community’s mission by recommending particular actions.

Resolutions should be tested before they are submitted.
- Is the information in the resolution complete and accurate?
- Is this a matter that pertains to the life and ministry of the community?
- Is this a matter of significance requiring consideration by the deaconess assembly?
- Is this concern directed to the appropriate unit; would it best be directed toward the Board of Directors, the Executive Committee, a community committee, the deaconess community staff, etc.?
- Do other people validate this idea?
- Does our resolution answer the following questions:
  - What should be done?
  - Who should act?
  - How the action is to be funded if cost is involved.
  - When should the action be completed?
  - To whom should the results be reported?
- If the resolution requires changes to the bylaws, are the proposed changes included in the resolution?
- Does the resolution use specific, non-inflammatory language?

The Resolutions Committee may:
- Recommend adoption of the resolution;
- Recommend adoption with proposed amendment;
- Recommend defeat of the resolution;
- Recommend referral to another entity;
- Forward without recommendation;
- Offer a substitute motion;
- Group together in a single recommendation motions on the same or similar subjects.

A resolution should be kept to one page and be written in the following format:

WHEREAS: The WHEREAS sections clearly state the REASONS for the resolution. Each reason should be a separate WHEREAS.

RESOLVED: The RESOLVED sections clearly state the action(s) desired – what should be done, who should do it, how it should be done, and when it should be done. Each action should be a separate RESOLVED so the assembly may deal with them individually.

If a resolution requires one action, use the following format:
RESOLVED,______.

If a resolution requires more than one action, the following format is used:
RESOLVED,________; and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, ____________.

If a resolution is preceded by a reason for submitting it, the following format is used:
WHEREAS,______; THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, ________________.

If a resolution is preceded by two or more reasons, the following format is used:
WHEREAS,______________; and WHEREAS, ____________; THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, ____________________.

Please include with your resolution:
- A title for your resolution.
- Name of committee/task force/team, or 5 voting members names and phone numbers submitting the resolution.
- The name and telephone number of a contact person in case committee members have questions or need information.
- Date the resolution was submitted.
Resolutions must be received by March 1, 2021

Please mail or email completed resolutions to:
Deaconess Community; Attn: Reference and Counsel Committee; 8765 W. Higgins Rd; Suite 405;
Chicago, IL 60631
Deaconess.community@elca.org

Resolutions received after March 1, 2021 will be reviewed by the reference and counsel committee, which will weigh the reasons given for the missed deadline. Assembly consideration may be proposed by a motion to suspend the rules of procedure for the purpose of considering the late resolution.
Moving out of our September 2019 Assembly, where we gave thanks for our inextricable connection and opportunities to respond with the Spirit to live into our vision and mission, we stepped into the chaos of the COVID 19 pandemic, escalating political divisions, and faced privilege and systemic injustices that impact the flourishing of God’s creation. With the world, we have lived into the pandemic restrictions, had our hearts broken open to horrific violence and natural disasters, and worked to breathe out the weariness and laments that grew through the year. AND as God’s beloved, we breathed in Christ’s hope and embraced opportunities that called us to work for justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God.

As pandemic restrictions both hinder our physical connections and demonstrate our love of neighbor, I give thanks for how you have grown our connections, as we continue to celebrate what more we can do together as we are sustained by community and work for justice and flourishing of all God’s creation.

Already familiar with the Zoom platform, our Community gathered weekly in the first months of the COVID restrictions for prayer and conversation, met informally to share COVID best practices, brought our questions, concerns and hopes in navigating the cultural discord for discussion, held a Gathering in November, (since it was decided we could not physically meet for our Assembly), and made the decision to hold all our meetings electronically.

Acting on our feelings of isolation, despair and hope, we drew on the best of community and faithfully grew our intentional connections with one another. We do this well through informally, through our one-to-one matchings, regionally, Trivia Nights, continuing conversations begun at the November Gathering, or through emails, cards, and Happy Birthday singing. There is a joy that weaves through our Community as we learn one another’s stories and celebrate our inextricable connection. It is a gift to be sustained by Community.

Daily, I see, hear and experience the gifts of our Community and the beauty of our shared love and deep care and respect for one another. Your prayers sustain and provide strength, your words encourage and motivate, your hearts are broken open to grief, despair and joys, and your financial gifts provide for our sister’s daily and emergency needs. It is a gift to be sustained by Community and dwell in kindness.

The breadth of what we mean by “sustained by Community” needs to be more fully considered. I am looking forward to this happening as a newly formed working group, Sustained by Community, brings ideas and wonderings to the Community as a whole. In this last year, I experienced the beauty of our love and support of one another as my responsibilities drew me into the physical aspects of our care for our sisters over many months. With friends, family, bishops and new partners, I was able to help physically move sisters into life-giving, safe homes. Transitions can be difficult and in the first days and months of COVID they are very difficult. Thank you for your prayers for our sisters. A special thanks to the local sisters, 4th Monday Evening Prayers and Executive Committee who faithfully walked with the sisters and me through these transitions, and to David Swartling who recommended an attorney for our Community.

In the midst of the laments in these past months, we have also had beautiful moments of hope and celebration break into our days. As a Community, since our last Assembly, we have celebrated with Deacon Megan McClintong, Sr. Ann Shultz and Sr. Le Brandes on their ordinations to Word and Service and Pr. Becky Swanson’s ordination to Word and Sacrament! And many of us joined in Sr. Annette Janka and her
congregation for worship when she was installed. Sr. Annette’s ministry received a grant through our New Ministry Initiatives for Deaconesses and so, it was especially fun to have many of us sharing in worship and celebration. To learn more about this grant, which is available to ordained Sisters, connect with me or one of several sisters who have received a grant through the fund: Sr. Clare Josef-Maier, Sr. Michelle Walka, Sr. Shana Williams, and Sr. Sally Burk.

In 2020, we also entered into our Mission Grant partnerships differently. In the early days of COVID 19, the market’s stability was unknown and so we determined that we should distribute our grants over the course of the whole summer. (A simple pause to shout out my thanks to Boston Common Asset Management for their shared knowledge and time as we (Exec, F&A, staff) met a number of times to discuss the market and strategies.) This decision was made early in the granting process and so, recipients were aware of the change (usually grants are distributed the first week of June.) Moving through the year, I worked to pour kindness over our grant partners as most of them were on the front lines in care and resourcing God’s people. In the pandemic restrictions, some of our partners felt the weight of becoming the only resourcing agency in their community. Through their mission grant relators, we worked to communicate our grant recipients’ needs, prayers and thanksgivings with the Community. A special thank you to the Mission Support Committee, outgoing chair, Deacon Nina Joygaard, and the mission grant relators for your partnership, care and passions that allow us to faithfully walk with our grant partners. It is beautiful to see what opportunities have come out of our grant relationships as we seek engagement with the recipient beyond our financial contribution. It is a gift to draw on our abundance and see what more we can do together.

Focusing on what more we can do together, called us to imagine opportunities in the midst of laments. We did this through our November Gathering – a time when we moved from lament to hope. Our DOTAC partners began monthly prayer conversations, and a DOTAC Racial Justice Conversation Group grew out of our shared prayer. We also drew from our underspent 2020 budget to provide Gifts of Abundance to our partners and mission partners. (Please see the Board of Directors Secretary’s Report for the specific action.) While our hearts were heavy because we could not meet physically for our Assembly, it is a gift to celebrate the opportunities our partners could provide with our humble gift.

Humbly walking into our partnership with Poor People’s Campaign a National Call for a Moral Revival (PPC), we encountered a radical welcome and daily call to engage. The list of PPC demands and interlocking injustices that threaten life has been an overwhelming and profound experience as the fusion movement came around us and helped us engage. Our PPC Working Group has sought to bring focused information, educational and engagement opportunities to the Community as we move FORWARD TOGETHER, NOT ONE STEP BACK. Thank you team! There is space at this table for anyone interested in joining – give me a call or send an email, so we can welcome you in the work as we seek justice and walk humbly in our learning and boldly in our actions.

The Prophetic Counsel (the PPC group we engage) also works to focus opportunities for engagement in the fusion movement. In December 2019, Katie Thiesen and I attended an interfaith blessing experience on the sacred Oak Flats land in AZ. We shared in meals, sat with Elder Wendler Nosie Sr. to learn the story of the sacred land, and shared in mutual blessings and prayers as the Apache Stronghold waited on the court’s
Standing in solidarity with our siblings we sought justice with an unceasing stream of letters and phone calls demanding the preservation of the sacred site. Now, in the last week, we shout out NO, as the courts have ruled in favor of the mining company. Lord have mercy.

Joining the fusion movement of the PPC also brought us together with 248 other mobilizing partners on June 20, 2020 for the Mass Poor People’s Assembly and Moral March on Washington: A Digital Justice Gathering. Our voices joined over two million people and added to the 300,000 letters sent to elected officials. A special thank you to each of you who supplied a letter for “EVERYBODY’S Got a Right to Live” and continue to work toward the 14 Policy Priorities to Heal the Nation. The life-draining unjust discrepancies are calling us Forward together – not one step back.

Since our last Assembly, we have also used our financial resources as we acted to participate in the Boston Common Asset Management Workplace Equality: A Roadmap for Comprehensive Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. And as we engage with corporations in workplace equality, our committees, board and members are looking around our own tables and asking what voices are absent in our own Community. I give thanks for our Boston Common partners, especially Andrew Thompson, our Nominating Committee and my faithful Sisters who are holding me/our Community accountable as we seek to walk our talk.

As our board faithfully examines our structure, I give thanks for the structure, policies and procedures that do hold us accountable to one another and invite evaluation of our documents in light of our vision and mission. While my deep dive into our policies and procedures in these last months, and while serving as the directing deaconess, has been administrative in nature, I am mindful that decisions and actions made by committees, the board, staff and Community impact us individually and corporately. With this, I share my thanks to our board and committees who have held me accountable and worked out of their own responsibility to our Community – a special thanks to our Committee on Finance and Audit for their faithful work as our shared administrative work grew in the last months; to the Committee on Vocation and Education as they took a deep dive with Sr. Sylvia and I into the policies and procedures that inform their work; to the Nominating Committee as they continue to create workable protocols; and to the Mission Support Committee who hold our vision and mission in one hand and the needs of our grant partners in their hearts. Thank you.

And a THANK YOU to the staff team that never lets go of our vision and mission. Thank you for your energy, deep respect and care of Community, moving with the changes and restrictions of the pandemic, laughter, Bible study, commitment to your call, and wondering with the Spirit.

Thank you, dear Community for your prayers, blessings, encouragement, challenges and holy conversations. It is a gift to be Community as together we do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God.
Preparing this report in February, I have now completed four very full months working once again for the Deaconess Community and its candidates as the part-time Interim Director of Vocation and Education (DoVE). Some parts of the job have changed since my earlier call from 2009-2013. The dual candidacy track, when the DoVE juggled candidacy deadlines and requirements for both our Committee of Vocation and Education (CoVE) and synod requirements, ended this year.

Deaconess candidates are now supervised by their synod candidacy committees and are eligible to become members of our Community after ordination as ministers of Word and Service. In that sense the job is simpler and more straight forward, but documentation and correspondence are still essential parts of each workday. The pandemic has eliminated the travel component and face to face contacts, but, thanks to the Internet and electronic technology, CoVE and the staff have been able to continue to support those in formation with the Community. Reviewing my work log since September 23, 2020, I can divide my workdays into three parts: individual contacts; planning and following up after meetings; and record keeping.

We currently have eighteen candidates and five applicants; seventeen inquirers have received emails and phone conversations since October. Two of our invested sisters in the “old track” have been approved and are awaiting call. At this Assembly two candidates will become sisters through the Rite of Reception, and three will be invited into formation through the Rite of Accompaniment.

In lieu of the previous multi-day Formation Events at retreat sites, CoVE, with the help of Community members, planned an electronic Fall Formation Event on five Sunday afternoons in October and November in sessions of two hours each. Members and staff of the Community also participated in a successful 2021 J-term course offered electronically by Luther Seminary and taught by Dr Susan McArver and Pr Gary Dreier. Thirteen students from a variety of seminaries participated.

Since September CoVE has also met eight times for a total of 17 hours to plan for candidates and clarify its financial oversight and formation practices. Other aspects of the DoVE’s work included review and updating candidate documents to ensure all were complete and accurate. During this interim, Sr Noreen has shared her experience and knowledge as an invaluable source of patience and insight.

The formation process of the Deaconess Community depends upon diligent and informed staff and CoVE members who understand the process and value consistency. It is only fair to the candidates who come to us that our counsel is well-informed, accurate, and worthy of scrutiny. CoVE members are individuals with feet on the ground and a heart for service, who can attend to detail while also articulating the vision of the Community. It has been a joy to contribute to that effort and I give thanks for all of you who make that possible as you volunteer your gifts toward forming public ministers to God’s people. It does indeed take a Community to form a Sister!

Sister Sylvia Countess
Interim Director of Vocation and Education
February 5, 2021
The Deaconess Community Communications and Public Relations areas are responsible for the communications, marketing, digital media, video and public relations work of the Community. Their primary goal is to strengthen the identity and mission of the Community through multichannel communication strategies.

Since the 2019 Assembly, the Community’s Facebook following has grown to 2,011, an increase of 1,062 followers from the 949 reported in 2019. This can be attributed to increased social media networking and sharing with partners and the general membership of the ELCA.

Work on a dedicated social media strategy was completed and implemented in 2020. The Community’s social media activities speak to and address topics relevant and educational to our audience. Below are examples of 2020 analytics:

- February 3, 2021, Sister Emma Francis
  Reach = 19,267, Engagements = 2,234
- January 6, 2021, prayer
  Reach = 105,218, Engagements = 15,144
- December 28, 2020, Holy Innocents
  Reach = 53,847, Engagements = 4,110
- November 29, 2020, First Sunday in Advent
  Reach = 20,858, Engagements = 1,923
- September 9, 2020, prayer for Wildfires
  Reach 78,117, Engagements = 11,294
- May 26, 2020, prayer
  Reach 75,816, Engagements 10,079

Also noteworthy is the Community’s Good Friday videos, where throughout the day, individual Sisters shared prayers, thoughts and music in prerecorded video format. The videos were shared through social media and the Community’s website.

Great strides have been made in traffic to the website. As reported in 2019, there had been 5,667 visitors to our site. This number has increased to 84,300.

In 2021 we will concentrate on developing and implementing the following:

- Deaconess Community Brochure
- Complete redesign and update of the website
- Online media kit
- Other resources

Respectfully submitted, Jan Rizzo
This past year and a half has been a very busy time for the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors. While we await a new personnel committee that is currently being established by our Nominating Committee, the Executive Committee has spent most of its time this past year on HR issues. Our Board of Directors has been meeting not only on HR issues, but at our last meeting the board also started to consider how we as a Board work through conflict. We used a tool called “The Theology of Conflict,” which generated good conversation.

Our Board will also continue to discuss the staffing and leadership structure of the Community. We are using our current mission and vision statement to reflect upon as we look into the future and what it means for leadership. Our goal is to bring the entire Community into this discussion as we re-evaluate our current structures and how our leadership can best be equipped to help lead and facilitate ministry into the future. We continue to be grateful for the work done by Sister Sylvia Countess as our interim DoVE. Her insight and experience have been helpful as we navigate what this position will look like for the next DoVE.

The Executive Committee of the Board is currently working with CoVE to help foster a better working relationship and to help support their work as it pertains to candidates and the Community as a whole.

As Board chair, I have been working with Finance and Audit and our treasurer as we look at expenditures and budgeting for future ministries, as well as the administration of the 50th Anniversary Scholarship and the Janice Painter Memorial Scholarship Fund.

I would also like to take the time to acknowledge the work of our staff, especially during this time of Covid. I would like to thank David Swartling, our parliamentarian for our assembly, for all of his “pre-assembly” work as it pertained to electronic elections. I am also grateful for the assembly planning team and their flexibility as it pertained to creating a November gathering and a different model for this assembly.

As always, our Board values the opinions of our Community members and is open to discussion on questions that may arise. The Board is appreciative of the feedback we received from the community as we looked to plan our gathering during Covid. Our goal is to be as inclusive as possible when it comes to our assemblies and gatherings.

In God’s Service,

Sister Dottie Almoney, Chair
Board of Directors Actions – September 2019 – January 11, 2021
(Note: Not included in this list of actions are those regarding approval of Agendas and Minutes for Board meetings.)

Actions taken at November, 2019 Board Meeting:
- **BOD 19.11.2 M/S/A** to direct the Finance and Audit Committee to investigate how Thrivent Financial invests its funds, assess how accepting Thrivent Choice dollars impacts our social justice mandate, and recommend how the Deaconess Community should respond.
- **BOD 19.11.3 M/S/A** that the Leadership Team, through the Directing Deaconess, receive the signing opportunities for Social Initiatives from Boston Common, and email tem to the Deaconess Community members for permission to sign. The members will have up to 24 hours to respond; the simple majority of responses gives direction. The Leadership Team, through the Directing Deaconess, will respond to Boston Common and cc the Deaconess Community via email. Notification will be put in the next-possible Newsletter.
- **BOD 19.11.4 M/A** to approve the 2020 Operating Budget as presented [by the Finance and Audit Committee].
- **BOD 19.11.5 M/A** to approve the recommendation of the Mission Support Committee that $2,000 be granted from the 2019 New Ministry Initiatives by Deaconesses to Good Soil Campus Ministry that Sr Clare Josef-Maier is called to with Central Lutheran Church in Eugene, OR.
- **BOD 19.11.6 M/A** to approve the recommendation of the Mission Support Committee that $8,000 be granted from the 2019 New Ministry Initiatives by Deaconesses to the ministry, “Our Neighbors,” that Sr Annette Janka has been called to with Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church in Anchorage, AK; and that $2,000 be granted in 2020 [to the same recipient] from the New Ministry Initiatives by Deaconesses.
- **BOD 19.11.7 M/A** to approve the updated Nominating Committee Charter as presented [by that committee].
- **BOD 19.11.8 M/A** to approve the 2020 Board of Directors election Process as presented [by the Nominating Committee].
- **BOD 19.11.9 M/A** to approve the 2020 Election Process for the Responsibility and Reconciliation Team [as presented by the Nominating Committee].
- **BOD 19.11.10 M/A** to approve the Directing Deaconess Nomination Process for 2020 as presented [by the Nominating Committee].
- **BOD 19.11.11 M/A** to appoint the CoVE, Nominating Committee, and 2020 Assembly Planning Team members as presented by the Nominating Committee.
- **BOD 19.11.12 M/S/A** to approve the Personnel Committee Charter [as presented by the Executive Committee and revised by the Board]. The Board set a deadline of May 1, 2020 for appointment of this committee.
- **BOD 19.11.13 M/S/A** that the Board of Directors appoint a team to help facilitate th[e] endorsement and partnership [with the Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival] with an eye toward both individual and communal involvements as the Deaconess Community.

Actions taken at May, 2020 Board Meeting:
- **BOD 2020.05.02 M/S/A** to approve the updated Board of Directors Charter as presented [by the directing deaconess].
- **BOD 2020.05.03 M/S/A** to adopt the revised Statement of Welcome as presented [by the directing deaconess].
- **BOD 2020.05.04 M/S/A** to recommend that the revised language around Good Standing status be adopted by the 2020 Deaconess Assembly, and affirmed as part of the updated Deaconess Handbook.
- **BOD 2020.05.05 M/S/A** to recommend that the updated Deaconess Handbook in its entirety be approved by the 2020 Deaconess Assembly.
- **BOD 2020.05.06 M/S/A** that the board grant a positive Approval decision for Sr Karen Norton, for submission to her synod.
• BOD 2020.05.07 M/S/A to amend the revised CoVE Charter draft to delete Membership references to Leadership Team attendance at CoVE meetings, as recommended by the board.
• BOD 2020.05.08 M/S/A to approve the revised CoVE Charter as amended.
• BOD 2020.05.09 M/S/A to approve Dr Susan McArver for a second term on CoVE as presented [by the Nominating Committee].
• BOD 2020.05.10 M/S/A to approve Sr Clare Josef-Maier for a first term on CoVE as presented [by the Nominating Committee].
• BOD 2020.05.11 M/S/A to approve Sr Carol Burk to fill an unexpired term [on CoVE] as presented [by the Nominating Committee].
• BOD 2020.05.12 M/S/A to approve the Travel Policy for the Deaconess Community as revised [by Finance and Audit].
• BOD 2020.05.13 M/S/A to approve and adopt the Deaconess Community of the ELCA Whistleblower Protection Policy as presented [by Finance and Audit], and to add it to the list of governance documents that are reviewed annually by the board and committees.
• BOD 2020.05.14 M/S/A to approve creation of a new $10,000 budget line item for the Covid-19 Emergency Response Fund, funded by transfer of unspent amounts from other line items.
• BOD 2020.05.15 M/S/A to approve 2020 Mission Grants in a total amount of $178,000 as recommended [by Mission Support], including 8 renewing grants for a total of $78,500 and 13 new grants for a total of $99,500.
• BOD 2020.05.16 M/S/A to approve a $2,000 grant from the Grants and Gifts budget to be distributed to the national campaign of the Poor People’s Campaign, a National Call for Moral Revival [as recommended by Mission Support].
• BOD 2020.05.17 M/S/A to task the Nominating Committee to investigate alternative protocols for holding elections in which some voting members are not physically present, in addition, in consultation with the board, plan for leadership continuity if the Assembly is postponed or canceled and elections are not held in November.
• BOD 2020.05.18 M/S/A to task staff to reach out to all sisters and candidates regarding their comfort level in traveling to Assembly in November [2020] if the board determines that it is safe and feasible to gather in person.
• BOD 2020.05.19 M/S/A that the Board Chair will send an update to the Community regarding how the board is approaching this matter [i.e., the 2020 Deaconess Assembly], and will keep it informed with new information as it becomes available.
• BOD 2020.05.20 M/S/A that the Directing Deaconess or [Assembly] Planning Committee will contact the retreat center to a) learn if they have the tech capacity to support remote connectivity of off-site participants, and to b) inquire whether, in the event of cancellation, our deposit can be retained and applied to a future Assembly date.
• BOD 2020.05.21 M/S/A to adopt the following decision timeline:
  June 4, 2020 – A small group of board members and Leadership Team will meet via Zoom to review and assess new information, and to consider the possibility of postponement. The group will include Sr Dottie Almoney, Sr Noreen Stevens, Sr Liz Colver, Sr Aubrey Thonvold, and Sr LaDonna Olson; other board members will also be welcome to attend.
  July 7, 2020 – The full board and Leadership Team will meet via Zoom to assess updated information and reach a “go-no go” decision.
  July 15, 2020 – Assembly registration opening will be deferred until this date and will go forward subject to a “go” decision.
• BOD 2020.05.22 M/S/A to approve the Deaconess Community’s annual gift to the ELCA and ELCIC in an amount to be determined, calculated upon receipt of the 2019 financial audit.

Actions taken at July, 2020 Board Meeting:
• BOD 2020.07.02 M/S/A to cancel the 2020 Deaconess Assembly currently scheduled for November 4 – 9, 2020, and to re-schedule the event for a date in 2021; and to modify the election processes to accommodate this re-scheduling.
• BOD 2020.07.03 M/S/A to authorize the Directing Deaconess to re-schedule the 2020 Deaconess Assembly for the available dates of April 7 – 11, 2021, and confirm these dates with T Bar M.
• BOD 2020.07.04 M/S/A to amend the proposed amendment to By-Law 5.2 as proposed.
• BOD 2020.07.05 M/S/A to adopt the proposed amendment to By-Law 5.2 as amended, and to submit the amendment to the Deaconess Community for approval. [text of by-law as amended: 
Terms of newly elected directors shall begin on January 1 of the calendar year following their election, or at such other time as may be determined by the board of directors. A person selected to fill a vacancy ad interim shall begin their term upon election. Outgoing directors shall continue in office until their elected successors begin service.]
• BOD 2020.07.06 M/S/A to appoint Bishop Pat Davenport to fill Bishop Terry Brandt’s unexpired board term, and to submit her name to the Deaconess Community for a vote to affirm the appointment.

Action taken electronically on August 15, 2020 by the Deaconess Community by vote of 2/3 of members in good standing:
• DC 2020.08.01 M/S/A to approve the proposed amendment to By-Law 5.2 [as submitted by the board of directors].

Action taken at August, 2020 Board Meeting:
• BOD 2020.08.01 M/S/A to receive and acknowledge, with great sadness, Sr Liz Colver’s letter of resignation as DoVE.
• NOTE: BOD 2020.08.02 and BOD 2020.08.03 were adopted in Executive Session to address a confidential personnel matter.

Actions taken at September, 2020 Board Meetings:
• BOD 2020.09.01 M/S/A to appoint Sr Sylvia Countess to serve as interim Director of Vocation and Education, under provisions of the Interim Contract as approved by the Board, and with a term extending through December 31, 2020. Continuation of the contract beyond 2020 will be evaluated prior to the end of 2020.
• NOTE: BOD 2020.09.02 was adopted in Executive Session to address a confidential personnel matter.

Action taken electronically on October 7, 2020 by unanimous consent:
• BOD 2020.10.01 was adopted to address a confidential personnel matter.

Actions taken at October, 2020 Board Meeting:
• BOD 2020.10.04 M/S/A to continue to offer the Portico Gold+ health plan to eligible Deaconess Community employees in 2021 [as recommended by Executive Committee].
• BOD 2020.10.05 M/S/A to award $1,000 bonuses to all Deaconess Community employees in 2020, in a spirit of generosity, in recognition of their outstanding work during this challenging year [as recommended by Executive Committee].

Actions taken at November, 2020 Board Meeting:
• BOD 2020.11.02 M/S/A to authorize the Directing Deaconess to sign an Amendment of the Deaconess Community’s lease (as Tenant) with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (as Landlord) on its office space located at 8765 West Higgins Rd, Chicago, IL 60631, to extend the lease for an additional three-year term beginning November 1, 2020, at a base rent of $18,922.56 per year ($1,576.88 per month).
• BOD 2020.11.03 M/S/A that the Deaconess Community make a gift of abundance of $100,000 from the 2020 operating surplus. This amount will be allocated to the Mission Support Committee to make additional grants before the end of 2020. [Suggestions were offered regarding possible recipients.] In accordance with existing protocols for Mission Grants, recommended gifts and grants must be submitted to the board for approval prior to funding.
• BOD 2020.11.04 M/A to approve a $10,000 grant from the New Ministry Initiatives by Deaconesses to the Climax-Shelly Knight Pack Program, Climax, Minnesota (served by Sr Shana Williams); and a $10,000 grant to the OUR NEIGHBORS: Children’s Community Theatre, Music Learning Center Exploring Worship, Anchorage, Alaska (served by Sr Annette Janka) [as recommended by Mission Support Committee].
• BOD 2020.11.05 M/A to approve distribution of the remaining $8,000 from New Ministry Initiatives to HOPE (Helping Overcome Poverty Experience), a Mission Grant partner in Wytheville, Virginia ($6,000); and to Augusta Victoria Hospital in East Jerusalem ($2,000) [as recommended by Mission Support Committee].

• BOD 2020.11.06 M/S/A that, because the November, 2020 Board of Directors election has been postponed until the rescheduled Deaconess Assembly is held April 7-11, 2021, the Board members whose terms expire in December, 2020 will continue to serve through the 2021 Assembly when the Board election is held.

• BOD 2020.11.07 M/S/A that, acting on By-Law 5.2, the Board members who are elected at the April, 2021 Deaconess Assembly will begin their terms at the Board meeting following that Assembly (currently scheduled for April 30 – May 1, 2021).

Actions on Committee appointments recommended by the Nominating Committee:

• BOD 2020.11.08 M/S/A to appoint Rev Carolyn Hellerich to a second four-year term on the Finance & Audit Committee (1.1.2021 – 12.31.2024).

• BOD 2020.11.09 M/S/A to appoint Sr Mary Julia McKenzie and UCC Diakonal Minister Ted Dodd each to a first two-year term on the Nominating Committee (1.1.2021 – 12.31.2022).

• BOD 2020.11.10 M/S/A to appoint Deacon Adrainne Grey to a first four-year term on the Mission Support Committee (1.1.2021 – 12.31.2024).

• BOD 2020.11.11 M/S/A to appoint Sr Carol Burk and Sr Michelle Collins each to a first four-year term on the Committee on Vocation and Education (CoVE) (1.1.2021 – 12.31.2024).

• BOD 2020.11.12 M/S/A to appoint Nancy Farnham and Deacon Korra Ann Looschen each to a first four-year term on the new Personnel Committee (1.1.2021 – 12.31.2024).

Conclusion of Actions on Nominating Committee appointments.

• BOD 2020.11.13 M/S/A to approve a 2021 Operating Budget [as presented by F&A and amended by the board], summarized as follows:

  Income: $920,545
  Expense: 912,752
  Net Income/Surplus: $ 7,793

• BOD 2020.11.14 M/S/A to approve the Sister Janice Painter Memorial Scholarship – Description, Administration, and Implementation; and Application for the Sister Janice Painter Memorial Scholarship [as recommended by F&A].

• BOD 2020.11.15 M/S/A to approve the Charter of the Finance and Audit Committee as amended [and presented by F&A for approval].

Action taken electronically on December 4, 2020 by unanimous consent:

• BOD 2020.12.01 M/S/A to approve distribution of a $100,000 gift of abundance to the following organizations, agencies, and partners of the Deaconess Community of the ELCA [as recommended by the Mission Support Committee]:

  $10,000 Caribbean Synod, ELCA
  $9,600 ELCA
  $9,600 ELCIC
  $4,000 To each of the following partners:
    Poor People’s Campaign, a National Call to Moral Revival
    Reconciling Works
    DOTAC – Scholarships
    Kaiserswerth General Conference
    Tumubushire Community, Tanzania

  $7,800 Earth Ministry, Seattle, WA
  $5,000 Maine Poor People’s Campaign, Maine
  $8,000 Oregon Fellowship, Oregon Synod, ELCA
  $2,500 To each of the following: Beloved Community Incubators, Washington DC

  Gathering Table, Kansas City, MO
HOPE, Wytheville, VA
Lower Lights Recovery, Columbus, OH
Café Esperanza, Reading, PA
Faith on Foot, Rutland, VT
Family Promise of Tulsa, Tulsa, OK
Joy Reigns Recovery Rental Assistance, Maryland
Kindergarten Suncani most Livno, Mostar
The Well, Philadelphia, PA
WE CARE Team, Carlisle, PA
West View Hub, Berkeley Hills, Pittsburgh, PA

Action taken electronically on December 15, 2020 by unanimous consent:
• **BOD 2020.12.02 M/S/A** to approve the recommendation by COVE for Approval for Sr. Jessica Zimmerle, which finishes her candidacy requirements for the Deaconess Community of the ELCA.

Action taken electronically on December 30, 2020 by unanimous consent:
• **BOD 2020.12.03 M/S/A** to hold the 2021 Deaconess Assembly, scheduled for April 7-11, 2021, virtually; and to promptly notify the Assembly Planning Committee of this decision.

Actions taken electronically on January 11, 2021 by unanimous consent:
• **BOD 2021.01.01 M/S/A** to grant Deacon Megan McClinton a positive approval decision for reception as a member of the Deaconess Community of the ELCA.
• **BOD 2021.01.02 M/S/A** to grant Deacon Rachel Bailey a positive approval decision for reception as a member of the Deaconess Community of the ELCA.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara A. Swartling
Board Secretary
January 2, 2021
Supplemental info added February 23, 2021
The Finance & Audit Committee (F&A) met four times during 2019 – 2020. The following items have been highlighted regarding F&A’s meetings:

- **Discussion of the 2021 Operating Budget:** During the past year, our accountant, Yvette Newberry White’s working hours were discussed. While her working hours are budgeted for 24 hours/week, she has been working more hours (and has been paid for them) than the budgeted 24 hours/week. The 2021 budget now calculates Yvette’s salary based on a 30 hours per week but retaining her 24 hours/week. Any hours in excess to the 24 hours/week will be negotiated with the Directing Deaconess, as needed. The increase budgeted hours more accurately reflect the added work responsibilities she has assumed, and may need to continue to assume, during the pandemic.

- **Budgeted salary costs are down in 2021 due to the Interim DoVE position budgeted as part time for the full year.** In addition, most travel costs are significantly reduced due to most meetings/events are expected to be remote. If offered, J-Term would be remote. However, travel has been budgeted for the Deaconess Assembly, and potentially for one face to face meeting for the Board of Directors, Finance & Audit Committee, CoVE, Mission Support and one live Formation Event.

- **It was learned that CoVE’s administration of the 50th Anniversary Fund had not followed the Handbook policy.** F&A affirmed the CoVE is expected to follow the existing guidelines and protocols for the 50th Anniversary and other financial assistance programs, as outlined in the Deaconess Handbook, until any proposed changes have been properly processed and brought to the Deaconess Assembly for action.

- **A scholarship gift was given to the Deaconess Community, in November 2019, from the Women’s Power Hour of Calvary Lutheran Church, West Chester, Pennsylvania in memory of Sister Janice Painter.** Sister Janice served as a parish deaconess in this congregation for many years. The gift was given to the DoVE for appropriate processing, according to the Community’s Gifting Policy, with the F&A committee. This did not occur. In fact, neither F&A or the Treasurer were aware of this gift until July, 2020, after learning of distributions from this scholarship gift had been approved by the DoVE without implementing a policy/protocol or before equitable application process and disbursement limits of the funds were established. As a result, F&A drafted two governance documents, in collaboration with CoVE, for the administration of the Sister Janice Painter Memorial Scholarship: *Sister Janice Painter Memorial Scholarship – Description, Administration, and Implementation; and Application for the Sister Janice Painter Memorial Scholarship.*

- **F&A authorized an internal audit of CoVE’s administration of financial assistance spending over the last 2 ½ years to determine how consistently applicable policies were followed.** This audit would include the 50th Anniversary Scholarship, Entrance Scholarship, and Emergency Assistance to Candidates.

Action items presented for the Board of Directors approval:

- **FA 2020.09.05 M/S/A:** To approve the Finance and Audit Committee Charter
- **FA 2020.10.01 M/S/A:** To adopt the draft Description, Administration and Implementation (guidelines) and Application for the Sister Janice Painter Memorial Scholarship.
- **FA 2020.10.03 M/S/A:** To incorporate in the recommended 2021 budget the following:
  - A 2% salary increase for all employees
  - To retain Yvette Newberry White’s 2021 budgeted salary calculated at 30 hours/week
  - To continue in 2021 Portico Benefits costs, including continuation of Gold+ health plan premiums for participating employees
F&A also sent to the Board of Directors the following:

- **FA 2020.10.04 M/S/A:** To revise earlier motion **FA 2020.09.06** and recommend to the Board of Directors a 2021 operating budget as follows:
  - Total income: $920,545
  - Total expense: $901,902
  - Net income/surplus: $18,643

F&A will also further review and discuss at their March 2021 meeting the tabled item from the 2019 Assembly:

- It was recommended that the Deaconess Community of the ELCA consider the creation of a Fund (at this point, it has no name) to be implemented by the Board of Directors beginning in the 2020 budget year.

  **DA19.09.16 Table the recommendation until 2020 Assembly. M/S/C**

Respectfully submitted:

Sister Melinda Lando, Chair

Committee members: Sister LaDonna Olson (Treasurer), Rev. Jim Wilson, Rev. Carolyn Hellerich, Barbara Swartling (Board Liaison), Yvette Newberry White (Accountant)
Report to the 2021 Assembly
Committee on Mission Support

Reporting on the work and actions of the committee from October 2019-December 2020
Deaconess Community of the ELCA Assembly – April 7-10, 2021

~ Meeting via zoom for all meeting in 2020, the committee met on **January 23, 2020** to consider 24 Letters of Intent submitted for consideration in the 2020 grant cycle. The committee then met **April 16-17** to consider full grant proposals, eligibility, proposed budget for 2021, review mission grant relator reports, consider grant evaluation timeline, review/update forms and documents and discussed the distribution of the grants in the midst of a volatile market due to the pandemic. In partnership with Finance and Audit, the Board, and in close communication with grant partners/inquirers it was agreed the grants would be distributed between June and August 2020.

~ At the **April 16-17** meeting the committee approved grants in the amount of $178,000. This included eight renewing grants = $78,500; thirteen new grants = $99,500. Acting on a partner grant request, the committee also brought forward one – one year partner grant = $2,000. The total was $180,000. These recommendations were then taken to the Board of Directors for action. These included:

**Renewing Grants**
- Beloved Community Incubators, Maryland, Year 2 of 2 – **Approved $6,000**
- Creative Living Community of Connecticut, Year 2 of 3 – **Approved $15,000**
- Earth Ministry, Washington State, Year 2 of 3 – **Approved $1,200**
- Foundation for Hope & Health in Haiti, New York, Year 3 of 3 – **Approved $21,800**
- Gathering Table, MO, Year 3 of 3 – **Approved $7,500**
- Heart River Lutheran Church, ND, Year 3 of 3 – **Approved $5,000**
- Lower Lights Recovery, Columbus, OH, Year 2 of 3 – **Approved $20,000**
- Park Players Summer Ministry, Rockford, IL Year 2 of 3 – **Approved $2,000**

**New Grant Requests**
- Cafe Esperanza, Hope Lutheran Church, Reading, PA - **Approved $10,000**
- Faith on Foot, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Rutland, VT – **Approved $10,300**
- Family Promise of Tulsa County, Tulsa, OK – **Approved $5,000**
- Joy Reigns Recovery Rental Assistance, Maryland – **Approved $6,000**
- Kindergarten Suncani most Livno, Mostar, Bosnia Herzegovina – **Approved $12,000**
- Maine Poor People's Campaign, Maine – **Approved $5,000**
- Nawakwa Growing Project, Luth. Camping Corp of Central PA, Arendtsville, PA –**Approved $5,000**
- Oregon Fellowship, Together Lab, Oregon – **Approved $2,000**
- Power Shift Ministry, The Village Church, Milwaukee, WI – **Decline application**
- The Well, The Welcome Church, Philadelphia, PA – **Approved $8,000**
- Together Here, Northeastern Minnesota Synod, Duluth, MN – **Approved $5,000**
- WE CARE Team, St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, Carlisle, PA – **Approved $13,500**
- West View HUB, Berkeley Hills Lutheran Church, Pittsburgh, PA – **Approved $17,700**

**Partner Grant Request**
- Poor People’s Campaign A National Call for Moral Revival – **Approved $2,000**

~ The committee met on **June 18, 2020** to consider the allocation of unspent grant monies. One grant recipient asked to defer their grant until 2021 as the pandemic would not allow them to continue with the program. The unspent $2,000 was distributed to H.O.P.E. in Wytheville, VA. The committee also approved the 2020 Mission Grant Relators, reviewed final evaluations and received feedback from current grant recipients as they navigated the pandemic – see November 2020 Verse of the Day.
~ The committee also met on November 5, 2020 to act on 2 renewing grant proposals for the New Ministry Initiatives by Deaconesses Grants submitted by October 31, 2020. Each year, $30,000 is made available through the budget for these grants. By action of the Assembly, funds remaining in this budget line by November 1 of the calendar year are to be distributed by the Committee on Mission Support for emergency funds, additional funds to grant recipients or other missional needs.

The renewing grant proposals were approved and forwarded to the Board of Directors for action:
Climax-Shelly Knight Pack Program, Climax, Minnesota – Sr. Shana Williams

The committee then acted to recommend the distribution of the remaining $8,000 in the New Ministry Initiatives by Deaconesses budget line. These recommendations were approved and sent to the Board of Directors for action:
H.O.P.E. ($6,000) Wytheville, Virginia
Augusta Victoria Hospital ($2,000) in East Jerusalem.

The committee also received and acted on questions grant recipients had as they navigated the restrictions of the pandemic and parameters of their grant.

~ The committee met for the last time in 2020 on November 23rd sending our chair, Deacon Nina Joygaard, with abundant thanks and celebration of her shared work with the committee and to act on the Board action: BOD 2020.11.03 M/S/A: That the Deaconess Community make a gift of abundance of $100,000 from the 2020 operating surplus. This amount will be allocated to the Mission Support Committee to make additional grants before the end of 2020. The board invites their consideration of the following suggestions:
   Additional gifts to the ELCA and ELCIC
   Support to the Community’s Mission Partners
   Additional funding to Mission Grant recipients
   Student Loan forgiveness for sisters’ theological education
   Grants to ELCA/ELCIC synods with critical needs

In accordance with existing protocols for Mission Grants, recommended gifts and grants must be submitted to the board for approval prior to funding."

Using the Board’s recommendations, the committee approved the $100,000 Gift of Abundance be distributed to the following partners organizations and agencies:
$10,000 Caribbean Synod, ELCA
$9,600 ELCA
$9,600 ELCIC
$4,000 to each of the following:
  Poor People’s Campaign A National Call to Moral Revival; ReconcilingWorks; DOTAC – Scholarships
  Kaiserswerth General Conference; Tumubushire Community, Tanzania
$7,800 Earth Ministry, Seattle, WA
$5,000 Maine Poor People’s Campaign
$8,000 Oregon Fellowship, Oregon Synod
$2,500 to each of the following:
  Beloved Community Incubators, Washington DC; Gathering Table, Kansas City, MO
  HOPE, Wytheville, VA; Lower Lights Recovery, Columbus, OH
  Café Esperanza, Reading, PA; Faith on Foot, Rutland, VT
  Family Promise of Tulsa, Tulsa, OK; Joy Reigns Recovery Rental Asst., Maryland

31
Kindergarten Suncani most Livno; The Well, Philadelphia, PA; WE CARE Team, Carlisle, PA
West View Hub, Berkeley Hills, Pittsburgh, PA

Respectfully submitted,
The Mission Support Committee, January 15, 2021

Sr. Sylvia Countess
Sr. Davia Evans
Sr. Karie Hamilton
Deacon Nina Joygaard (chair through 12/21/2020)
Pr. Steve Ridenhour
Lisa Simer
Sr. Noreen Stevens, staff liaison
Report to the 2021 Assembly
Committee on Vocation and Education – Dr. Susan McArver

The world has changed substantially since the last annual report of CoVE to the Assembly, which was submitted in July 2019. As has been true for the entire world, the pandemic has affected the work of this Committee in every way. Little did we know when we gathered in November of 2019 that it would be our last in-person meeting for well over a year – and counting. Meetings, formation events, and even J-term have all been forced to find new homes online.

CoVE, however, is an incredibly creative and hard-working committee. Membership on the Committee is a commitment. In “normal” times, CoVE meets and holds lengthy, multi-day in-person meetings in order to plan for meetings, events and conversations that elevate, shape and form candidates for the Community. In between those in-person meetings, much work went on by email and through conference call.

In these not-so-normal times, it has met instead almost monthly by Zoom, as it has been forced to work through staff and committee transitions at the same time it was trying to consider what “virtual formation” could look like in the midst of a pandemic. It is one thing to hold a “meeting” on Zoom. It is quite another to address the needs and questions of inquirers and candidates who are just beginning the process of introduction to and engagement with the Deaconess Community. CoVE wondered: what could “community” even look like for these newcomers, when it had to be shaped at such distances? Would “Zoom Formation” even work?

Perhaps to our surprise – and against all odds - CoVE has found over the course of these many months that community engagement and formation can indeed take place in the many and various ways we have all had to create in 2020.

FORMATION EVENTS

In non-pandemic years, CoVE normally schedules Formation Events to bring together in a retreat setting both candidates who are just beginning their candidacy and those who are near the end of that process. These events feature times of education, spiritual practice, theological reflection, worship, community living, small group time, and discernment. At the conclusion of our last in-person Formation Event in Fall 2019 at Spirit in the Desert Retreat Center in Carefree, Arizona, CoVE invited Alex Benson, Charissa Carroll, Phyllis Cox, Leannne Elliott and JJ Godwin to the Rite of Accompaniment, which was held at the Formation Event.

By the summer of 2020, it was clear that CoVE would not be able to hold its scheduled fall 2020 Formation Event in person. The Committee worked diligently to provide a framework for an online version of what had previously taken place only in a retreat setting, led by the work of Sister Michelle Collins. The Fall 2020 Formation Event was held between October 15 and November 15, 2020 as five, two-hour online Zoom sessions. These gatherings involved book reading, Bible study, small group time in Zoom breakout rooms, and large group reflection time.

After the five-week course and individual discernment conversations via Zoom with members of CoVE, Colleen Bernu, Kimberly Dunbar and Rebecca Kolowé, who all participated in their first Formation Event, were invited to participate in the Rite of Accompaniment. This welcome will take place at the 2021 Deaconess Assembly.

For Rachel Bailey and Megan McClinton, the online gathering served as their second Formation Event, and after discernment conversations, CoVE recommended them to the Board for a positive approval decision for reception as members of the Deaconess Community. The Rite of Reception will also be held at the Deaconess Assembly in April 2021.
In addition to the candidates attending the Formation event, CoVE was delighted to meet by Zoom with Sr. Karen Norton (April 2020), Sr. Kriss Buss (November 2020) and Sr. Jessica Zimmerle (December 2020). After these meetings, CoVE unanimously recommended that the Board grant positive approval decisions to all three. Sister Jessica is officially the last candidate to enter the Community under the “old process”.

Thanks to the work of our DoVEs and others, we have several additional candidates and inquirers moving through the process – the future is indeed bright.

**JANUARY TERM COURSE**

The 2020 J-term course, “Diaconal Ministry: History, Formation and Spirituality” was held January 4-11, 2020, at Mount Olivet Retreat and Conference Center in Farmington, MN. Fourteen students participated, including four inquirers or candidates. Sister Michelle Walka and Sister Davia served as sisters-in-residence. All of us in CoVE were saddened that this J-term marked the last teaching session of Rev. Dr. Dirk Lange’s as co-professor for a course he has taught for well over a decade. While CoVE rejoiced in his new call to the Lutheran World Federation in Geneva, we also knew that we would miss his wise counsel and pastoral support.

The pandemic necessitated that the 2021 J-term become a new and creative experiment. For the first time, J-term was held entirely online through both synchronous Zoom sessions and asynchronous online work before, during, and after the term. Fourteen students participated, plus six additional guests, including Sr. Sylvia, Sr. Carol, and Sr. Noreen as “Zoom Sisters-in-Residence”.

We were glad to welcome the Rev. Gary Dreier, Founder and past Director of the Spiritual Direction Certification Program of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, as our new professor leading the spiritual formation component. He brought considerable pastoral skill to his sessions on spiritual formation and was well-received by the students.

The pandemic has brought so many difficulties to just about every facet of life over the last year, it is worth noting that it also brought forth one unexpected gift to J-term. Because the entire class was meeting by Zoom, rather than at a retreat center, we were able to invite several sisters from the Community to come “share a meal and a story” over Zoom for three out of the five days of our synchronous in-person meetings. Not only did we learn how to do “art by Zoom” from Sr. Michelle Walka, students were also able to hear from Sr. Sally, Sr. Melinda and Sr. Anne about “life in the Motherhouse” on the day the class studied Kaiserswerth and the 19th century deaconess movement, as well as hear stories of call and discernment from Sr. Karie and Sr. Annette Janka. It was a highlight of the week for all participants.

**CONTINUING EDUCATION**

All sisters are encouraged to apply for continuing education scholarships from the Fiftieth Anniversary Fund to support a wide range of possible educational experiences: workshops, travel related to diaconal development, spiritual direction, vocational training, and more. CoVE is pleased to support the continuing education of the Community through these grants.

**TRANSITIONS**

Sr. Liz Colver’s resignation as DoVE in August 2020 was met with deep regret by the Committee. Her passion for our candidates and the formation process was inspiring, and she worked diligently to bring in and nurture a new and exciting generation of sisters for the Deaconess Community. CoVE will forever be grateful for her work and dedication.

CoVE is also thankful to both Sr. Sylvia Countess, who stepped into the position of interim DoVE with good humor and organizational skills, and to Sr. Noreen Stevens for her gracious and knowledgeable oversight.
Their assistance proved invaluable at a time when CoVE was trying to determine a way forward through the pandemic with already-scheduled Formation Events and the J-term course.

Committee membership has also experienced an unusual amount of turnover during this period. Current membership of the committee as of January 2021 includes: Sister Carol Burk, Sr. Michelle Collins, Sr. Clare Josef-Maier, and Dr. Susan McArver. Other members who served between July 2019 and January 2021 included: Sr. Phyllis Enck, Pr. Linda Friesen, Sr. Joy Hovis, Dr. Bjorn Peterson, and Sr. Val Sander, all of whom had to step aside for various medical and other reasons. We are greatly appreciative of the contributions all of them have made to the work of CoVE. We could not have gotten through this year without any of them.

THE YEAR AHEAD
No one knows what 2021 will bring. But if 2020 has proven anything, it is that in the coming year, CoVE will continue to work with candidates to help them discern their call to ministry and to offer guidance in that discernment. We do not know when we will be able to meet again in person, but we know that the work will continue. We invite your prayers and your suggestions as we continue along that path.

Respectfully submitted:

Dr. Susan Wilds McArver
Chair
Report to the 2021 Assembly  
Responsibility and Reconciliation Team

The R & R Team gratefully welcomed Sr Ramona Daily in 2019 to the team and began meeting regularly. We focused on the Covenant to consider renewing the language while preserving the message. Thoughts about a liturgical style Covenant were gathered from the Community and the process continues. In its work, the team has begun to review the Protocol and consider potential additions of information and direction to clarify and strengthen its guidance. The R & R team remains committed to encourage healthy Community relationships that we may grow in deepening our love for each other.

The R & R team also worked with the Leadership Team on developing a process for the community regarding membership as charged by the following motion from our 2019 Assembly:

**DA19.09.24 Adopt the working group recommendation M/S/C**

*It was moved that a working group consisting of the Leadership Team and the R & R Team create and implement a process to engage the Community in discussion and decision-making regarding membership in the Deaconess Community and for this to be brought back to the Community at the 2020 Assembly.*

We discerned a process to move forward and to implement this. The following motion will be brought to the 2021 Assembly with time allotted for discussion.

Motion to be presented at the 2021 Assembly:

*That a working group regarding membership in the Deaconess Community be appointed by the BOD with recommendations from R&R and Leadership and that a report be brought to the 2022 Assembly with actions as appropriate.*

Prior to the 2021 Assembly, please prepare for our discussion by reading the following: Statement of Welcome, Bylaws 3.2 and 4.1, Section III A of the Handbook, Our Mission, Vision and Guiding Principles. These items are found on the pages following this report.

If interested or have questions, contact Sr Annette Langdon atlangdon@me.com or 651-470-3238

Submitted by
Sr Annette Langdon, Sr Clare Josef-Maier and Sr Ramona Daily
From the R&R Team - Membership in the Deaconess Community of the ELCA, also serving in the ELCIC as defined in our governing documents and statements:

I. Statement of Welcome – approved 2016 Assembly

Our Commitment to Oneness in Christ:

The Deaconess Community of the ELCA, compelled by the love of Christ and sustained by community, recognizes and affirms the beauty of the diversity of God’s image reflected in humanity. We seek to be a community that is diverse in age and body type, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, ethnicity and race, sexual orientation and gender expression, ministerial passions, and our creative ideas about how to change the world.

“In the richness of diversity, we are unified in our commitment to proclaim the gospel and to lives of mercy and servant leadership. Our world can be one of alienation and brokenness. Christ calls us to be agents of healing and reconciliation, making us one. We better proclaim the Gospel and better serve our world when we are whole; we, therefore, are becoming a community that lifts up safety and celebration of a sisterhood for cis- and trans- womxn together. We commit ourselves to wholly serve all people, without exceptions.

“The Deaconess Community of the ELCA commits to consistently choose to become a safe space for our staff, board, all sisters and candidates who share this call, and all whom we serve.”

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for siblings to dwell together in unity!
Psalm 133:1

II. Bylaws – approved August 2020

3.2 The Deaconess Community consists of womxn who have been approved by the Deaconess Community and called to the roster of Ministers of Word and Service in the ELCA or the Diaconal Ministers Roster in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, referred to herein as the “ELCIC,” together with those of its candidates who have met preparatory standards and publicly participated in a service of mutual affirmation known as Investiture or the Rite of Reception. Members are committed to prophetic diakonia and are strengthened for service through the Deaconess Community. If called ministry is not feasible, a deaconess may maintain membership as prescribed in the Deaconess Community Handbook. Our bylaws direct us to the Handbook for a definition of Good Standing.

4.1 The Deaconess Assembly is the gathering of the members of the Deaconess Community. Membership in good standing shall be defined in the Deaconess Community Handbook. Voice and vote in sessions of the Deaconess Assembly shall be limited to those who are members in good standing. All members are expected to attend sessions of the Deaconess Assembly.

III. Handbook – approved 2014

A. Good Standing - adopted by the 2019 Assembly:
Both candidates and rostered deaconesses shall be considered in good standing in the Deaconess Community of the ELCA by committing to:

1. Attending the annual Deaconess Assembly;
2. Living in accord with the Community Covenant;
3. Mutual accountability of our life together and our public call to the prophetic ministry of diakonia; 
4. Intentional participation in diaconal leadership in their neighborhood, synod, region and/or church-
wide/national church as opportunities present themselves; and 
5. Making a thoughtful, intentional contribution of time and/or talent and finances to the Deaconess 
Community.

Good standing is also a condition of voting privileges and for receipt of financial assistance for community 
events, meetings and continuing education.
If a sister’s standing is in question, it is expected that the directing deaconess will engage in discerning 
conversations with the sister and others as appropriate, as well as provide steps for restoration of good standing.

IV. Mission, Vision, Guiding Principles – approved 2019 Assembly

Our Mission
For the sake of the Gospel and all of God’s creation, 
the Deaconess Community of the ELCA fosters intentional community, 
diaconal leadership development, and dynamic partnerships 
within the church and the world.
Our Vision
Compelled by the love of Christ and sustained by community, the Deaconess Community of the ELCA works for 
justice and flourishing for all of God’s creation.
Guiding Principles
We are rooted in the living Word and love of God 
We are emboldened by our history 
We are accountable to intentional community 
We practice courageous leadership 
We practice radical welcome 
We practice cultivating partnerships
In December of 2019 the Nominating Committee finalized election processes for the scheduled 2020 Assembly. All nominations for the R&R Team election, Board of Director Elections, and the Directing Deaconess Elections were received by July 1, 2020 and ballots were submitted and approved by the Board of Directors at a special July meeting. This Board of Directors Meeting also voted to push the November 2020 Assembly to April 2021. The Nominating Committee worked alongside the Board of Directors, the Board’s Parliamentarian, and the office staff to make appropriate changes to all election processes in regards to this change. This also included a special election for a vacated position on the Board of Directors. On September 11 Bishop Patricia Davenport was elected to fulfill the term vacated by Bishop Emeritus Terry Brandt ending in May of 2021.

Throughout the course of the past year and a half your Nominating Committee has also been assisting the Board of Directors in establishing a Personnel Committee. We are continuing to seek nominations to continue building this committee. Your Nominating Committee also assisted in bringing new members to the Committee on Vocation and Education and Mission Support. If you know of someone who would be an asset to any of our standing committees please, know that nominations are both accepted and welcome at any time for the future needs of our committees.

Finally, this committee is bringing forward the slate of nominees for our 2021 Assembly R&R Team election, our Board of Directors Elections, and our Directing Deaconess Election. We ask that you read through the biography forms provided in our Pre-Assembly Packet and prayerfully consider your votes as we look forward to electing our leaders this April.

Respectfully Submitted by,
The Deaconess Community’s Nominating Committee
Susan Berg
Diaconal Minister Ted Dodd
Sister Tashina Good, Committee Chair
Sister Jennie Myers
Sister Mary Julia McKenzie
Aubrey Thonvold, Board Liaison
Non-deaconess position

5.1 The Board of Directors shall be elected by the Deaconess Assembly and shall consist of five deaconesses and four other persons from the membership of the ELCA or the ELCIC. A majority of the directors shall be members of the ELCA. Biographical information, including the gifts and skills each prospective director offers to the board, shall be given to the Assembly so that the Assembly may make an informed vote. The nomination slate presented by the Nominating Committee may consist of two candidates for each deaconess position and a single candidate for each non-deaconess position. The Presiding Bishops of the ELCA and ELCIC, or the bishop’s designee and the Leadership Team shall have seat and voice on the Board of Directors.

Bylaws – approved 8.2020

The Nominating Committee will present the following slate for two open non-deaconess positions on the Board of Directors. Voting members will elect two. Bio Forms will be sent in early March.

The Rev. Patricia Davenport

The Rev. Patrick Shebeck
Deaconess position

5.1 The Board of Directors shall be elected by the Deaconess Assembly and shall consist of five deaconesses and four other persons from the membership of the ELCA or the ELCIC. A majority of the directors shall be members of the ELCA. Biographical information, including the gifts and skills each prospective director offers to the board, shall be given to the Assembly so that the Assembly may make an informed vote. The nomination slate presented by the Nominating Committee may consist of two candidates for each deaconess position and a single candidate for each non-deaconess position. The Presiding Bishops of the ELCA and ELCIC, or the bishop’s designee and the Leadership Team shall have seat and voice on the Board of Directors.

Bylaws – approved 8.2020

The Nominating Committee will present the following slate for three open deaconess positions on the Board of Directors. Voting members will elect three. Bio Forms will be sent in early March.

Sister Dottie Almoney

Sister Nora Frost

Sister Sally Burk

Sister Rebecca Mastalerz
Elections – Responsibility and Reconciliation Team (R&R Team)

The Nominating Committee will present the following slate for one open position on the R&R Team. Voting members will elect one. Bio Forms will be sent in early March.

Sister Annette Langdon

Sister Jane Roper
8.1 The Deaconess Assembly shall elect a Directing Deaconess for a term of four years, renewable by election for one additional term. The term of office shall ordinarily begin ninety (90) days following election, or at such other time as may be determined by the Board of Directors. The Directing Deaconess shall be chosen from among those who are members in good standing of the Deaconess Community who was called to the Roster of the Ministry of Word and Service in the ELCA or the Diaconal Ministers Roster in the ELCIC. The process for electing the Directing Deaconess shall be approved by the Board of Directors pursuant to paragraph 7.7 of these bylaws no less than three months before the Deaconess Assembly at which a Directing Deaconess will be elected, all members in good standing shall be provided notice regarding the election.

The Nominating Committee will present the following slate for the Directing Deaconess.

Please review the Pre-Disclosure Statement following this page and Sr. Noreen’s Roster Minister Profile – found in the additional documents.

Sister Noreen Stevens
PRE-ELECTION DISCLOSURE
For Election of Directing Deaconess, 2021

Personal Information:

Name: Sister Noreen Stevens       Date of Baptism: April 1962

Date of Ordination: September 20, 1987

Address: 7245 Clear Ridge, Centerville, Minnesota 55038

Preferred Phone Number: 651.815.1145.  Preferred Email Address: sr.noreenhenry@gmail.com

Present Call/Employment: Deaconess Community of the ELCA, also serving in the ELCIC/directing deaconess

To assist the Deaconess Community in discerning its choice of a sister to serve as its next Directing Deaconess, please respond to the following questions:

1. Are you prepared to accept election by the Deaconess Community to serve based on the needs of the Community, which may require extensive travel?

   Yes, with the help of God, Christ’s love and the Spirit’s sustaining and motivating daily presence.

2. If there are situations in your personal life, marriage, or family that could adversely interfere with your ability to serve as Directing Deaconess, what are they and how would you address each?

   My family has been faithfully walking with me in the last four years, as I serve as directing deaconess, and I trust they will continue to support and ground me in my daily response to God’s call.

3. Is there additional information that should be considered in evaluating your readiness, fitness and health to serve as Directing Deaconess, that you believe that the Deaconess Community of the ELCA should know?

   My day begins in the beauty of the dark morning sky. Here, I take time to dwell in my Center, breathe in the silence, dwell in the Word, walk and pray. I work to enter each day with intentionality and service – and with this, I know I need to be centered and tending to my body, mind and soul as I respond to God’s daily call.
   
   And so, I work at this – giving thanks for support and holy nudges to do it well!

Note: A background check shall be required and completed for persons nominated as directing deaconess prior to the election.

Signature: ________________________________    Date: January 4, 2021
DIAKONIA of the Americas and the Caribbean

DOTAC has initiated several new projects during the period since your last Assembly. We are excited to be fostering connections internationally and ecumenically between and amongst our diaconal siblings.

In the area of Social Justice:

- A Social Justice Committee has been formed with the mandate to “create, coordinate and maintain a social justice presence for DOTAC.” Sister Noreen is serving on this new group.
- In response to Black Lives Matter and calls for Indigenous-Settler reconciliation a series of Racial Justice Zoom sessions have attracted 30-40 participants for challenging and life-giving learning and discussion.
- We continue to promote Thursdays in Black: Toward a World without Rape and Violence on our DOTAC Facebook page and in our 12 member communities and associations.
- Our DIAKONIA Overcoming Violence Exchange (DOVE) was scheduled to be in Jamaica in September 2020 but it was postponed, due to COVID, and will likely move to a virtual format for 2021.

To support diaconal individuals, in their Spiritual Practices, DOTAC offers:

- A Monthly Prayer Zoom Meeting on the first of every month. Generally, we have about 20 people gathering for these profound times of reflection and sharing. Send an email to teddodd@live.com to get on the list.
- At the end of January, we started a series introducing a variety of Spiritual Practices. Sister Michelle Walka kicked off the series by facilitating a session on Creative Expressions.
- Weekly, on our Facebook page, a prayer using themes from the Lectionary, is shared.
- We are exploring the possibility of on-line retreats. We will keep you posted.

We believe that DOTAC has a role in enhancing the Scholarship and the Theology of Diakonia.

- In September, we have sponsored a corporate registration for the ReDi (The International Society for Research Study in Diakonia and Christian Social Work) conference. Over 20 DOTAC folx participated in these intellectually stimulating Zoom sessions.
- Plans are underway for a series of Zoom presentations that will explore diaconal identity. After Easter, we hope to host academics and researchers who have been writing about diakonia. Stay tuned for details.

As an organization we are thinking ahead. A Vision and Future Task Group has been created and we are pleased that Sister Dottie has agreed to serve on this group. We will be reviewing all the work of DOTAC and imagining ways forward to enhance the vision of diakonia in the church and the world.

DIAKONIA World Federation

The DWF has also made significant changes to its work and ministry. In the area of Communications,
• the annual newsletter has been replaced by DIAKONIA Enews: (To be placed on the mailing list send an email to: news@diakonia-world.org)

• The website has been reconstructed and will be launched soon http://www.diakonia-world.org/

• President’s Blog is published by Sandy Boyce on a regular basis. Follow her on: http://diakoniapresident.blogspot.com/

• A Monthly Prayer is written (and circulated) by members of the diaconate from all over the world. An infrastructure of new sub-committees is being created with hopes of involving more people, and with dreams of energizing diaconal connections, identity and mission between the quadrennial Assemblies. The next World Assembly was originally planned for June 2021 in Darwin Australia, but is now slated for July 2022, depending on pandemic restrictions and cautions.

Respectfully submitted,
Ted Dodd,
DOTAC President and Regional President on the DWF Executive Committee
The KGC grew out of the 19th-century deaconess movement. Protestant pastor Theodor Fliedner and his first wife Friederike paved the way for this in 1836 in Kaiserswerth / Germany (today a district of Düsseldorf), with the founding of a Deaconess Mother House. The way of life enshrined in the deaconess movement was conceived as a life-long community of faith, service and shared everyday life and involved abstaining from having a family. The central focus was on fulfilling the Biblical mandate to love one’s neighbour, expressed through the sisters’ diaconal ministry, which was embedded in a committed spiritual life in the sisterhood. The Fliedners’ deaconess model served as an example for the Deaconess Mother Houses established worldwide, most particularly in Europe. For 160 years, sisters and brothers have met every 3 years for the KGC, which was founded by Theodor Fliedner.

About 100 Member Houses belong to this conference nowadays, along with the diaconal social and welfare undertakings that have emerged from the Deaconess Mother Houses and diaconal communities and sisterhoods that are pursuing new paths in shaping community life and no longer practice celibacy. The General Conferences and the diaconal symposia are planned by an Executive Committee that meets twice a year and that, as a long-established practice, also always includes a sister from the Deaconess Community of the ELCA. The next KGC will be held in Bergen / Norway in 2022, the last symposium was in Brazil in 2019 and another was held in New York in 2017 with great support from the Deaconess Community of the ELCA. This international network, established in the early days of the movement, has to this day remained attractive for its members.

In a globalised world that currently faces enormous challenges and changes, this network is assuming new significance with its systematic emphasis on the broader perspective beyond our immediate context, the possibilities it offers to meet and exchange experiences and knowledge, its discourse on current and relevant topics in diaconal ministry work, as well as its solidarity in practice, as exemplified by the Deaconess Community of the ELCA and the use of its Mission Grants.

Our world needs networks like this that open up space for the message of God’s love as practised by Jesus Christ and that, thanks to members’ enthusiasm for the diaconal mission, also promote peace, accord importance to justice and advocate good stewardship of Creation.

Through their diaconal welfare establishments and communities, the KGC’s members make an important and indispensable contribution to helping people who face social hardship and difficult situations in their lives, in the process boosting social cohesion and fostering thriving community life. Diaconal work involves working for inclusion while opposing nationalism and rejecting right-wing extremism and religious radicalism. Guided by the ethos of love for one’s neighbour, Christians worldwide contribute to processes that foster mutual understanding, respect and reconciliation. The KGC is also part of that, in cooperation with other international organisations, such as the DIAKONIA World Federation. The focus is always on providing service for and to people, motivated by and drawing strength from God’s mercy and the example that Jesus gave us, with a view to helping people overcome difficult situations and gain hope and confidence. In thus, serving the people and societies in the countries where our members are active, we are strengthened by our celebration of faith, shared prayers and mutual intercession.

Faith in Jesus Christ unites us and enables us to act in a spirit of justice, for faith and deeds, contemplation and action go hand-in-hand. Whether in the USA or in Germany, the focus is on faith in practice expressed through caring for others, especially those in social difficulties. Faith lived out in practice fosters community, takes a broad view and is rooted in solidarity. These are the values the KGC has upheld for 160 years. It gives a face to God’s benevolence. Based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ, it continues to focus on community in the tradition of the Deaconess Houses and promotes a culture of mutual support across borders. May this commitment to the mission of loving one’s neighbour, following Jesus’ example, continue successfully in future and may the KGC keep on providing important impetus for diaconal action for each of us in our own particular setting.