



The
**DEACONESS
COMMUNITY**

ELCA

also serving the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

Handbook

(Revised September, 2014)

2014

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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.*

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*

Mission, Vision, Guiding Principles approved Deaconess Assembly September 2019

Core Values:

- ✓ A Gospel centered purpose that proclaims and furthers the reign of God among us.
- ✓ A prophetic diakonia that commits itself to risk taking and innovative service on the frontiers of the church's outreach.
- ✓ Cooperative partnerships that invite participation, bridge divisions, and accompany others in mission.
- ✓ Inclusivity in mission that affirms the individual gifts of all people.
- ✓ Stewardship that respects God's gifts of time, talents, and resources.

Deaconess Motto:

What do I wish?	<i>I wish to serve.</i>
Whom do I wish to serve?	<i>The Lord, in His poor and needy ones.</i>
And what is my reward?	<i>I do not serve either for reward or for thanks, but out of gratitude and love; my reward is that I may do this.</i>
And if I perish in doing it?	<i>"If I perish, I perish," said Queen Esther, who knew not Him for love of Whom I would perish; but He will not let me perish.</i>
And if I grow old?	<i>Still shall my heart keep fresh as a palm tree, and the Lord shall satisfy me with grace and mercy. I go in peace and free from care.</i>

~Wilhelm Löhe

For the love of Christ urges us on.... ~2 Corinthians 5:14 (NRSV)

Introduction to This Handbook

The Deaconess Community Handbook has historically served two broad purposes: first, providing information on preparation to become a deaconess, including candidacy, roster policies, and call processes; and second, providing information and guidance concerning life as a member of this community. Handbook content covering the first purpose has come directly from the policy and governance documents of the ELCA and the ELCIC, on whose rosters the members of this community are called to serve. Content covering the second purpose has been revised and updated over the years to reflect changes in internal policy and practice. Most recently, the community's internal "good standing" policy was amended by action of the 2010 Deaconess Assembly, with the Handbook updated to reflect this change.

In recent years, the ELCA and ELCIC have made significant changes to their respective policies and governance structures, so that some material in the previous Handbook has become out of date. In addition, new community resources have been created that are well suited for inclusion in the Handbook. These circumstances led the board to a decision to make changes to the Handbook's format and content as follows.

Content that re-states or paraphrases the standards, policies and practices of the ELCA as they apply to the Deaconess Community as a roster of this church (or the ELCIC as they apply to its diaconal ministry roster) will not be published separately by the community. Rather, a new Resource Guide has been compiled to assist the community's members, leaders, candidates and inquirers in locating the information that they seek in the published documents of the respective church bodies – generally available on their Web sites. This new Section I Guide replaces the previous Sections I, II, and III. The new Section II introduces two new candidacy related resources that have been created by the Committee on Vocation and Education. They supplement, but do not duplicate, church body resources. Section III briefly addresses roster matters from the perspective of the Deaconess Community, in the context of church body documents.

Section IV, Life in Community, has been expanded and updated to incorporate a wealth of new resources that have been created in recent years, particularly relating to formation, continuing education, and financial matters.

This new Handbook is intended to be primarily an on-line resource, available for reference and download from the "sisters only" web site, <http://www.elca.org/deaconess>. ELCA and ELCIC documents can be accessed directly from the on-line Handbook by clicking on the printed URL's for each document. Hard copies are also available upon request from the Deaconess Community office.

I. A GUIDE TO RESOURCES COVERING CANDIDACY, CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE – ELCA and ELCIC

Deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are consecrated – according to the standards, criteria, policies, and procedures of this church – for service within the life of this church in positions of Word and service. As a roster of the ELCA, deaconesses are accountable to its standards for acceptance and continuance as members of the Deaconess Community.

Members of the Deaconess Community may also serve the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC). In that church, deaconesses are consecrated as diaconal ministers and are accountable to the applicable standards, criteria, policies, and procedures of the Canadian church.

This Guide has been prepared to serve as a resource for inquirers, candidates, members and leaders of this community. Its goal is to direct them to the portions of ELCA and ELCIC governing documents that offer guidance in matters of candidacy, standards of conduct, and discipline as they apply to their respective rosters.

A. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

1. Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions (November, 2010)

Chapter 7.50 covers the Official Rosters of Laypersons, including Deaconesses. Subjects include Basic Standards for all rostered ministers; Preparation and Approval; Reinstatement; Maintenance of Lay Rosters; matters relating to call; Retirement; Disability; and Sources of Calls. This chapter also states clearly (7.53) that persons on the lay rosters of the ELCA are subject to the discipline provisions of this Constitution.

Chapter 20 covers Consultation, Discipline, Appeals and Adjudication and outlines a due process to be followed in matters requiring discipline within this church. Section 20.22 is specifically addressed to Lay Rostered Ministers, including deaconesses.

<http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Office-of-the-Secretary/ELCA-Governance/Constitutions-of-the-Evangelical-Lutheran-Church-in-America>

2. Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline for Ordained Ministers, Associates in Ministry, Deaconesses, Diaconal Ministers and Congregations (April, 2010)

This document was established by the ELCA Committee on Appeals pursuant to Chapter 20 of the ELCA Constitution (20.71.71), to establish definitions and guidelines that enable “clear and uniform application of the grounds for discipline.” The section, addressed to members of the Deaconess Community and the other lay rosters, provides a list and description of the specific grounds for discipline of individuals on these rosters.

<http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Office-of-the-Secretary/Synod-Administration/Disciplinary-Process/Definitions-and-Guidelines-for-Discipline.aspx>

3. Vision and Expectations: Associates in Ministry, Deaconesses, and Diaconal Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (April, 2010)

This document, which was revised and updated following the adoption of the social statement “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust” by the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly and the related Ministry Policies. It sets out this church’s expectations of members of these rosters in terms of their understanding of call; faithfulness to scripture and the church’s confessions; holy living; and faithfulness in witness.

<http://www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Vocation/Rostered-Leadership/Associates-in-Ministry/Vision-Expectations.aspx>

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4. *Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Candidacy Manual (April, 2010)*
Chapter 1 provides an overview of the ELCA candidacy process, including reinstatement guidelines.
Chapter 4 describes the candidacy process, including Standards for a Deaconess, for the Deaconess Community of the ELCA. (Additional resources concerning the formation process and internship are located in Section II of this Handbook)
Chapter 6 describes the Entrance process.
Chapter 7 describes the Endorsement process, which culminates in Investiture in the Deaconess Community.
Chapter 8 describes the Approval process, which culminates in first call and Consecration.
Chapter 9 is a resource for downloading of forms applicable to the various participants in the candidacy process.
(<http://www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Vocation/Become-a-Leader/Candidacy/Resources/Manual.aspx>)
 5. *Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (July 2010)*
Part Two provides information specific to Associates in Ministry, Diaconal Ministers, and Deaconesses. It references sections of Chapter 7 of the *ELCA Constitution* pertaining to the official rosters of laypersons, and reviews roster standards. This manual also provides guidelines relating to On-Leave-From-Call Status; Shared-Time Ministry; Reinstatement to Rosters; Retired and Disability Status; Non-Stipendiary Ministry; and Synodically Authorized or Licensed Ministry.
(<http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Office-of-the-Secretary/ELCA-Governance/Official-Guidelines.aspx>)

B. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

1. *ELCIC Constitution (2009)*
Article VIII pertains to Diaconal Ministers; this article also appears in Appendix 2 of the ELCIC Candidacy Manual.
(http://elcic.ca/Documents/documents/ELCICConstitution_2009.pdf)
 2. *Administrative Bylaws, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (2009)*
Part IV pertains to Diaconal Ministers; this part also appears in Appendix 3 of the ELCIC Candidacy Manual.
(<http://elcic.ca/Documents/documents/ELCICAdministrativeBylaws-2009.pdf>)
 3. *ELCIC Candidacy Manual (October 2009)*
The ELCIC has a single Candidacy Manual that serves as a guide to both the ordained and diaconal ministry rosters. The appendices to this manual also contain the provisions of the ELCIC Constitution and By-Laws as they relate to rostered Diaconal Ministers. Sections of importance to deaconess candidates from Canada who seek consecration as diaconal ministers in the ELCIC include:
C – Candidacy for Diaconal Ministry
D – Registration for Candidacy
E – Annual Endorsement – Ordained and Diaconal Ministry
F – Final Evaluation for Ordained or Diaconal Ministry
Appendix 2 – Article VIII of ELCIC Constitution pertaining to Diaconal Ministers
Appendix 3 – Part IV of the ELCIC Bylaws pertaining to sources of call, roster status and discipline for Diaconal Ministers
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Appendix 4 – ELCA/ELCIC Internship Standards (may be out of date; adopted by ELCA and ELCIC in 1991-1992)

Appendix 5 – Approved Theological Courses for Diaconal Candidates

Appendix 6 – Guidelines for Mentors and Candidates

(<http://elcic.ca/documents/documents/candidacymanual2009.pdf>)

4. *ELCIC Manual re Discipline of Rostered Ministers (2004)*

This document covers both ordained and diaconal ministers, and provides a description of specific grounds for discipline along with processes to be followed by synods and committees on discipline.

(<http://elcic.ca/Documents/documents/DisciplineofRosteredMinisters2004.pdf>)

II. DEACONESS COMMUNITY RESOURCES REGARDING FORMATION AND CANDIDACY

As stated in the first section, this Handbook will no longer re-state or paraphrase the standards, policies, and practices of the ELCA or ELCIC, but will refer inquirers directly to the applicable documents of the respective church bodies. To supplement, but not duplicate, these resources, the Committee on Vocation and Education (CoVE) has created the following internal resources to provide information in greater depth on topics unique to the Deaconess Community.

A. Deaconess Community Formation Notebook

This document provides background information on the Deaconess Community as both an organization of women and a roster of the church. The Notebook also discusses formation in the context of tradition, values, definitions, process descriptions, and basic requirements. While the Formation Notebook's primary audience is inquirers, candidates and CoVE members, it is a resource to the entire community and may be accessed or downloaded from the "sisters only" ELCA web page (<http://www.elca.org/deaconess>).

B. Internship Handbook

Many of the internship resources available from the ELCA and ELCIC are addressed more specifically to candidates for ordination than candidates for consecration as a deaconess. Both the timing of the internship (often following completion of theological education) and the nature of the internship itself (often outside a congregational setting) can be different for a deaconess candidate, and this handbook provides information and detail specific to the Deaconess Community but in the context of coordination with church body requirements. The synod candidacy committee receives for review the final evaluation forms prepared by the intern, the supervisor, and the site committee, and may also request the interim equivalent reports prepared after three months, and six months, of the internship.

The primary audiences for this Handbook are candidates, interns, CoVE members, internship committees and site supervisors. The Internship Handbook and related Appendices may also be accessed or downloaded from the "sisters only" ELCA web site (see above).

III. THE DEACONESS COMMUNITY ROSTER

Consecrated deaconesses are members of the Deaconess Community roster of the ELCA and the diaconal ministry roster of the ELCIC. As such, deaconesses are held accountable to the "basic standards" for all rostered ministries as found in Chapter 7 of the *Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing*

Resolutions of the ELCA. Standards for a Deaconess are further enumerated in Chapter 4 of the ELCA Candidacy Manual.

A. Causes for Discipline and Disciplinary Procedures

In addition to the constitutional standards for rostered leaders, consecrated deaconesses are also required to live according to *Vision and Expectations: Associates in Ministry, Deaconesses, and Diaconal Ministers of the ELCA*; and the *Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada Manual re Discipline of Rostered Ministers*, referenced above in Section I. Specific causes for discipline, and disciplinary procedures, are outlined by both church bodies in these documents.

The Deaconess Community has also established internal expectations relating to good standing and appropriate conduct within the community. These expectations are discussed in Section IV of this Handbook.

B. Reinstatement to the Deaconess Community Roster

Should a deaconess be removed from the roster for disciplinary or other reasons, future reinstatement to the roster of the ELCA or ELCIC is the responsibility of the candidacy committee of the synod in which she was last under call. The Application for Reinstatement to the Deaconess Community (Diaconal Ministry roster in Canada) should be submitted to the synod candidacy committee, with informational copies to the DoVE and CoVE. An applicant must first be approved by her synod for reinstatement to the roster, in accordance with applicable church body guidelines, before seeking reinstatement to the community. The ELCA reinstatement process is outlined in detail in the *Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Rosters*.

Once approved for reinstatement by the ELCA or ELCIC, the applicant shall submit to the Deaconess Community, through the DoVE or CoVE:

1. A report of the psychological evaluation and career consultation, if any, and a recent medical report
2. A statement of activities since resigning from the Community, and reasons for requesting reinstatement
3. Evidence of a possible call

The applicant will meet with the CoVE, who will make a recommendation to the board of directors regarding reinstatement. The board will act on the request. Following approval for reinstatement, the candidate will participate in a rite of reinstatement at the next Assembly of the Deaconess Community.

C. Transfer from other diaconal organizations

When transfer into the Deaconess Community from another diaconate is requested, the ELCA/ELCIC synod candidacy committee shall first evaluate the request according the applicable standards, including educational equivalents and candidate formation events. Following synod approval, the CoVE shall review the application and make a recommendation to the board of directors. Following board approval, and receipt and acceptance of a recognized call, the candidate shall be placed on the roster of the ELCA Deaconess Community or the ELCIC Diaconal Ministers.

D. Resigning from or termination of a call

A deaconess planning to resign, or having learned of the termination of her call, should consult

with the directing deaconess and her synod bishop. An exit interview should take place and the deaconess should send a copy of any written summary to the directing deaconess.

In accordance with the policies of the ELCA and ELCIC, all retired deaconesses remain on the rosters of their respective churches.

E. Resignation from the Deaconess Community

From time to time, a candidate or sister may choose to resign from the community or candidacy process. In order to insure healthy communication among all parties, and to provide the board of directors with information necessary for good governance, the board has established an “exit information process.” This process is in addition to, and does not supersede, pastoral care offered by the directing deaconess.

When notice of a resignation is received, the directing deaconess and board chair are immediately informed. The directing deaconess, who likely is already aware of the candidate’s or sister’s discernment, provides appropriate and confidential pastoral care. At the same time, within seven days of receipt of the resignation, the Deaconess Office will mail out a confidential Exit Information Form, accompanied by personal letters from the board chair and the directing deaconess, with a postage paid return envelope addressed to the board chair, in care of the Deaconess Office.

When a completed Exit Information Form is received by the office, receipt is acknowledged to the sender. The form is placed in the candidate or sister’s permanent file and distributed electronically to the board chair, directing deaconess, executive committee, and leadership staff. The form is also included in preparation materials for the next regularly scheduled board meeting, and added to that meeting’s agenda as “receipt of exit information.”

Finally, the board of directors, or executive committee, may direct additional follow-up by the chair. The directing deaconess may also follow up in whatever ways she feels are pastorally appropriate.

IV. LIFE IN COMMUNITY

The Deaconess Community is unique among the rosters of the ELCA and ELCIC, in its commitment to walk with candidates from the earliest stages of their formation, and to continue to uplift and support its members throughout their ministries. The call to community includes grounding in the Word, a dedication to service, and a shared spiritual journey. This section is devoted to various dimensions of life within this community, along with mutual expectations and resources.

A. Our rule of life

1. Worship and prayer in the Deaconess Community are essential to the life and service of its members. The call into diakonia is a call into a continually deepening relationship with the Christ who called us to serve those in need. Each deaconess is encouraged to make use of a spiritual director and to participate in regular prayer retreats. Each must attend worship regularly and be an active member of a Lutheran congregation.
 2. Intercessory prayer is an important part of the life of a deaconess and members are encouraged to use the daily prayer calendar, prepared annually, to remember others in the Community. We are encouraged to offer regular prayers for the church, its bishops,
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officers, and leaders, as well as for the needs of the world.

3. The Committee on Community Life seeks to enhance the life of the Deaconess Community through programs and events which emphasize our diaconal focus through spiritual growth, nurture, support, and fellowship among the members.
4. The spiritual formation of each deaconess is supported through mutual experiences, personal contacts, and prayer. In addition, the Community gathers in Assembly each year for times of study, reflection, and worship.
5. Each deaconess is encouraged to be an active interpreter of and advocate for the diaconate.

B. Good Standing in the Deaconess Community

To remain part of this Community, each ordained deaconess shall be in good standing on the roster of the ELCA or ELCIC. Both candidates and ordained deaconesses shall be considered in good standing in the Deaconess Community by:

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.

Under the Deaconess Community by-laws, a deaconess who is not in good standing forfeits her vote in Assembly. Good standing is also a condition for receipt of financial assistance for community events, meetings and continuing education.

It is the responsibility of the directing deaconess to review standing in the community according to these criteria. That information will be shared with the board. If a sister's standing is in question, this will be communicated to her by the directing deaconess. 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 standing.

Good Standing approved by Deaconess Assembly September 2019

C. Covenants Governing Conduct within the Community

When a cause for discipline involves church body and/or roster standards, ELCA or ELCIC policies and guidelines will apply as appropriate.

At the 2012 Deaconess Assembly, the community adopted a Community Covenant and accompanying Responsibility and Reconciliation Protocol. This document is a statement of community-directed behavior expectations, including a process for addressing internal relational issues in a spirit of restorative justice. See Appendix I.

D. Financial Support for Deaconess Preparation and Continuing Education

The following paragraphs describe the primary categories of financial assistance for education that are available from the Deaconess Community. A more complete and detailed resource, "Overview of Financial Assistance Resources," may be found on the community's Web site, <http://www.elca.org/deaconess>, or may be requested from the Deaconess office.

1. Assistance to Candidates

Potential deaconess candidates are responsible for financing their own education. For

this reason, a decision to enter seminary and begin the candidacy process should include a realistic assessment of available financial resources to pay for tuition, course materials and living expenses. An entranced candidate may be eligible for financial support from her congregation, synod, or seminary, and she should make application directly to those agencies. If borrowing is considered, a candidate should avoid accumulating a level of debt that cannot reasonably be repaid from her future salary as a deaconess.

The Deaconess Community is committed to share in a portion of the cost of a deaconess' preparation, beginning with her entrance to candidacy. The community will pay for a candidate's transportation, meals and lodging for all required interviews and formation events. In addition, following approval for Entrance and enrollment in an approved seminary, a new candidate becomes eligible for the Entrance Scholarship. This scholarship, administered by the Committee on Vocation and Education (CoVE), has been established to help pay the cost of seminary education and/or other academic preparation.

The maximum grant under the Entrance Scholarship program is \$2,000. If a candidate is currently enrolled in seminary, funds are remitted directly to the seminary, divided over the remaining semesters' study. If a candidate is enrolled, or about to enroll, in CPE, funds are remitted to the accredited CPE center. If these expenses have already been paid, Entrance Scholarship funds can be used to pay down student loans or to fund other educational preparation costs.

In the event of withdrawal from candidacy, the recipient of an Entrance Scholarship is required to repay the scholarship balance to the community under the terms of an Honor Pledge, signed at the time of initial disbursement. For additional information, refer to the Overview of Financial Assistance Resources, which can be found on the "sisters only" Web site, <http://www.elca.org/deaconess>.

2. J-Term Course: "Diaconal Ministry: Discernment, History and Formation"

This three-credit, seminary-level course was established by the Deaconess Community following the sale of the Gladwyne, PA Deaconess House. It is funded in part from a dedicated reserve created from a portion of the sale proceeds. The course examines the historical, theological, and social contexts in which diaconal ministry has been expressed in the church, and also explores a theology of spirituality that offers a window to vocational discernment, particularly as it pertains to the diaconal calling.

Completion of this course is an investiture requirement for all deaconess candidates, and the Deaconess Community pays their tuition and all related expenses. The course is also open to any other persons who are interested in learning more about diaconal ministry, and the community pays their tuition. J-Term is offered each January at alternating ELCA seminary sites. For additional information, refer to the Overview of Financial Assistance Resources, and the current J-Term announcement flyer, which can be found on the community's Web site, <http://www.elca.org/deaconess>.

3. Continuing Education

Each deaconess is encouraged to take advantage of the opportunities for continuing education and funding resources that are available through her call. Each deaconess is also encouraged to pursue sabbatical opportunities, which may include continuing

education components, as they may be offered and funded through her call.

The Deaconess Community offers funding for continuing education through the Fiftieth Anniversary Scholarship Fund, which was established in 1945 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Baltimore Lutheran Deaconess Motherhouse and School. The original fund of \$50,000 grew at a faster rate than scholarships were granted, and the board later established \$100,000 as the permanently restricted portion of the fund. The amount available for scholarships each year is determined according to a percentage of the fund's appreciated value. The Committee on Vocation and Education is entrusted with the task of awarding scholarships from the Fund, typically in amounts of \$500 to \$1,000. The total awarded to any one individual is determined on the basis of need, total indebtedness, and available funds.

Scholarships from the 50th Anniversary Fund are available to invested or consecrated deaconesses in good standing, retired or active. Courses may be for degree programs, for credit or non-credit continuing education, as well as for spiritual and personal growth events. Career development expense is also eligible for payment from this fund.

Application for a 50th Anniversary Fund scholarship should be made after other funding sources have been explored. Some personal contribution toward the cost of the desired educational offering is also expected. Supporting documentation must state how the proposed study will benefit the deaconess' ministry or the community, and must include an itemized statement of projected expenses and other funding sources. Additional information about this program is presented in the Overview of Financial Assistance Resources which, along with the application and instructions, is available from the Deaconess Community office and from the Web site.

E. Other Forms of Financial Assistance

1. Emergency Assistance to Candidates

At the discretion of CoVE, emergency assistance is available to a candidate with a personal need for which no other financial resource is available. This assistance is not restricted to education expense. A candidate with such a need should send a request letter to the DoVE or the chair of CoVE, outlining the specific need and affirming that other funding sources have been exhausted.

2. Participation in Deaconess Community Events

All expenses for deaconesses in good standing to attend the Deaconess Community Assembly, certain conferences and seminars, and Community board and committee meetings, will be reimbursed. Guidelines regarding travel arrangements, eligible expenses, and expense reimbursement may be found in the Travel Policy for the Deaconess Community, available from the Deaconess Community office and from the Web site.

3. Care of Sisters

The directing deaconess is responsible for administration of the Care of Sisters budget, which is approved each year by the board of directors as part of the overall operating budget.

All retired deaconesses who served in the cooperative plan are eligible for quarterly

living and clothing allowances. They will be informed annually of the allowances for which they are eligible.

Retired deaconesses who did not serve in the cooperative plan may also be eligible for Community funded living assistance. Additional information regarding forms of assistance and eligibility may be found in the Care of Sisters policy available on the sisters' Web site. To request assistance, a deaconess must complete the Application for Financial Assistance, which is reviewed by the directing deaconess and approved by the board of directors. The information requested includes personal history, estate planning details, existing insurance coverage, and a statement of financial condition. The form may be requested from the Deaconess Community office or accessed on the sisters' Web site. Following the board's decision, the deaconess will be informed of the allowance(s) for which she is eligible.

Assistance through the Care of Sisters budget is also available for a consecrated sister's emergency medical or personal expense. A person with such a need should send the directing deaconess a request letter, outlining the specific need and affirming that other funding sources are exhausted. Requests in excess of \$500 require board approval.

4. Other Sources of Assistance to Deaconesses in the ELCA

Active and retired members of the ELCA's Deaconess Community roster may also be eligible for income assistance from the Special Needs Retirement Fund (offered by Portico Benefit Services, formerly the Board of Pensions), or emergency assistance from the Good Samaritan Fund (offered by ELCA Synodical Relations in consultation with the bishop of the sister's synod). Unlike the Deaconess Community's assistance program, which is available only to sisters, eligibility for the ELCA programs extends to spouses and dependents who meet the assistance criteria.

Additional information about these ELCA resources, including qualifications and contact information, is available through a sister's ELCA synod bishop and may also be found in the Policy for Care of Sisters Fund, available on the sisters' Web site or by request from the Deaconess Community office.

F. Financial Matters Relating to Employment

In the ELCA, rostered leaders serving under call may be classified for tax purposes as either self-employed or employees. As of January 1, 1988, when the ELCA was formed, all deaconesses in the ELCA were classified as "employees." Therefore, their employers are expected to follow synod compensation guidelines, are required to pay their appropriate share of social security, to withhold and remit state, local, and federal income taxes, and to offer pension, health and other benefits in accordance with local synod guidelines for the position.

Each deaconess should be familiar with her synod's compensation guidelines and understand the benefits available to her through her employer, so that she can make informed choices and advocate on her own behalf. She should also be familiar with her employer's personnel policy. The policy should provide for an annual performance review and opportunity to set future goals.

A deaconess who serves in an approved part-time call should insure that she is provided, or has access to, adequate health and pension benefits.

All deaconesses in the United States must be enrolled in Social Security, and must participate in the ELCA Pension and Other Benefits program or an equivalent pension and health care plan. Those who continue their employment at age 65 must enroll in Medicare. In Canada, a deaconess/diaconal minister must participate in the ELCIC Pension and Benefits Plan, the Canada/Quebec Pension Plan, and Provincial Health Care Plan/Blue Cross, and be enrolled in Canadian Pension Plan and Old Age Security.

G. End of life matters and estate planning

1. The Importance of a Will

Each deaconess should have a will that directs how her property will be distributed after her death. In a sense, she has an estate plan with or without a will. However, if she dies without a will of her own, her “estate plan” is dictated by her state or provincial government – which may not reflect her own wishes. As Christians, we are reminded in I Peter to “always be prepared to give an account of the hope that is within you.” A last will and testament is a way for a deaconess to communicate to family and friends an accounting of the gifts God has given her and provide directions for how she wants those gifts to be used after she dies. In this way, her will becomes an expression of whole-life stewardship.

2. Living Will and Power of Attorney for Financial Affairs and Health Care

In addition to a last will and testament, each deaconess should create two other types of legal documents while she is of sound mind. A durable power of attorney authorizes a designated person to manage her financial affairs if she becomes incapacitated. This person is usually called an agent or attorney-in-fact. Another important document is a living will or a durable power of attorney for health care. In a living will, you specify the type of care you want (or don’t want) if you become incapacitated. In a power of attorney for health care, you appoint someone you trust to make any necessary health care decisions on your behalf if you are unable to make those decisions or speak for yourself. It is wise to prepare both documents. In some states, the living will and power of attorney for health care are combined into a single form called an advance directive. A deaconess should determine what form is available in her place of residence.

Each deaconess is urged to prepare the above documents with the assistance of a qualified attorney. She should appoint a trusted friend or family member to serve as executor of her will, and to hold durable power of attorney for finances and durable power of attorney for health care in case of a debilitating illness. (The same person need not be appointed to all these roles, however.)

A deaconess should not appoint the Deaconess Community or directing deaconess to any of these positions.

Copies of these documents, and subsequent updates, should be furnished to the Deaconess Community office, for placement in the sister’s personal file.

3. ELCA and ELCIC Estate Planning Resources

Both the ELCA and ELCIC offer resources to assist in the task of estate planning. Both churches encourage their members to leave a legacy for ministry as part of their estate plan as an extension of their lifetime stewardship. Whether a deaconess possesses modest

assets or a significant accumulation of wealth, she has the opportunity to tell her own faith-inspired story in her will.

The ELCA Foundation has two helpful publications that are available on its web site or by request (www.elca.org/foundation/resources, 800-638-3522, ext. 2970). A deaconess who has not previously prepared a will, or who did so many years ago, may find the “Will and Trust Workbook” of value to update personal information; make an inventory of financial assets and liabilities; list insurance policies, and consider specific bequests. This information can in turn be reviewed with an estate planning professional to assist in preparing a new will or updating an existing one.

“Important Notes About My Estate” is a workbook designed to let friends and family know where important documents are located, including will and contact information for your executor. Locations of insurance policies, investments, annuities, bank accounts, safe deposit box, etc. are also listed. Space is provided to list specific charitable bequests. A page is also devoted to instructions at time of death, including people to notify, burial/cremation instructions, church information, memorial service requests, etc.

All deaconesses are strongly encouraged to complete this form, or to compile this information in a similar format, and give it to a close friend or family member, with a copy sent to the Deaconess office for her personal file. At a minimum, each deaconess is urged to complete the community’s form “Information for Death or Illness” to state her wishes regarding burial arrangements and funeral service to place in her personal file at the Deaconess office.

The ELCIC also offers estate planning resources to Canadian deaconesses through Lutheran Planned Giving. The LPG Web site, www.elcic.ca/LPG, provides information to assist in the planning of a gift or bequest, with the caveat that donors should do so in consultation with a qualified legal, tax and/or financial planning advisor. LPG can be reached by phone at 888-786-6706, ext. 172.

Both the ELCA and ELCIC have networks of gift planning representatives who are available to assist individuals in making charitable gifts as part of their estate plans. They provide this service at no cost to the donor.

4. Burial Assistance from the Deaconess Community

A deaconess who served in the cooperative plan and is not in the ELCA Death Benefit Plan or ELCIC Pension Plan, and who has no other insurance or estate assets, will be buried at the expense of the Deaconess Community.

Deaconesses who are in ELCA or ELCIC benefit plans, or who have other insurance or burial arrangements, will be buried at the expense of their named beneficiary. If the Deaconess Community is the beneficiary and the death benefit is not sufficient to cover the burial costs, the Community will pay the balance for burial in the appropriate cemetery.

Selection of burial place for deaconesses who are eligible for burial assistance will be at the discretion of the Deaconess Community.

H. Programs related to the Deaconess Community

1. Diaconal Year Program

In 1957, the Deaconess Community instituted a self-supporting opportunity for men and women to participate in this Community and in diaconal work. It was a one year volunteer program which offered a three week orientation at the Deaconess Center and provided supervision and job placement in an approved setting. Many participants in the program later became deaconesses. The program was suspended in 2003. In 2012, the board of directors voted to allocate temporarily restricted funds, previously designated for this program, for Mission Grants to sisters wishing to participate in a mission event.

2. The Alumnae Fellowship of the Deaconess Schools

From their founding through 1966, the deaconess schools in Baltimore and Philadelphia provided religious and practical instruction for more than 1,000 women wishing to serve in church vocations as well as in the Deaconess Community. In 1939, the first alumnae group was organized in Baltimore, Maryland. Similar circles were founded in other areas. The purpose was not only to provide fellowship and spiritual growth among its members but also to share information about the Deaconess Community and support its work, and communicate through newsletters and reunion retreats.

3. The Friends of the Deaconess Community

Organized in 1938 as the Philadelphia Deaconess Association, its purposes were to acquaint persons with the work of the diaconate, to encourage deaconesses in their preparation, service and retirement; and to inform the members of the ELCA and ELCIC of the purpose, activities and needs of the Deaconess Community. This organization supported the ministries of the Community through prayer, financial gifts and service. The Friends voted to dissolve as a corporation on September 10, 2011, “based on the recognition that the organization is no longer sustainable by its membership, and also that the organization has accomplished its mission [as set forth in its Constitution].” In May, 2012, their investment assets were transferred to the Deaconess Community in accordance with their governing documents.

I. Ecumenical Diaconal Relationships

1. DIAKONIA, World Federation of Diaconal Associations and Diaconal Communities, is the ecumenical federation organized in 1947 to further ecumenical relationships among diaconal associations and diaconal communities. Its aims are to reflect on the nature and task of diaconia in the biblical sense; to further a sense of diaconia in the churches; to strengthen fellowship among members; to render mutual help; to undertake common tasks.

Every fourth year, a DIAKONIA World Assembly takes place where participants from around the world gather for worship, Bible study, lectures, group discussions and sharing. At this event, a president and executive committee are also elected. The executive committee is the federation’s management board. <http://www.diakonia-world.org>

2. DOTAC, Diakonia of the Americas and the Caribbean, is one of the regional conferences of DIAKONIA and the one with which the Deaconess Community is associated.
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Regional conferences are held every four years. <http://dotac.diaconia-world.org>

3. The Kaiserswerth General Conference is an international union of Motherhouses and diaconal agencies with Sisters and service communities of the Kaiserswerth tradition. It was founded in 1861, and the Deaconess Community has held membership since its beginning in 1884. The community currently holds a seat on the Presidium as the non-European representative, with a term from 2007 – 2014. The main goal of the Conference is to strengthen the member diaconal communities in the practice of their task and to share experiences and information. An Assembly is held every three years, and professional development seminars are organized intermittently.
4. The Ecumenical Network of Diaconia – commonly referred to as “TEND,” is an unofficial and informal network of ecumenical diaconates which meets annually in Chicago, IL. During their annual autumn meeting, they usually have a speaker and discussion on a relevant topic.

Appendix I

Deaconess Community Covenant

Preamble: Sustained and guided by the Holy Spirit and as members, staff and leadership of the Deaconess Community of the ELCA / ELCIC, we strive to co-create community life that is prayerful, healthy, and celebratory. Our community is committed to maintaining a work and community life environment that is free from harassment as defined in ELCA Policies. The Deaconess Community further will not tolerate behavior that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive community life environment. Mindful that the Constitutions of the ELCA and the ELCIC govern our consecrated work and inform the ethical conduct of our private lives, we adopt and affirm the following Covenants for our relationships in the Deaconess Community.

1. In our relationships with members, friends, employees and colleagues of our Deaconess Community:¹

This first section is foundational and informs the subsequent sections.

1.1 We will affirm and respect the human dignity and individual worth of each person when we speak to or about them; when we interact with them and when we work with them or on their behalf.

1.2 We will not speak ill of or treat with unkindness anyone because of race, gender, age, faith group, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, or position in the community.

1.3 We will respect the integrity and welfare of those we serve, of those with whom we work, and of those with whom we share community. We will refrain from disparaging them and avoid emotional, psychological, spiritual, sexual or any other kind of exploitation.

1.4 We will approach the religious and political convictions of others with respect and sensitivity and avoid the imposition of our particular values.

1.5 We will respect confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the Constitutions of the ELCA and the ELCIC, and applicable professional standards.

1.6 We will take collegial and responsible action when concerns about incompetence, impairment, or misconduct arise.

1.7 We will first speak directly with anyone with whom we have a concern before speaking to another person about our concern.

2. In our relationship to our Deaconess Community:

2.1 We will speak on behalf of the Deaconess Community or represent the official position of the Community only as authorized. We will distinguish private opinions from those of the Community or ELCA/ELCIC when speaking publicly or publishing.

¹ Sections I and II adapted from the ACPE and APC Codes of Professional Ethics

2.2 We will continue professional education and spiritual growth, including participation in the meetings and affairs of the Deaconess Community.

2.3 We will not make intentionally false, misleading, or incomplete statements about our work or conduct or the work or conduct of anyone else.

2.4 We will maintain professional and constructive relationships with persons employed by our Community as well as with the board members and the wider community.

2.5 We will not use our knowledge, position, professional or community association to secure unfair personal advantage or permit ourselves to be used by others for purposes inconsistent with the foundational standards and beliefs of our community. We will not use community membership for purposes that are inconsistent with our community and ELCA/ELCIC standards.

2.6 We will carry out our community responsibilities in a timely, professional and considerate manner. We will negotiate clear and achievable deadlines and meet them.

2.7 We will follow sound fiscal practices, maintain accurate financial records, and protect the integrity of any funds entrusted to our care on behalf of the community or its members.

3. In Our Spirit of Speaking and Listening in Community and Public Forums:²

In all of our speaking and listening we will first of all strive to be attentive to the working of the Holy Spirit in our midst.

3.1 We will speak only for ourselves and out of our own experiences.

3.2 We will speak our truth respecting both each other and ourselves.

3.3 We will listen to each other with openness and respect for the purpose of “mutual up building.”

3.4 We will listen with empathy and resilience, restraining our emotionally-triggered responses, either positive or negative.

3.5 We will avoid monopolizing the conversation, whether in private conversation or public discussions. We will promote a courteous environment in conversations that provide space for all to speak.

3.6 We will be constructive in our concerns and critiques.

3.7 We will be clear if we choose to share our personal and confidential information. As listeners we will respect confidentiality. We will not knowingly violate another person’s privacy.

3.8 We will refrain from using intimidating speech or behavior.

3.9 We will keep our body language and non-verbal responses constructively congruent with our verbal expressions.

² Section III adapted from the Public Conversations Project: A Guide to Community Dialogue for the CCL-March 15 -16, 2010 and modified for draft Covenants 02/12/11. Updated draft 02/16/11

3.10 We will follow agreed-upon rules of order when they apply.

3.11 As Christians we acknowledge that discussion (and/or discourse) may not lead to decisions, change in policy or agreement; we do however, recognize the value of true dialog and honor it.

4. Mutual Accountability:

4.1 Adherence to this Community Covenant is first a matter for self-discipline and prayerful personal discernment.

4.2 We will seek assistance when confused or conflicted about a Covenantal obligation.

4.3 We will speak directly with the one with whom we have a concern as a gracious first response.

4.4 When asked to assist another or witnessing a violation, we will prayerfully consider how best to proceed.

4.5 The Deaconess Community Responsibility and Reconciliation Protocol is available when it is needed.

Soli Deo Gloria

Responsibility & Reconciliation Protocol

Rationale: In the spirit of restorative justice and reconciliation this protocol is for relational issues arising within the Deaconess Community. Candid, cooperative participation is expected as part of one's commitment to being in Community. This protocol is not a "disciplinary" procedure. This protocol is not a substitute for counseling, therapy, or another forum's adjudicatory process. This is a protocol to engage, actively and charitably, challenging communications necessary for healthy Community life.

1. Purpose:

1.1. Responsibility & Reconciliation Protocol (R&R) addresses personal relationships between, among, and within the Deaconess Community members, candidates, staff, and appointed or elected leaders (Participants) and the attendant requirement that when disagreements or dislikes emerge, one has vowed to put the Community's interest ahead of one's individual preferences.

1.2. The R & R process is to support healthy interactions among Participants. It is a protocol for upholding a culture of self-disciplined, right relationships and not a disciplinary process.

2. Scope:

2.1. Violations of professional conduct within a sister's ministry will generally fall within the ELCA/ELCIC jurisdiction of the sister's bishop, thereby removing it from Community consideration, at least until the ELCA/ELCIC process is complete.

3. Responsibilities:

3.1. Participants will model and be united and focused in supporting the culture this protocol encourages. The whole community will model but is not itself responsible for administering the protocol. That will be charged to an independent "Responsibility & Reconciliation" team (R & R Team) of three sisters, empowered by and for, the whole community.

3.2. The R & R Team's recommendations that result after steps of the protocol have been followed, may be appealed to the Directing Deaconess (DD) by the person(s) receiving those recommendations. Her elected position of Community leadership requires that she be entrusted with final disposition if disagreement remains.

4. R&R Team formation:

4.1. Initial formation: In keeping with our current way of filling committee openings, the Governance Committee and the Board will appoint three Sisters as the initial R & R Team. There will be an initial term of one, two and three years.

4.2. At the 2013 Assembly, the assembled community will elect the replacement Sister for the R & R Team Member serving the one-year term. This Sister will serve a full three-year term.

4.3. At the 2014 Assembly, the assembled community will elect the replacement Sister for the R & R Team Member serving the initial two-year term. This Sister will serve a full three-year term.

4.4. At the 2015 Assembly, and each assembly thereafter, the assembled community will elect the replacement for the R & R Team Member whose term is ending.

4.5. Sisters who agree to serve on the R & R Team will be offered training for methods needed for serving in this capacity.

5. Community Affirmation:

5.1. A special Ritual of Mutual Responsibility will be held at each Assembly. The R & R team will be commissioned anew for the coming year's challenges. Each R & R Team member will affirm her commitment to the team's responsibilities.

5.2. Each Participant (present or absent) will sign a copy and will present it as an offering. This is an opportunity for renewed commitment to our communal nature that requires shared responsibility for the Covenant and for reconciliation of differences and divisions.

6. Protocol Steps:

The protocol can end when all parties agree upon a resolution. There needs to be no written record of protocol steps 6.1-6.4.

6.1. Discernment: When a Participant experiences conduct – words or deeds – that aggrieves her or him and it is caused by conduct that could violate the Community Covenant, she or he must first discern alone whether or not to move forward with the Protocol. If the decision is not to engage the protocol, the aggrieved member cannot otherwise communicate their experience to other Participants -- except for the person(s) whose conduct/words are in question.

Either of those two parties may contact an R & R Sister for consultation.

6.2. Individual conversation: Gentle, attentive listening, is the first step. An R&R team member listens to the aggrieved person and then, if necessary, any other affected persons.

6.2.1. Often, the pain of discord can be assuaged before it rises to anger by someone who is an unbiased listener, able to reflect thoughtfully without judgment, and gently present multiple perspectives.

6.3. Facilitated dialogue: One or more R & R Sister sits with the affected persons to facilitate the "challenging conversation" of hearing another's perspective and feelings. Before a facilitated conversation, the R & R Sister must have spoken individually with each participant, considered the

person's perspective and feelings, and talked with them about how best to present those feelings and perspectives in a manner that others can sit with and comprehend.

6.3.1. In other words, an R & R Sister enters as a facilitator with a reasonably clear idea of the issues and attitudes that will emerge. She does not, however, predict or break privacy between the participants. She lets each person speak for herself and present her/his own feelings.

6.3.2. These dialogues occur most productively "over coffee" and in person. When necessity dictates, telephonic [i.e., conference call, or video conference] will have to suffice.

6.4. Talking Circle: R &R Team convenes a circle of everyone who is affected by the conduct at issue.

6.5. Mediation: The R&R Team determines when mediation is necessary and arranges for it. Often, a professional mediator from outside the Community should be retained. Because this will normally involve an expense, the Board of Directors will be involved in authorizing the expenditure following the Community Bylaws. The R&R Team will maintain confidentiality regarding the need for mediation as much as possible.

Mediation can be between two people in direct conflict, or may involve multiple parties. Agreements are formalized in a written agreement that remains on record for the time specified in it. Many mediation agreements are "confidential" and the documentation will be handled according to existing protocol for confidential documentation.

6.5.1. In most cases involving formal mediation, the R & R team, and the parties will agree to a specific statement about the mediation agreement that will be made public rather than the entire agreement.

6.6. Engaging the Directing Deaconess: If no agreement is reached and an issue remains open for resolution, the R & R Team will collaborate to offer a resolution to the parties. If the parties do not accept it and agree to adhere, either may appeal it to the Directing Deaconess within two weeks of receiving the offer. The DD will give substantial deference to the R&R Team's offer. If she determines it necessary to her consideration, she will speak with the R & R Team and the parties before rendering her determination that the Team's decision will be upheld, over-turned, or modified. Her decision is final and is published in the next newsletter so that the full community clearly understands and is informed as to the outcome of the matter. This is the only situation in which "public announcement" of the results of a protocol step occurs, unless it is part of a mutual agreement.

Approved and Affirmed at Deaconess Assembly 2012

Appendix II

SERVICE OF INVESTITURE

The chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Deaconess Community of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (or his/her representative) shall present the candidate(s) for investiture:

Name(s) of candidate(s) has been endorsed by the Board of Directors of the Deaconess Community of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as someone with whom we desire to share this Community. It is with joy that I present her for investiture.

The directing deaconess addresses the candidate(s). Each candidate responds individually:

- D You have been commended to us for inclusion in the Deaconess Community. Your acceptance entitles you to the privileges of using the title, "Sister," of wearing the garb and the deaconess candidate pin, and of sharing in the life and responsibilities of this Community of deaconesses. I now ask you in the presence of Almighty God and this congregation:
Are you ready to enter the Deaconess Community of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America?
- R Yes, by the help of God.
- D Will you seek to grow in grace so that Christ may be glorified through your words and deeds?
- R Yes, by the help of God.
- D Are you willing to be accountable to all rightful authority?
- R Yes, by the help of God.
- D Do you promise to be diligent and faithful in meeting the requirements of the Deaconess Community?
- R Yes, by the help of God.

Members of the Deaconess Community stand. The directing deaconess addresses them:

- D I now ask you, are you willing to receive name(s) of candidate(s) as a member of the Deaconess Community, and are you willing to support her with your love and your prayers, so that together we may be perfected in the Holy Spirit?
- a Yes by the help of God; we welcome you as a member of our Community.

The directing deaconess greets each candidate:

- D I hereby declare you a member of the Deaconess Community of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and authorize you to share in its privileges and responsibilities.

The directing deaconess and/or Chair of the Board presents each candidate with the pin.

The blessing:

- D God Almighty, bless, preserve, and sanctify you and endow you with all faith, love, wisdom, and humility."
- a Amen

The following is the preferred consecration rite used by the Deaconess Community (2007-2011)**

CONSECRATION RITE FOR DEACONESSES

a = Response by the Community; R = Candidate, P = Pastor, D = Directing Deaconess

The Hymn of the Day:

(The Directing Deaconess for the Deaconess Community ELCA, presents the deaconess)

I present for consecration to the office of deaconess, Sister _____, who has been prepared and approved by the _____ Synod and the Deaconess Community, and called by the _____ of the _____.

a **Thanks be to God**

P All baptized Christians are called to share in Christ's ministry of love and service in the world, to the glory of God and for the sake of the human family and the whole creation. The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ anointed with his Spirit Miriam and Deborah, Stephen and Philip, Phoebe and Priscilla, calling them to faithful service. Those who have been called to the diaconate assist in the Church's mission to proclaim the Gospel.

Christ calls deaconesses to be God's Word in the midst of the world. Christ calls deaconesses to bring the needs of God's world to the Church. This call is a call to public ministry, witness, and service that exemplifies Christ-like self-giving and leads the Church and all its baptized members to witness to Christ in the world.

You have been called to be a deaconess, to give leadership in the Church's mission to proclaim the gospel through word and deed. Therefore, serve the needy, care for the sick, comfort the distressed, and through words and actions, witness to God's love for all people

In the exercise of your ministry as a deaconess you are to seek out those places where the gospel of Jesus Christ meets human need. Serve Christ with pastors and bishops, deacons, deaconesses, diaconal ministers, associates in ministry and all other leaders in this Church. Empower, equip and support all the baptized in the ministry of Jesus Christ. Be a leader in proclaiming the gospel in witness and service.

Saint Paul teaches: "There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit gives them. There are different ways of serving, but the same Lord is served. There are different abilities to perform service, but the same God gives to everyone ability for particular service. The Spirit's presence is shown in some way in each person, for the good of all." (I Cor 12:4-7)

The presiding minister questions the candidate(s):

P Before almighty God, to whom you must give account, and in the presence of this assembly, I ask:
Will you accept this ministry, and as a servant of God perform the work of a deaconess in the Church? R I will and I ask God to help me

P The Church in which you serve confesses that the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God and are the norm of its faith and life. We accept, teach, and confess the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene and the Athanasian Creeds. We also acknowledge the Lutheran Confessions as true witness and faithful expositions of the Holy Scriptures. Will you serve in accordance with the Holy Scriptures and these creeds and confessions? R I will, and I ask God to help me.

P Will you be diligent in your study of the Holy Scriptures and faithful in your use of the means of grace and in prayer? R I will, and I ask God to help me.

P Will you witness in word and deed, and by your own example encourage God's people in faithful service and holy living? R I will and I ask God to help me.

P Almighty God, who has given you the will to do these things, graciously give you the strength and compassion to perform them R Amen.

Prayers of the People:

Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, and for all people according to their needs.

P For the holy catholic Church, that it may be filled with your love, may hunger for truth, and may thirst after righteousness: Lord in your mercy,

a **hear our prayer.**

P For all the members of the Church that they may serve you in true and godly lives: Lord, in your mercy,

a **hear our prayer.**

P For name, our bishop(s), for our pastors, deaconesses, diaconal ministers, associates in ministry and for all those responsible for the care and nurture of your people: Lord, in your mercy,

a **hear our prayer.**

P For name, called to be a deaconess in your Church, that, sustained and encouraged by the indwelling of your Holy Spirit, she may faithfully fulfill the duties of this ministry: Lord, in your mercy,

a **hear our prayer.**

P For the Church, that in faithful witness it may proclaim the Gospel and in humble love serve the poor: Lord, in your mercy,

a **hear our prayer.**

P For the nations of the world and their leaders, that they may work for justice and promote the dignity and freedom of every person: Lord, in your mercy,

a **hear our prayer.**

P For the just and proper use of your creation, that the world may be freed from poverty and famine: Lord, in your mercy,

a **hear our prayer.**

Other intercessions may be offered.

P For the glorious company of all the saints, those who have died in faith and those who live in certain hope, we praise you; that their witness may give us courage until the day of Jesus Christ: Lord, in your mercy,

a **hear our prayer.**

P Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

a **Amen**

A hymn may be sung

Candidate kneels

P The Lord be with you

a **And also with you.**

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
a **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

P Holy God, mighty Lord, gracious Father: We thank you for sending your son, Jesus, your Word in flesh who proclaimed your kingdom in words and deeds of service to the poor and the suffering. Christ took on himself the form of a servant for the sake of all. He showed us that whoever would be great must be servant of all. We praise you for the many ministries in your Church and for calling this your servant (name) to this ministry of Word and service.

The presiding minister lays both hands on the deaconess' head. Other rostered persons may be invited to participate by the presiding minister.

Heavenly Father, pour out your Holy Spirit upon Sister _____, called to be a deaconess in your Church. Consecrate her to this holy ministry and empower her service. Bless her service that she may worthily exercise the ministry entrusted to her. Let her life and teaching so reflect your grace that many may come to know You and love You through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

a **AMEN**

P The office of the ministry of deaconess is committed to you, in the name of the Father and of the Son (+), and of the Holy Spirit. AMEN

Those participating in the laying on of hands step back as Sister _____ and the Directing Deaconess stand and face one another.

D Receive and wear this cross as a sign of your calling to serve Christ and Christ's people. Confess your faith in the risen Christ, and bear in your heart the love of Christ who died on the cross for you.

D The consecration verse:.....

Gifts appropriate to the office of deaconess may be presented at this time:

Basin and Towel (a unifying and universal symbol of the ministry of diaconia):

P: Receive this basin and towel as a sign that you are to serve as Christ served, humbling himself and taking the form of a servant. Hear what our Lord Jesus Christ says: "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord – and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example; that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them."
(John 13:12b-17)

Oil Stock (to express the healing ministry of chaplaincy, parish ministry, etc)

The presiding minister and the deaconess turn to face the assembled congregation, who is asked to rise:

P People of God, will you receive Sister _____ who is consecrated as a deaconess this day to serve all people in Christ's name?

a **We will.**

P Will you pray for her, help and honor her for her work's sake, and in all things strive to live together in the peace and unity of Christ?

a **We will**

The deaconess may kneel for the blessing.

P Eternal God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, creator of man and woman: You anointed with the Spirit Miriam and Deborah and Hannah and Huldah, you chose the virgin Mary to be the mother of your only Son, and you set apart women for service in your holy temple. Bless this your servant who has been consecrated a deaconess. Protect her, and grant that in singleness of purpose and with a willing mind she may accomplish the service committed to her to the praise of Christ to whom be glory with you and the Holy Spirit forever.

The peace is shared....followed by the offering

NOTE: the following is the Preface used at the installation of Sister Anne Keffer as directing deaconess, October, 2004, created with the help of the Rev. Drs. Stephen and Rebecca Larsen. Permission to use is granted:

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior, Jesus Christ; who on the night of his betrayal washed his disciples' feet and commanded them to love and serve one another. You poured out the fire of your Spirit to enliven the ministry of all people and promised to be with us even to the end of the age. And so with servants of every time and every place, and with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

The deaconess may assist in the historic diaconate's role in Holy Communion: receiving the gifts of bread and wine; preparing the altar; distributing Holy Communion; caring for the altar and vessels following the distribution. (She may change into alb during the receiving of the offering) Reading the Gospel in the assembly, while historically the role of the diaconate, will have taken place prior to this rite. It is especially appropriate for the newly consecrated deaconess to take the Holy Communion to the sick or homebound immediately following this service.

If the Bishop of the Synod into which the deaconess is called agrees, she may have a deacon stole presented to her, with words such as: "Receive this deacon stole, a symbol of the historic diaconate role during worship, gathering up the skirts of your gown so that you may serve more easily."

**** This rite, as presented, reflects certain historical, theological, and liturgical differences with the established ELCA consecration rite.**

The official ELCA rite of consecration for deaconesses and diaconal ministers may be accessed as follows:
<http://www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Worship/Resources/Ministry-Rites.aspx>
