Handbook
Revised April 2020

Deaconess Community of the ELCA
also serving the ELCIC
8765 W. Higgins Road, Suite 405
Chicago, Illinois, 60631 – USA

For the love of Christ compels us ... II Corinthians 5:14
Community Directory may be accessed online by going to:

https://members.instantchurchdirectory.com/

If this is your first time using the Directory follow these simple steps:

1. Go to members.InstantChurchDirectory.com
2. Click on the Create Login button under: First time signing in?
3. Enter your email address that is on file with the Community. And follow the online instructions.

Cover graphic by Marla Mendenhall

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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.

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

The Deaconess Motto
What do I wish? I wish to serve.

Whom do I wish to serve? The Lord, in His poor and needy ones.
And what is my reward? I do not serve either for reward or for thanks, but out of gratitude and love; my reward is that I may do this.
And if I perish in doing it? “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.
And if I grow old? 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. ~Wilhelm Löhe
Statement of Welcome

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 *work for justice and flourishing of all God’s creation* 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.”

*BOD 2020.05.03 M/S/A to adopt the revised Statement of Welcome to reflect language of our Vision and Mission.*
Introduction

As an intentional community of rostered diaconal womxn, members of the Deaconess Community of the ELCA, also serving in the ELCIC, (DC) commit to one another in bold and relational ways. This Handbook provides information and guidance concerning our life together as members of the Deaconess Community of the ELCA. Intended as a reference, the Handbook guides and informs our life together as we are both sustained by and accountable to Community.

The content has been revised and updated over the years to reflect changes in internal policy and practice. Content that restates or paraphrases the standards, policies and practices of the ELCA, as they apply to the Ministers of Word and Service roster, or the ELCIC, as they apply to its Diaconal Ministry roster, are available in the section titled ELCA/ELCIC Roster Resources in Section V of this Handbook.

The Handbook is available hard copy from our Community office and, or available on the Internal Community Section of our website:

https://deaconesscommunity.org under Organizational Documents.

The Deaconess Community of the ELCA

Deaconess Community of the ELCA Bylaws – Article 3, Purpose, Membership and Functions, approved September 2020

3.1 The Deaconess Community is a prophetic Christ-centered community of diaconal womxn, called to impact a broken world by accompanying, forming, equipping, and resourcing diaconal leaders and communities. This ministry relates the Gospel to human need in every situation, builds bridges across divides and works with the Church’s mission to proclaim the Gospel and to extend the ministry of diakonia to all the world.

3.2. (In part) Members are committed to prophetic diakonia and strengthened for service through the Deaconess Community…

3.3 In order to participate in God’s mission through diaconal ministry, the Deaconess Community shall:

3.3.1 proclaim the sustaining love and grace of Christ through radical hospitality in word, deed, and ministry;
3.3.2 nurture and support one another in ministry and daily life;
3.3.3 strengthen, promote, and provide spiritual, professional and personal growth of its members;
3.3.4 encourage and equip God’s people through discernment and educational opportunities that motivate and challenge its members and others to fulfill their calling to serve God in the world;
3.3.5 manifest the unity of the community in Christ by strategically joining with ELCA, ELCIC, ecumenical, and interfaith partners in prayer and action; and
3.3.6 serve and advocate for humanity, strive for dignity and justice for all people, work for peace and reconciliation and stand with the marginalized.
I. Life in Community

The DC is unique in its commitment to walk with candidates in early stages of their formation and to continue to uplift and sustain its members throughout their ministries. The call to intentional community includes grounding in the Word, dedication to service, and a shared spiritual journey. While there are many and various ways we accompany one another, there are also rich historical, traditional, and intentional ways we seek to commit to this community. This section is devoted to various dimensions of our life within this Community, along with mutual expectations and resources.

A. Our Rule of Life

1. Compelled by the love of Christ and sustained by Community, we commit to living and practicing our 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.

   Deaconess Community Guiding Principles – 2019 Assembly

2. Worship and prayer are central to our continual deepening relationship with Christ and call to diakonia. As a Community, we believe worship and prayer are essential to the life and service of each member and therefore,

   - we are encouraged to make use of a spiritual director and to participate in regular spiritually formative retreats;
   - we attend worship regularly and actively participate as a member of a Lutheran congregation;

3. As a Community, we believe we are sustained and nurtured by intercessory prayer and therefore, we participate in daily Community prayer; praying for our Sisters, partners, leaders and the world’s needs as we pray for the flourishing of all God’s creation.
4. The Community in Assembly, Leadership Team, Board of Directors, Committees and Working Groups seek to enhance the life of this Community through programs and events, while emphasizing our shared diaconal focus through spiritual growth, support and fellowship among the members.

   - One way we do this is by participating in each Deaconess Community of the ELCA Assembly to deepen Community partner relationships, study, reflect, worship and to tend to the business of the Community.

5. Acting on a call to diakonia within the diaconate, each deaconess is encouraged to be an active interpreter of and advocate for the diaconate.

B. Community Covenant

As we foster community, we commit to mutual accountability in our life together and seek to live fully into our Community Covenant with the grace and help of God.

The Community Covenant and accompanying Responsibility and Reconciliation Protocol were adopted at the 2012 Assembly. This Covenant is a statement of community-directed behavior expectations, including a process for addressing internal relational issues in a spirit of restorative justice.

The Community Covenant is available in Section V - Resources in this Handbook.

C. Life-long Formation and Wellness

As we are sustained by Community and seek the flourishing of all God’s creation, we are expected to participate in life-long formation and wellness that tends to the needs of our body, soul and mind. Actively listening to our body, soul and mind, we practice and participate in

   - congregational, synodical and, or ecumenical study/formation groups;
   - continuing education, spiritual formation/direction, and, or holistic wellness opportunities
   - sabbatical opportunities offered through our call;
   - promoting life-long formation and wellness for all God’s people;
   - making healthy daily life choices;

See Section III Finances in this Handbook for Life-Long Formation funding resources.
And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Hebrews 10:24-25

II. Membership

Deaconess Community of the ELCA Bylaw – Article 3, approved September 2020

3.3 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.

A. Formation

The process for becoming a member of the DC is found in The Deaconess Community Formation Guide. The document provides background information on this Community and discusses formation in the context of tradition, values, definitions, process descriptions, and basic requirements. While the Formation Guide’s primary audience is inquirers, candidates and the Committee on Vocation and Education (CoVE), it is a resource for the entire Community and may be accessed through the website.

The Deaconess Community Formation Guide is available hard copy from the DC office and/or available on the Internal Community Section of our website: https://deaconesscommunity.org under Community Documents — currently under revision by CoVE
B. Good Standing in the Deaconess Community

Both candidates and rostered deaconesses shall be considered in good standing in the DC 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 each year.

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 Executive Committee as appropriate, as well as provide steps for restoration of good standing.

Deaconess Community Assembly
September 2019

For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.

Romans 12:4-5
C. Causes for Discipline and Disciplinary Procedures

In addition to this Community’s internal expectations and mutual covenant which moves them into the world, members are required to live according to the constitutional standards for rostered leaders in the ELCA and ELCIC and in accord with their denominations expectations as found in the *ELCA Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline* or the *Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada Manual re Discipline of Rostered Ministers*. Specific causes for discipline, and disciplinary procedures, are outlined by both church bodies in these documents.

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

When a cause for discipline involves DC’s established internal expectations relating to good standing and/or mutually accountable covenant,

- the Responsibility and Reconciliation Protocol will be implemented as a process for addressing internal relational issues in a spirit of restorative justice.
- the directing deaconess and Executive Committee will implement the process for reconciliation and/or termination of membership with the sister.

D. Reinstatement to the Deaconess Community

1. Should a deaconess be removed from the roster of the ELCA/ELCIC 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. Once approved for reinstatement by the ELCA or ELCIC, the womxn may submit an application for reinstatement to the DC.

2. Should a deaconess be removed from the membership of this Community for disciplinary or other reasons, consideration of future reinstatement to DC is the responsibility of the Committee on Vocation and Education (CoVE).

   The Application for Reinstatement to this Community will include at least:

   - A report of the psychological evaluation and career consultation
   - A statement of activities since resigning from the Community, and reasons for requesting reinstatement
   - Evidence of a possible call

The applicant will meet with 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 DC. If not recommended for reinstatement by CoVE, the womxn may request a review of the process by the board of directors.
Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:2

E. Continued Membership in the Deaconess Community – BOD 16.04.14 M/S/A

Womxn become members of this Community by first becoming members of the Word and Service Roster of the ELCA or the Diaconal Minister Roster of the ELCIC. Should a Deaconess no longer be on one of these rosters, she is no longer a member of the DC. (Bylaw 3.3) However, a Deaconess in Good Standing may apply for continued full membership in the DC itself without being reinstated to a churchwide roster.

Application for continued membership in the DC must be submitted to the Director of Vocation and Education within one year of leaving or being removed from the roster. The application will include:

- A reflective statement explaining why they are no longer on the Word and Service or Diaconal Minister roster and why they seek continued membership in the Deaconess Community.
- The Continued Membership Form which includes reflection on the Wholeness Wheel Model and a statement of intention to maintain full and active membership in an ELCA/ELCIC congregation, or one of our full communion partner churches.

The applicant will meet with CoVE, who will make a recommendation to the Board of Directors regarding continued membership. The Board will act on the request as brought forward by CoVE. If not approved by the Board, the applicant may reapply for continued membership after one year.

Women who have been approved for continued membership and remain in good standing shall reapply for membership in the community every five years until retirement or age 70.

The process for Continued Membership is being further clarified by CoVE.
F. Resigning from or termination of a call

A deaconess planning to resign, or having learned of the termination of their call, should consult with the directing deaconess and their 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.

G. 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 ensure 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 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 team. 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 they feel are pastorally appropriate.

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

Psalm 133:1
III. Finances

A. Contributions

A member or candidate may make contributions to the Community in a variety of ways.

- Cash or check donations may be made during Community gatherings.
- Checks may be sent to the Deaconess Community office.
- Online contributions:
  - From our website: [https://deaconesscommunity.org](https://deaconesscommunity.org) Select the Internal Community Section from the menu (do not choose from the dropdown items). By selecting the donate button at the very end of that page you will be given the option to set up one-time and/or recurring "community contributions" from your checking or savings accounts or from your credit card. You will have the ability to create a profile that gives you access to log on to the donation/payment link to manage your payments.
  - GivePlus Church” to use your smartphone, go to the App Store or Google Play and search for “GivePlus Church” and download the app for FREE. Once you have the app, simply search for "The Deaconess Community" and then follow the instructions provided at: [https://giveplushelp.vancopayments.com/images/GivePlus_Mobile_How_it_work.pdf](https://giveplushelp.vancopayments.com/images/GivePlus_Mobile_How_it_work.pdf)
  - Vanco direct deposits from your account may be set up through the office. Please contact the accountant for information on using Vanco for direct deposit.

B. Reimbursement

1. Travel Policy: Policies regarding travel arrangements, eligible expenses and expense reimbursement may be found in the Travel Policy for the Deaconess Community.

   This policy is available on our website and/or in Section V - Resources of this Handbook.

2. A member may receive reimbursement for travel, room & board for a majority of the expenses associated with Community meetings for the Board of Directors, Committees and/or Working Groups. Please review the Travel Policy for reimbursement eligibility. Reimbursement is paid through check or direct deposit. Please contact our accountant to arrange for reimbursements through direct deposit.

3. If representing this Community at a conference, event and, or meeting, please request a written explanation of shared costs and reimbursement eligibility.
C. Financial Support

1. Financial Support for Continuing Education - Each deaconess is encouraged to take advantage of the opportunities for continuing education and funding resources that are available through their call. Each deaconess is also encouraged to pursue sabbatical opportunities, which may include continuing education components, as they may be offered and funded through their call.

The DC 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 ordained 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. A 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, as well as an itemized statement of projected expenses and other funding sources. When completed, the application, available on our website or from our office, is submitted to the Director of Vocation and Education (DoVE)/CoVE. https://deaconesscommunity.org/2018/11/06/community-documents/

2. Financial Support During Formation
   See Section V – Resources in this Handbook for additional information.

Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind.
1 Peter 3:8
D. Care of Sisters Policy

The Care of Sisters Policy provides for fair and equitable consideration for all who seek assistance. Historical terms used in the policy include:

Cooperative plan - In the early days of the Deaconess Community all sisters served in a cooperative plan of remuneration in which they gave their salaries to the Community, and were reimbursed according to their need, also receiving a quarterly allowance and funds to cover clothing, vacations, etc. In retirement, many of these sisters turned over their Social Security and pension benefits to the community, and were cared for in the motherhouse, which included independent and assisted living and skilled nursing care.

Cooperative/Salaried - Beginning in the 1960’s and 1970’s, deaconesses had the opportunity to retain their salaries and contribute a percentage of their income to the Community to support its motherhouse and operation. In 1978, the “cooperative plan” was dissolved by the LCA. The LCA promised to “assure life-long care” for deaconesses who served in the cooperative plan before 1978. During the Gladwyne years (apx. 1962 – 2002), measures were adopted over time to provide equity for retired sisters who had been “co-op” and salaried, or both.

The Care of Sisters Policy, administered by the directing deaconess, is available on our website or in Section V Resources of this Handbook.

There are two financial assistance programs available through this Community.

1. Supplemental Income in Retirement

Eligibility: Income support in retirement is available to sisters who served under the cooperative/salaried (ELCA/ELCIC) plans who meet the following criteria:

- They are retired with at least ten years’ membership in the community;
- They have reached full social security retirement age or qualifies for social security disability;
- Their total income falls at or below a minimum income that provides basic necessities like food, clothing, shelter and transportation.
- The value of all their assets is less than $150,000 (of which no more than $40,000 may be cash or investments); and
- They live in either an independent setting, or in an assisted living or skilled nursing facility.

2. Emergency or Special Needs Assistance

Eligibility: Financial assistance is available to all members of the DC who are confronted with short-term emergency situations, with the following provisions:

- All sisters are eligible to apply for assistance.
- Priority will be given to maintaining health insurance coverage for sisters on leave from call, or without call.
- Funds will also be available for physical, medical and mental health care expenses that are not covered by the sister’s insurance.
- The sister has no or limited resources available to meet this need.
E. Burial Assistance

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

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

F. Financial Matters Relating to Employment

Sisters should be familiar with their synod’s compensation guidelines and understand the benefits available to them through their employer, so that they can make informed choices and advocate on their own behalf. Sisters should also be familiar with their employer’s personnel policy. The policy should provide for an annual performance review and opportunity to set future goals.

If serving in an approved part-time call, sisters should insure they are provided, or have access to, adequate health and pension benefits. In the United States sisters must be enrolled in Social Security and 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 sister 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. Other Sources of Assistance to Deaconesses in the ELCA

- Ministers of Word and Service in the ELCA, active and retired, may also be eligible for income assistance from the Special Needs Retirement Fund (offered by Portico Benefit Services), 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 program may extend to their spouses and dependents who meet the assistance criteria.

Additional information about these resources, including qualifications and contact information, is available through a member’s synodical bishop.
For where two or three are gathered in my name,  
I am there among them.  Matthew 18:20

IV. Partnerships

Recognizing we are called to prophetic diakonia, the DC practices cultivating partnerships, as we continue to build on our historical partnerships and also seek strategic partners who work for justice and the flourishing of all God’s creation.

DIAKONIA World Federation
http://www.diakonia-world.org
The federation was organized in 1947 to further ecumenical relationships among global diaconal associations and communities. It aims to reflect on the nature and task of diakonia in the biblical sense; to further a sense of diakonia in churches, to strengthen communion among members, to render mutual help, and to undertake common tasks which promote prophetic diakonia. The world community meets in Assembly every four years.

DIAKONIA offers an international and ecumenical community of diaconal friendship, connecting us in diversity and commonality.
DIAKONIA broadens our worldview and deepens our sense of diaconal vocation.
DIAKONIA reminds the church of God’s call to service, justice, compassion, and peace for creation,
and assists us in living out our ministries in the world with vision and hope.
The church is not the church without diakonia.

DIAKONIA of the Americas and Caribbean (DOTAC)
http://dotac.diakonia-world.org
As one of three geographical regions in the DIAKONIA World Federation, DOTAC, is comprised of twelve diaconal communities. The DOTAC Board of Directors consists of one representative from each of the member communities. Six of the communities are from the United States, four Canadian, one is based in the Caribbean and one in Brazil. Five are Lutheran, three are Methodist, two Episcopalian/Anglican, one Presbyterian, and one United Church. The regional community meets in Assembly every four years.
DOTAC links and gathers those engaged in diakonia, is a prophetic voice for ecumenical relations and social justice, and encourages, supports and empowers the development of groups doing diakonia in the region.

DOTAC works –
- To encourage ecumenical relationships among diaconal associations, sisterhoods, and orders in North America, the Caribbean, Central America, and South America.
- To strengthen a sense of community among the associations, sisterhoods, and orders.
- To reflect on the nature and task of the diakonia in the New Testament sense and to further the understanding of it.
- To provide a forum for discussion of issues of mutual concern.
- To render mutual assistance and undertake common tasks.

Kaiserswerth General Conference
https://kaiserswerther-generalkonferenz.org/de
Founded in 1861, the General Conference is an international union of Motherhouses and diaconal agencies with Sisters and service communities of the Kaiserswerth tradition. The DC has held membership since its beginning in 1884. The community currently holds a seat on the Presidium as the non-European representative. 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. As Assembly is held every three years and professional development seminars are organized intermittent.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)
https://www.elca.org
Our historical partnership is rooted in the ELCA predecessor bodies where we held an Office and served on the roster of The Deaconess Community of the ELCA. With the unification of the three ELCA Word and Service rosters, we continue to be rostered in the ELCA as Ministers of Word and Service and live the mission of the ELCA as together in Jesus Christ we are freed by grace to live faithfully, witness boldly and serve joyfully. Our partnership seeks to build on our historical relationship rooted in the roster and engage the breadth of the ELCA’s ministry of forgiveness, reconciliation and transformation; dignity, compassion and justice; and inclusion and diversity through its units, organizations and partners.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC)
http://www.elcic.ca
With sisters serving in the ELCIC and a relationship grown out of shared leadership, participation on our Board of Directors and Committees, our Community continues to seek to grow our partnership with the ELCIC particularly through the National Office and Bishop. Drawing on their Four Vision Priorities: Courageous Innovation, Reconciled Relationships, One Body Working Together, and Empowered Disciples, we will continue to work with them to bring the Gospel to people in Canada and around the world.
Poor People’s Campaign, A National Call for a Moral Revival (PPC)  
https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org  
The DC became an endorsing partner of the PPC during the 2019 Assembly. Creating a PPC Working Group to hold the Community accountable to the endorsement, the Community seeks to work with the campaign to change the moral narrative in the United States, serve as advocates for the campaign demands, educate, unite and work for change of unjust systems.

ReconcilingWorks  
https://www.reconcilingworks.org  
The DC became a Reconciling in Christ Community during the 2016 Assembly as we committed to our oneness in Christ. As we continue to strive to be a safe place, our partnership provides opportunity for shared learning, network development and accountability as we daily practice being a Reconciling in Christ Community.

Tumushubire Community, Tanzania  
Tumushubire is one of the institutions under the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania Karagwe-kyerwa Diocese. It was inaugurated in 1992 and founded by Sr. Hedi Hennrich and Sr. Hanna Goebel from Germany. They work to unify their sister’s association in the image of God. They also work to create a sister’s community center which is unified with God’s fellowship through Bible study, self-reliance, small business, recreation and formulating Christian women group for different training and running training for different groups according to the needs in the society around us. The ministry of Tumushubire Community is centered, positioned and committed in the word of God "The good Samaritan" (Luke 10:25 – 37) We are called to serve.

Mission Grant Partners  
Since 2004, this Community has granted over $2 million to ministries around the world demonstrating:

- 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;
- 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.

The Grant recipients are posted on our website https://deaconesscommunity.org
**Historical Programs**

**Diaconal Year Program** - In 1957, a self-supporting opportunity was instituted for men and womxn 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 Community mission event.

**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 womxn 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.

**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 give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.”

*John 13:34*
V. Resources –

A. Bylaws
B. Community Covenant and Protocol
C. Care of Sisters Policy
D. ELCA/ELCIC Roster Resources
E. Travel Policy
F. Financial Support during Formation
G. End of Life Matters and Estate Planning
H. Personal/End of Life Choices/Celebration of Life Service Information Sheet
A. Bylaws

Approved 2020 Deaconess Community of the ELCA

BYLAWS

of

The Deaconess Community of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

PREAMBLE OF HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS

The Deaconess Community of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America expresses the continuity of deaconess work in the Lutheran Church in America (a) as conceived in an agreement dated January 13, 1966, among three corporations existing at that time, viz. Mary J. Drexel Home and Philadelphia Motherhouse of Deaconesses, The Baltimore Lutheran Deaconess Motherhouse and School, Inc., and the Board of College Education and Church Vocations and its successor, the Division for Professional Leadership, both of the Lutheran Church in America, and (b) as of September 7, 1965, by joining with the sisterhood previously affiliated with the Immanuel Deaconess Institute of the former Augustana Lutheran Church. This continuity is particularly defined and shaped by the actions pertaining to deaconess work of the 1978 convention of the Lutheran Church in America and by the official documents of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

ARTICLE 1: NAME AND INCORPORATION

This document records the bylaws which regulate the corporation known as The Deaconess Community of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America which will be referred to herein as the “Deaconess Community.” The corporation so named was formed by decree of the Court of Common Pleas of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, dated August 5, 1966, approving the articles of incorporation. The decree, together with the articles of incorporation, was recorded on August 8, 1966, in the Office for the Recording of Deeds for Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, in Charter Book 14, at pages 301 and 302. The Deaconess Community, through corporate merger, is successor to The Baltimore Lutheran Deaconess Motherhouse and School, Inc., and The Mary J. Drexel Home and Philadelphia Motherhouse of Deaconesses. In 1988, the name was changed from the Deaconess Community of the Lutheran Church in America to The Deaconess Community of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

1.1 Registered office: The registered office of the Deaconess Community shall be at such location in Pennsylvania as the directors may from time to time determine.

1.2 Other offices: The Deaconess Community may also have offices at such other places as the directors may select and the business of the community shall require.

ARTICLE 2: CHURCH RELATIONSHIP

The Deaconess Community, relates to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, referred to herein as the “ELCA,” through the ELCA’s Domestic Mission Unit.
ARTICLE 3: PURPOSE, MEMBERSHIP, AND FUNCTIONS

3.1 The Deaconess Community is a prophetic Christ-centered community of diaconal womxn, called to impact a broken world by accompanying, forming, equipping, and resourcing diaconal leaders and communities. This ministry relates the Gospel to human need in every situation, builds bridges across divides and works with the Church’s mission to proclaim the Gospel and to extend the ministry of diakonia to all the world.

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.

3.3 In order to participate in God’s mission through diaconal ministry, the Deaconess Community shall:

3.3.1 proclaim the sustaining love and grace of Christ through radical hospitality in word, deed, and ministry;
3.3.2 nurture and support one another in ministry and daily life;
3.3.3 strengthen, promote, and provide spiritual, professional and personal growth of its members;
3.3.4 encourage and equip God’s people through discernment and educational opportunities that motivate and challenge its members and others to fulfill their calling to serve God in the world;
3.3.5 manifest the unity of the community in Christ by strategically joining with ELCA, ELCIC, ecumenical, and interfaith partners in prayer and action; and
3.3.6 serve and advocate for humanity, strive for dignity and justice for all people, work for peace and reconciliation and stand with the marginalized.

ARTICLE 4: THE DEACONESS ASSEMBLY

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.

4.2 The Deaconess Assembly shall be the highest authority within the Deaconess Community. It shall:

4.2.1 review the work of the Board of Directors and committees, and for this purpose require and receive reports and act on proposed business;
4.2.2 elect the Directing Deaconess and members of the Board of Directors as provided in the bylaws;
4.2.3 have the sole authority to amend the bylaws;
4.2.4 fulfill other functions as required in the bylaws; and
4.2.5 conduct such other business as necessary to further the purposes and functions of the Deaconess Community; and

4.3 The Deaconess Assembly shall meet at least biennially to review the work of the Deaconess Community and to plan for the future; its agenda shall also include elements of worship, fellowship and education.

4.4 The Deaconess Assembly shall be called into session at a time and place determined by it or by the Board of Directors.

4.5 The Directing Deaconess shall chair sessions of the Deaconess Assembly. A vice chairperson and a secretary for each session of the Deaconess Assembly may be approved by the Board of Directors from among the members in good standing of the Deaconess Community.

4.6 The members present shall constitute a quorum.

4.7 Notice of the convening of a Deaconess Assembly shall be provided to the entire membership by mail or electronic communication at least two months prior to the opening of an assembly.

4.8 The Presiding Bishops of the ELCA and ELCIC, or the bishop’s designee, shall be invited to attend each meeting of the Deaconess Assembly.

4.9 The Deaconess Assembly shall use parliamentary procedures in accordance with Robert’s Rules of Order, latest edition, unless otherwise ordered by the assembly.

ARTICLE 5: THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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.

5.1.1 A majority of the voting members shall constitute a quorum for any boardmeeting.

5.2 The term of a director shall be four years, and the terms shall be arranged so that approximately half of the directors are elected every two years. No director shall serve more than two terms consecutively. Terms of newly elected directors shall begin on January 1st 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 as interim shall begin their term upon election. Outgoing directors shall continue in office until their elected successors begin service.

5.2.1 Interim appointments. When a board vacancy is to be filled between elections, the Executive Committee shall select a candidate to fill the unexpired term and submit that
person’s name to the Deaconess Community for a mail or electronic vote within 6 months. A simple majority of members in good standing is required to affirm the appointment. In computing an interim appointee’s eligibility for continued board membership, service which precedes a full term without interruption shall be disregarded if less than half a term.

5.3 The Board of Directors shall be accountable to the Deaconess Assembly for the management of the affairs of the Deaconess Community and to the ELCA for policies relating to the Deaconess Community. The Board of Directors shall act for the Deaconess Community in the interim between sessions of the Deaconess Assembly, but may not act contrary to the Deaconess Assembly’s decisions or those of the ELCA. Specifically, the Board of Directors shall:

5.3.1 carry out corporate and fiduciary responsibilities on behalf of the Deaconess Community;
5.3.2 establish policy for the management of the financial resources of the Deaconess Community;
5.3.3 adopt annual current budgets which project no deficit spending;
5.3.4 have power to authorize contracts;
5.3.5 exercise responsibility for all properties owned or leased by the Deaconess Community;
5.3.6 oversee the responsibilities of the Deaconess Community for those who were on the cooperative plan;
5.3.7 determine staff structure for the Deaconess Community, and in consultation with the Leadership Team, employ executive and program staff;
5.3.8 maintain committee charters and review and act on committee reports as needed;
5.3.9 report annually to the members of the Deaconess Community and to the ELCA’s Church Council and
5.3.10 carry out such other responsibilities as the Deaconess Assembly may assign from time to time.

5.4 The Board of Directors, if it determines that a director is unable to carry out their responsibilities, may vote to remove that director from the board in accordance with these bylaws.

The dismissal of a director may be affected:
 a. for willful disregard or violation of the bylaws and standards of this Community;

 b. for such physical or mental disability as renders the director incapable of performing the duties of the office; or

 c. for such conduct as would subject the director to disciplinary action as a member of a roster of the ELCA or ELCIC, or as a member of a congregation of one of these church bodies.

 d. for such other reasons as a majority of directors deem to warrant dismissal.

5.5 Should the Directing Deaconess die, resign or be unable to serve, its chairperson shall convene the Board of Directors to arrange for the appropriate care of the responsibilities of the Directing Deaconess until an election of a new Directing Deaconess can be held or until the Directing Deaconess is able to serve again. The term of the successor Directing Deaconess, elected by the next Deaconess Assembly, or a special meeting of the Deaconess Assembly called for the purpose of
election, shall be four years, with the subsequent election to take place at the assembly closest to the expiration of such a term.

Proceedings for dismissal of the Directing Deaconess shall be instituted at petition by:

a. the Board of Directors on a vote of at least two-thirds of its members; and

b. the Deaconess Assembly on a vote of at least two-thirds of its members.

5.6 Should the Leadership Team member, other than the Directing Deaconess, die, resign, or be unable to serve, the remaining Leadership Team, with the approval of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors, shall arrange for the appropriate care of the responsibilities of that person until a new person is able to serve again.

5.7 The officers of the Board of Directors shall be a chairperson, a vice chairperson, a secretary and a treasurer. They shall be elected biennially at the last board meeting of each calendar year in which directors are elected by the Deaconess Assembly. Their respective terms shall begin the first day of the following calendar year, and shall expire no later than the conclusion of their respective terms on the Board. Their duties and responsibilities shall be those customary to their respective offices and as set forth in Article 6.

5.7.1. The treasurer may be chosen from outside the directors if necessary to provide for the requisite financial expertise. If so chosen, they shall also be elected biennially by the directors at the last board meeting of each calendar year in which directors are elected by the Deaconess Assembly. A treasurer chosen from outside the board membership shall not serve more than four two-year terms consecutively. An outside treasurer shall have seat and voice, but not vote, in meetings of the Board of Directors and of the Executive Committee.

5.8 The Board of Directors shall meet twice annually, and at such other times as it may deem necessary. The chairperson or the Executive Committee may call meetings of the Board of Directors. The chairperson shall call a meeting when requested to do so in writing by four members of the Board of Directors or by a majority of members in good standing of the Deaconess Community. Notice of a meeting shall be mailed or sent electronically at least three weeks prior to its meeting date.

5.8.1. A majority of the directors in office shall constitute a quorum for any board meeting. The acts of a majority of the directors present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the acts of the Board of Directors.

5.8.2. Teleconference meetings: One or more directors may participate in a meeting of the Board of Directors, or any committee thereof, by means of phone or video conferencing in which all persons participating in the meeting can hear one another.

5.8.3. Action by written consent: Any action which may be taken at a meeting of the Board of Directors may be taken without a meeting, provided that the action is set forth in writing and all of the directors in office give their written consent. The record of such action shall be filed with the Board secretary and distributed to all parties who receive the minutes of regular board meetings.
ARTICLE 6: OFFICERS

6.1 Vacancies
A vacancy in any office may be filled by the Board of Directors for the unexpired portion of the term.

6.2 The Chairperson

The Chairperson shall:

6.2.1 preside at all meetings of the Board of Directors and of the Executive Committee;

6.2.2 be responsible for the development of an agenda for each meeting;

6.2.3 be responsible that the provisions of these bylaws are observed and that the enactments of the Board of Directors are carried out;

6.2.4 have seat and voice in all meetings of each standing committee and of all other committees of the Board; and

6.2.5 have such other powers and perform such other duties as may be incidental to this office, as are given by these bylaws, or as from time to time may be assigned by the Board.

6.3 The Vice-Chairperson

The Vice-Chairperson shall:

6.3.1 in the absence of the chairperson preside at all meetings of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee; and

6.3.2 perform such other duties as from time to time may be assigned by the Board of Directors or the chairperson.

6.4 The Secretary

The Secretary shall:

6.4.1 record the minutes of the meeting of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee;

6.4.2 file the minutes of the Board of Directors or the Executive Committee, and the resolutions by which any actions taken without a meeting are authorized, together with the consents to such action;

6.4.3 transmit promptly a copy of the minutes of each meeting of, and a copy of each resolution by which action is taken without a meeting by the Board of Directors or the Executive Committee to each director;

6.4.4 cause notices to be duly given in accordance with the provision of these bylaws and as required bylaw;
6.4.5 see that all reports and other documents and records required by law are properly filed and kept;

6.4.6 have custody of the records and seal of the corporation and cause the seal to be affixed as authorized; and

6.4.7 have such other powers and perform such other duties as are given by the Board of Directors or the chairperson.

6.5 The Treasurer
The Treasurer shall:

6.5.1 be bonded;

6.5.2 be the chief fiscal officer of the Board;

6.5.3 have responsibility for the receipt and distribution of all moneys, and for the safekeeping of moneys and securities, of the corporation;

6.5.4 keep an accurate account of all financial transactions and report thereon at each meeting of the Board of Directors; and

6.5.5 have such other powers and perform such other duties as from time to time may be assigned by the Board of Directors or the chairperson.

6.6 Resignations
Any officer may resign at any time by giving notice in writing to the Board of Directors or the chairperson. Unless otherwise specified in the notice, the resignation shall take effect upon delivery.

6.7 Removal
Any officer may be removed at any time, either for or without cause, by the Board of Directors.

**ARTICLE 7: COMMITTEES**

7.1 Committees of the Board of Directors shall be appointed by the Chairperson with the concurrence of the Board of Directors, except for the Executive Committee, which is elected by the Board. Each committee shall have at least one director included in its membership, who will serve as its liaison to the Board.

7.1.1 Members of each committee, excluding the Executive Committee and Nominating Committee, shall be appointed for a four-year term, and are eligible to serve one additional consecutive four-year term. A member may be appointed to a subsequent four-year term on the same committee after four or more years’ break from service.

7.1.2 The chair of each committee shall be appointed biennially by the Board of Directors at the last board meeting of each calendar year in which directors are elected by the
Deaconess Assembly. A committee chair’s term shall not exceed his or her term on the committee.

7.1.3 A majority of the voting members shall constitute a quorum for any committee meeting. The acts of a majority of the voting members present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the acts of the committee.

7.1.4 Teleconference meetings: One or more committee members may participate in a meeting by means of phone or video conferencing in which all persons participating in the meeting can hear one another.

7.1.5 Removal
Any committee member may be removed at any time, either for or without cause, by the Board of Directors.

7.2 The Board of Directors shall have general oversight of the work of each committee, establishing policy as appropriate. Each committee shall report, after each meeting, to the Board of Directors. If a committee’s chair is not a director, a board member who serves on that committee shall be its liaison to the Board, and shall give a report to the Board at its next scheduled meeting.

7.3 The Executive Committee shall consist of the officers except that, if the treasurer is not a member of the Board of Directors, one additional “at large” director shall be elected to the committee by the Board of Directors. This committee shall have the power to act on behalf of the Board of Directors in instances requiring interim action, except that it shall not have power to modify any prior action of the Board of Directors. Actions of the Executive Committee shall be reported by electronic communication to the entire Board of Directors within ten days.

7.4 The Committee on Finance and Audit shall consist of at least one director and three other persons chosen for their competence in finance, including one deaconess in good standing. The treasurer shall have seat and voice. This committee shall report to the Board of Directors on all matters concerning fiscal management and shall be responsible for the review of the annual audit. It shall supervise the investments of the Deaconess Community under policies adopted by the Board of Directors.

7.5 The Committee on Vocation and Education shall consist of at least one director and three other persons; including at least two deaconesses in good standing. This committee shall facilitate the processes for becoming and remaining a member of the Deaconess Community, shepherding inquirers, candidates, members, and other diaconal leaders in formation, discernment, and education.

7.6 The Committee on Mission Support shall consist of at least one director and three other persons; including at least two deaconesses in good standing. It shall assist the Deaconess Community in seeking, responding to, evaluating, and selecting mission support opportunities that will facilitate, fulfill, and further its vision and mission.

7.7 The Nominating Committee shall consist of members appointed for a two-year term. A member may be appointed to a subsequent two-year term on the Nominating Committee after two or more years’ break from service. The Nominating Committee shall consist of at least one director and three other persons; including at least one director and three other persons; including at least two
deaconesses in good standing. It shall deal with all matters relating to a) the process and selection of nominees for election to positions on the Board of Directors; b) the process and selection of nominees for election as Directing Deaconess; and c) recommendations for appointment of standing committee members.

7.8. The Personnel Committee shall consist of at least one director and three other persons chosen for their competence and experience in human resources, interpersonal skills and communication, including at least one deaconess in good standing. The committee shall report to the Board of Directors on matters concerning the personnel management of the Deaconess Community, and annual appraisal of the Leadership Team. The committee shall be responsible for review and implementation of the personnel policies.

7.9 The Board of Directors may establish task forces and working groups from time to time as it deems necessary.

ARTICLE 8: STAFF

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.

8.2 The Leadership Team members (including at least the Directing Deaconess and Director of Vocation and Education) shall be accountable to the Deaconess Community, the Board of Directors, and one another for their respective leadership responsibilities. Each shall have seat and voice in all committees and the Board of Directors.

8.2.1 The Leadership Team provides vision and direction for the organization while working in partnership to model radical hospitality and accountability as they serve:

a. the team may include a Directing Deaconess, Director of Vocation and Education and Director of Operations.

b. in collaboration to maintain and implement a current strategic direction;

c. to provide assistance, counsel and guidance, as appropriate, to all committees and the Board of Directors;

d. in consultation with the Board of Directors to employ executive and program staff; and
e. to arrange for the appropriate care of the responsibilities of a staff person if the person dies, resigns, or is unable to serve.

f. oversight of the programs and operations of the Deaconess Community.

8.2.2 The Directing Deaconess shall be elected by the Deaconess Community with responsibility for overseeing the pastoral and spiritual care of the individual sisters and the Community as a whole. She represents the Deaconess Community and serves as liaison with denominational, ecumenical, and interfaith partners.

8.2.3 The Director of Operations shall be appointed by the Board of Directors with responsibility for oversight of the management and administration of the finances, programs, and operations of the Deaconess Community.

8.2.4 The Director of Vocation and Education shall be appointed by the Board of Directors for overseeing and implementing the formation process, and discernment and education opportunities for prospective members, candidates, deaconesses, and the greater church.

ARTICLE 9: FISCAL MATTERS

9.1 The fiscal year shall be the calendar year.

9.2 The Deaconess Community shall not incur deficits in current operations.

9.3 Signing Authority
Each contract or other financial instrument shall be executed by any one of the following: Directing Deaconess, Director of Operations, Director of Vocation and Education, chairperson, vice chairperson, or treasurer. If the amount of any instrument exceeds FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS ($5,000.00), it shall be executed by any two of the above.

ARTICLE 10: INDEMNIFICATION

To the full extent permitted from time to time by law, each person who is or was made or threatened to be made a party to any proceeding by reason of the present or former capacity of that person as a member, director, officer, employee, or committee member of this church shall be indemnified against judgments, penalties, fines, settlements, excise taxes, and reasonable attorneys’ fees and disbursements incurred by that person in connection with the proceeding. This Deaconess Community may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of itself or any person entitled to indemnification pursuant to this chapter against any liability asserted against and incurred by this Deaconess Community or by such other person in or arising from a capacity described above.

ARTICLE 11: DISSOLUTION

Should the corporation cease to act and be dissolved, all of its property and assets remaining after the payment of its liabilities shall be paid and distributed to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, a
Minnesota nonprofit corporation, or its successor or assigns, provided, however, that payment shall be made hereunder only to corporations, trusts, foundations, or other organizations which are organized and operated exclusively for charitable or religious purposes and which shall then be exempt from Federal income tax under Section 501 (a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as amended, as organizations described in Section 501(c) (3) thereof (references to include corresponding provisions of any future revenue law).

ARTICLE 12: AMENDMENTS

12.1 Amendments to these bylaws may be presented: (a) by the board of directors or (b) in writing by five members in good standing of the Deaconess Community. When presented by five members, amendments shall be referred immediately to the board of directors which shall promptly submit its recommendations thereon to the Deaconess Assembly if it is in session or otherwise in writing to the members of the Deaconess Community immediately following the next meeting of the board of directors.

12.2 Amendments to Articles 1, 2, 3, 4.1, and 9 shall be adopted by majority vote of the Deaconess Assembly. Amendments to other articles may be adopted by the same procedure or by mail vote with approval by two-thirds of the members in good standing of the Deaconess Community.

12.3 Before becoming effective, all amendments shall be submitted, through the Office of the Presiding Bishop of the ELCA, and through the office of the national Bishop of the ELCIC as information.

As adopted by the Deaconess Community of the Lutheran Church in America, In Assembly, December 30, 1978 And

As amended October 1, 1994, by the Deaconess Community of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America And

As amended May 16, 2004, by the Deaconess Assembly, approved by the Division for Ministry Board, June 2, 2004 And

As amended by the Deaconess Assembly, May 6, 2006 and approved by the ELCA Church Council Executive Committee July 28, 2006. EC06.07.25. Note: The ELCA Office of the Secretary interprets the Community’s amended bylaws to mean that all amendments are to be submitted through the Vocation and Education unit to the Church Council or its Executive Committee for approval.” And

As amended by the Deaconess Assembly, April 26, 2008 and approved by the ELCA Church Council Executive Committee July 25, 2008. EC08.07.16b. Note: The ELCA Office of the Secretary interprets the Community’s amended bylaws to mean that all amendments are to be submitted through the Vocation and Education unit to the Church Council or its Executive Committee for approval. And

As amended by the Deaconess Assembly, September 29, 2010, submitted by the ELCA Vocation and
As amended by the Deaconess Assembly, October 2, 2011, submitted to the ELCA Office of the Presiding Bishop, and approved by the ELCA Church Council, November 13, 2011. **CC11.11.83u.**

As amended by the Deaconess Assembly, September 24, 2012, submitted to the ELCA Office of the Presiding Bishop, and approved by the ELCA Church Council, November 11, 2012. **CC12.11.44v.**

As amended by the Deaconess Assembly, September 28, 2013, submitted to the ELCA Office of the Presiding Bishop, and approved by the ELCA Church Council, November 10, 2013, the church council voted **CC13.11.69v.**

As amended by the Deaconess Assembly, June 27, 2017, submitted to the ELCA Office of the Presiding Bishop, and approved by the ELCA Church Council, November 9 - 13, 2017. **CC17.11.33h.**


As amended and approved by the Deaconess Community of the ELCA, August 15, 2020, submitted to the ELCA Office of the Presiding Bishop and ELCIC National Bishop for information August 21, 2020. **DC2020.08.01**

*NOTE:* Church Council action **CC10.11.78** also authorized the ELCA Secretary “to make editorial changes to the bylaws related to the redesign of the churchwide organization.” These changes, which consisted of replacing references to the ELCA’s Vocation and Education Unit with the name of the new Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit, which replaced it in the redesign, have been incorporated into these bylaws.

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*Bylaws
Approved 2020 Deaconess Community of the ELCA*
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

1.1 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.

2.2 We will continue professional education and spiritual growth, including participation in the meetings and affairs of the Deaconess Community.
1 Sections I and II adapted from the ACPE and APC Codes of Professional Ethics

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.
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.

~ Community Covenant and Protocol
Approved and affirmed 2012 Assembly
C. Care of Sisters Policy

Approved Board of Directors 11.2018

Policy for Care of Sisters Fund

Introduction and Historical Background

In the Deaconess Community’s early years, all deaconesses served in a “cooperative plan” of remuneration in which they gave their salaries to the Community, and were reimbursed according to their need, also receiving a quarterly allowance and funds to cover clothing, vacations, etc. In retirement, many of these sisters turned over their Social Security and pension benefits to the community, and were cared for in the motherhouse, which included independent and assisted living and skilled nursing care.

Beginning in the 1960’s and 1970’s, deaconesses had the opportunity to retain their salaries and contribute a percentage of their income to the Community to support its motherhouse and operation.

In 1978, the “cooperative plan” was dissolved by the LCA. Former Immanuel sisters, who were retired when the Augustana church became part of the LCA in 1962, were provided for by the church. The LCA further promised to “assure life-long care” for deaconesses who served in the cooperative plan before 1978.

During the Gladwyne years (approx. 1962 – 2002), measures were adopted over time to provide equity for retired sisters who had been “co-op” and salaried, or both. Agreement was reached with each sister regarding how she would pay for care at an institution of her own choosing, or at the Gladwyne house.

In the transitional period after the Gladwyne house was sold, the board of directors made several policy decisions to affirm the community’s historical and ongoing commitment to the care of sisters’ financial needs, both in retirement and in times of emergency need. These included:

- Creation of a Sisters’ Discretionary Fund to provide aid to an invested or consecrated sister who has an emergency or special need, administered by the directing deaconess with oversight by the executive committee of the board.
- Affirmation that “the Community is responsible for lifetime care of those sisters who served full time under the Cooperative Plan.” While in 2004, all those sisters were in care facilities and receiving support from the community, there are no longer sisters living who served fully under the cooperative plan.
- Eligibility for assistance was extended to sisters who had spent part of their service under the co-op plan and part salaried. As of November 1, 2018, there are two sisters in long term care facilities and five sisters living independently who served under the cooperative plan and salaried.
- Any facility being considered for a sister needing assisted living or skilled nursing care must be Medicare/Medicaid approved.
- A requirement that a sister requesting financial assistance must complete an application, providing requested medical and financial information.
Updating the Care of Sisters Policy

The Committee on Finance and Budget has updated the Care of Sisters Policy to broaden eligibility and insure that detailed information is readily available to all who may seek assistance. In doing so, the committee recognizes the need to both 1) inform the community of the forms of assistance available to them in times of need; and 2) insure that the community’s policies provide for fair and equitable consideration for all who seek assistance.

The two assistance programs are described below:

Supplemental Income in Retirement

Eligibility: Income support in retirement is available to sisters who served under the cooperative/salaried (ELCA/ELCIC) who meet the following criteria:

- She is retired with at least ten years’ membership in the community;
- She has reached full social security retirement age or qualifies for social security disability;
- Her total income falls at or below a minimum income that provides basic necessities like food, clothing, shelter and transportation.
- The value of all her assets is less than $150,000 (of which no more than $40,000 may be cash or investments); and
- She lives in either an independent setting, or in an assisted living or skilled nursing facility.

Administration: Requests for supplemental income assistance will be reviewed and approved by the executive committee of the board of directors. Sisters seeking this type of assistance will complete the Application for Financial Assistance. Evidence of income and level of assistance allowed by the sister’s government assistance is also required.

As needed, the Directing Deaconess (DD) will work with the sister in completing forms, seeking other sources of support and contacting referrals. The DD will take the request to the executive committee of the board for action. This committee will report to the board of directors at each meeting on the distributions that have been made from the Care of Sisters Fund (amounts, not names).

The executive committee, Directing Deaconess and accountant hold the confidentiality of the application and action.

The DD and sister will confer each year to determine ongoing eligibility. This will be reported by the DD to the executive committee.

Please note – supplemental income may be subject to income tax.

Emergency or Special Needs Assistance

Eligibility: Financial assistance is available to all members of the Deaconess Community of the ELCA who are confronted with short-term emergency situations, with the following provisions:

- All sisters are eligible to apply for assistance.
• Priority will be given to maintaining health insurance coverage for sisters on leave from call, or without call.
• Funds will also be available for physical, medical and mental health care expenses that are not covered by the sister’s insurance.
• A sister has no or limited resources available to meet this need.

Administration: Sisters seeking emergency or special needs assistance will be required to complete an Application for Financial Assistance. Assistance will usually be in the form of a lump-sum grant paid directly to the service provider.

Requests should be submitted to the directing deaconess, or in her absence, the chair of the board of directors. The directing deaconess may review and approve requests up to $500; requests exceeding $500 must be reviewed and approved by the executive committee of the board. This committee will report to the board of directors at each meeting on the distributions that have been made from the Care of Sisters Fund (amounts, not names).

The executive committee, Directing Deaconess and accountant hold the confidentiality of the application and action.

If the member’s financial situation improves the sister is expected to notify the directing deaconess.

Please note – emergency or special need funding may be subject to income tax.

Submission Instructions

• The application for assistance may be found on the Sisters Only web site: https://deaconesscommunity.org/2018/11/06/community-documents/ Please contact the Deaconess Community Office: 773.380.1705, if you need help accessing the document or want to request a hard copy.
• The completed application should be sent to the Directing Deaconess through email or mail for confidential distribution to the executive committee. Deaconess Office at 8765 W. Higgins Rd, Suite 405, Chicago IL 60631

Other Sources of Assistance to Deaconesses in the ELCA

As rostered leaders of the ELCA, active and retired deaconess may also be eligible for income assistance from the Special Needs Retirement Fund (offered by Portico Benefit Services), 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 their spouses and dependents who meet the assistance criteria.

For more information about these resources, and applications, please contact the following:

Portico Service Center (Special Needs Retirement Fund) – www.PorticoBenefits.org
800 Marquette Ave., Suite 1050
Minneapolis MN 55402-2892 800.352.2876, or 612.333.7651
Synodical Relations (Good Samaritan Fund) – please contact your synod bishop for information on this fund.

~ Care of Sisters Policy
Approved by the Board of Directors 11.2018
D. ELCA/ELCIC Roster Resources

Members of the Deaconess Community are ordained – according to the standards, criteria, policies and procedures of the ELCA or ELCIC – for service as a Minister of Word and Service. As a rostered member of the ELCA or ELCIC, a deaconess is accountable to the ELCA or ELCIC standards for acceptance and continuance on their rosters. The following governing documents 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

   https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Constitutions_Bylaws_and_Continuing_Resolutions_of_the_ELCA.pdf?_ga=2.201392146.2049201928.1606779967-746010545.1604922914
   a. Chapter 7.50-7.70 covers the Ministers of Word and Service roster including definitions, standards and calls.
   b. Chapter 20 covers Consultation, Discipline, Appeals and Adjudication and outlines a due process to be followed in matters requiring discipline within this church. Section 20.23 is specifically addressed to Ministers of Word and Service.

   This document was established by the ELCA Committee on Appeals pursuant to Chapter 20 of the ELCA Constitution to establish definitions and guidelines that enable “clear and uniform application of the grounds for discipline.”

3. ELCA Candidacy Manual 2020

   https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Policies_Procedures_Roster_Mgmt.pdf?_ga=2.201016109.2049201928.1606779967-746010545.1604922914
   Part two of the manual provides information specific to the roster of Ministers of Word and Service. The manual also provides guidelines relating to call, non-stipendiary call, shared-time ministry, on-leave-from call, retirement, disability, resignation from the roster and reinstatement to the roster.

B. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

1. Constitution – last amended July 2019
   Article IX pertains to the roster of deacons.
2. *Administrative Bylaws* – last amended July 2019  
[https://www.elcic.ca/Resources/documents/AdministrativeBylaws-AmendedJuly2019_000.pdf](https://www.elcic.ca/Resources/documents/AdministrativeBylaws-AmendedJuly2019_000.pdf)

Part V pertains to Rostered Deacons – including standards, acceptance, call, congregational membership, on leave from call, resignation from the roster, retirement and discipline.

3. **ELCIC Candidacy for Diaconal Ministry**  
[https://www.elcic.ca/Its-Your-Call/Lay-Diaconal-Candidacy.cfm](https://www.elcic.ca/Its-Your-Call/Lay-Diaconal-Candidacy.cfm)

4. **ELCIC Manual re: Discipline of Rostered Ministers** – approved by the National Church Council September 2019  

This manual provides a description of specific grounds for discipline for rostered ministers in the ELCIC and the processes to be followed by synods and committees on discipline.
E. Travel Policy
Approved Board of Directors May 2020

Travel Policy for the Deaconess Community

Individuals traveling on behalf of the Deaconess Community of the ELCA are required to follow this policy regarding travel arrangements and expense reporting.

This policy outlines the approved procedures for arranging travel related to work of the Deaconess Community by staff members and others who travel on behalf of the Community. The policy is intended to be consistent with ELCA travel policy, good business practice, and IRS requirements.

SECTIONS:

A. AIRLINE RESERVATIONS
B. HOTEL RESERVATIONS
C. MEALS
D. AUTOMOBILE RENTAL
E. OTHER EXPENSES
F. EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT
G. PRECLUSION OF FLIGHT CLUBS
H. DEFINITION OF “REASONABLE”

A. AIRLINE RESERVATIONS

A.1. Making Reservations: Make reservations for airline tickets only through the travel agency of the ELCA, Direct Travel. Travel-accident insurance is provided through the charge to the Community’s American Express travel billing account.

Call Direct Travel: Direct Travel (1-800-543-8016) is the travel management company approved to handle all community travel needs.

Please only call between 9am - 5pm Central Time Monday-Friday.

a) On-line Booking: Travelers are encouraged to book their air travel on-line through Direct Travel’s web link to SAP Concur. To set up a profile with SAP Concur, travelers first must send their legal name, and the email address to be used as their user name, to psullivan@dt.com. Once a profile is set up, travelers will receive an email notification that includes the web link to SAP Concur.

b) Domestic Travel: All tickets for travel are to be purchased through Best Direct Travel and charged to the Community’s travel billing account (10F), except as noted below for some international travel. 3

c) Emergency: Except in an emergency or special circumstance, no airline tickets for Community-related travel are to be charged to a Deaconess Community credit card or a personal credit card.

   1. An explanation of the emergency/special situation, and approval by the designated Leadership Team member, are required for reimbursement of airline tickets charged on a Community credit card or a personal credit card.
2. Payment of a schedule-change fee is to be noted with explanation on the expense reimbursement form. NOTE: If a schedule change is made for the traveler’s personal convenience (vs. business necessity), the change fee will not be reimbursed.

d) **International tickets:** International travel may be arranged through Direct Travel or Menno Travel Service of Minnesota, 1-800-635-2032.

1. A traveler may wish to check with Menno Travel on an international itinerary to determine if a significant savings is available through use of a Menno Travel “consolidator” ticket, compared to the quoted ticket price from Direct Travel.

e) **Preclusion:** Unless approved in advance, reimbursement will not be given for tickets purchased directly from the airlines or other agencies or through on-line methods. **Statement of Purpose:** The “business purpose” of the travel is to be provided at the time of the ticket purchase.

f) **Cancellation:** All purchased tickets that will not be used must be reported (and returned if a paper ticket) to the travel agency before the schedule date, if possible. Credit or re-booking will be given according to the regulations of the specific airline.

g) **Cancellation by travelers:** Unless otherwise agreed to in writing, any traveler (including external consultant or contractor) who cancels attendance at a scheduled meeting, appointment or engagement will be required to reimburse the community for the cancellation and rescheduling costs.

A.2. **Lowest Fare Available:** Travelers are expected to accept the lowest fare available at the time of reservation.

a.) All travel for Community, board, committee, or work group members is to be by the lowest discounted fare available. If the lowest available air fare is refused, and/or the cost exceeds $500, Direct Travel will contact the designated staff member for approval prior to ticketing. Both the lowest available and actual fares will be reported. **The individual must also contact the Deaconess Community office for approval.** Any individual who refuses to accept the lowest fare available at the time of booking will be required to reimburse the community for the excess over lowest available fare.

b.) If an individual chooses to upgrade to a higher class, the incremental cost is a personal expense.

1. *Such a ticket is to be charged by Direct Travel to the individual’s personal credit card. Reimbursement will be provided only in the amount of the lowest discounted fare available at the time the ticket was purchased.*

2. *The Community travel-accident insurance benefit as provided through American Express will not apply to any ticket charged to the individual’s personal credit card.*

c.) Tickets purchased for personal use are to be charged to the individual’s credit card by Direct Travel, NOT to the Community billing account.

A.3. **Advance Purchase:** Whenever possible, make airline reservations at least 30 days in advance, but no later than two weeks in advance, to obtain maximum cost savings. Exceptions to the advance purchase requirement must be approved by a member of the Leadership Team before the reservation is made.

A.4. **Flexibility:** Allow a one-hour window before and after desired flight times for greater possible savings on airfares.

a.) **Connection:** Agree to one connection each way if that will result in reduced cost, subject to A.4.b below.
b.) Travelers are not expected to accept connecting flights in lieu of direct flights, if such a change would delay arrival by more than two hours or cause arrival after midnight on the day of travel.

c.) Extra Overnight Stay: Be open to an extra overnight stay and use of alternative airports if the airfare savings exceeds by more than $100 the cost of housing, food, and ground transportation.

A.5. Mileage Programs: Any travel incentives earned through airline mileage programs may be retained for personal use.

a.) Travel arrangements for specific airlines, however, must be in accordance with the policy of using the lowest fare available. Thus, reservations for specific airlines cannot be made to gain incentive mileage credits via inappropriate routes or use of other than lowest available fares.

b.) The Community will not purchase flight coupons from travelers for use toward Community-related travel, nor will it reimburse any amount of the published ticket cost to individuals who use a frequent flyer ticket for Community business.

A.6. Confirmation of Authorized Travel: The Leadership Team or treasurer, or her/his authorized representative, is responsible for ensuring that all airline tickets charged to the Community by Direct Travel represent authorized travel.

B. HOTEL RESERVATIONS

B.1. Overnight accommodation reservations are made through the in-house travel counselors (Direct Travel) or by Deaconess Community Staff for certain group arrangements.

a.). A traveler may request a specific property and Direct Travel will advise you if a lower priced property is available in the same area.

b.). Cost, location, and safety are to be considered in making lodging reservations.

c.). A traveler requesting a private room will be personally responsible for the additional charges.

B.2. Chicago Rates: In the Chicago O’Hare area, the ELCA has negotiated rates with several hotels. These rates are available to travelers to Chicago on Community-related business. Travelers will be housed on the basis of the rate and availability.

a.). “Direct bill” hotel charges paid by the Deaconess Community are limited to room and taxes. A personal credit card is required at hotel check-in for payment of other costs, which will be reimbursed by the Community as appropriate.

B.3. Responsibility for Payment: Travelers are responsible for payment upon check out unless prior arrangements have been made by Community staff. When checking out, travelers are urged to review the bill for accuracy, including the direct billing provision, if applicable. Reimbursement is provided through the traveler’s expense statement/report.

B.4. Detailed Bill for Documentation: Hotel bills charged to a traveler’s credit card will not be reimbursed unless a detailed bill showing separate amounts of lodging, meals, phone, and other charges is attached to the expense statement/report.
a). **Names and Purpose of Meals:** If a meal that included other individuals is charged to a hotel bill, the name(s) of the individual(s) and the purpose of the meal are to be recorded on the bill or an attached note.

b). **Personal Expense:** Movies, alcohol purchases, personal internet and other incidental expenses on detailed hotel bills are considered to be personal and will not be reimbursed.

c). **“No Show” Expense:** “No show” hotel fees will be reimbursed only upon documentation and approval by the Leadership Team or treasurer. To prevent possible discrepancies, it is recommended that the traveler obtain a confirmation number when a reservation is canceled.

C. **MEALS**

C.1 **Individual Meals:** Those traveling on behalf of the Community are expected to be wise stewards of the community’s resources. Reasonable expenses for three individual meals per day will be reimbursed. Meals should be appropriate to the nature of the travel.

a). Meals should be appropriate to the nature of the travel.

b). Meals purchased in transit to and from a meeting/event/gathering will not be reimbursed.

c). Travel meal expenses for an individual will **not** be reimbursed without a receipt showing the itemized food and beverage order. Per day meal costs up to $50 will be reimbursed.

d). Alcoholic beverage purchases will not be reimbursed.

C.2 **Group Meals:** In general, each traveler is expected to pay for her/his own meal. Where a traveler meets with one or more individuals for a **Community-related purpose** and pays for the meal, an itemized receipt **must** be attached. All meals with other individuals must indicate the following information in order to be reimbursed:

a). **One or More Individuals by Name:** The individuals who attended the meal must be listed **by name** on either the meal receipt or expense form.

b). **Defined Groups:** For defined groups – such as all or most members of a unit board – the reimbursement form may be submitted with the indication of the defined group (for example, “Board of Directors”) without having to list by name the entire group.

c). **Purpose Must be Indicated:** The Community-related purpose of the meal must be listed on the receipt or expense report.

D. **AUTOMOBILE RENTAL**

D. 1 **Economy:** Use the most reasonable, least costly mode of ground transportation available. Avoid automobile rental unless group transportation or public transportation are unavailable, inadequate, or more expensive.
D.2. Reservations: Automobile rental reservations are to be made through Direct Travel. Compact or smaller vehicles will be used unless four or more people are traveling together. Direct Travel will use the lowest price available from automobile rental firms.

D.3. Charges and Insurance: Deaconess Community employees should charge the payment for the rental car on a Community credit card. The necessary liability and collision damage insurance coverage are provided through the community’s business insurance policy and the credit card company, respectively. Decline any additional insurance coverage. Non-employees who rent a car on community business are responsible for providing the necessary insurance, either through their personal policies (covering hired or non-owned autos) or through the car rental company.

D.4. Personal Use: Corporate discounts rates through the ELCA are available for personal use. In such circumstances, purchase of insurance coverage is a personal decision (see above). Individuals are not covered by the community’s insurance policies when renting a car for personal use.

D.5. Attach Agreement: Both the car rental agreement and payment receipt must be attached to the applicable expense report for reimbursement of the expense.

D.6. Gasoline for Rental Car: Before returning automobile at the end of the rental period, the traveler is expected to fill the gas tank. This is generally less expensive than the gas rate charged by the rental firms.

E. OTHER EXPENSES

E.1. Automobile Mileage:

a.). Mileage Rate and Reimbursement: Use of a personal automobile in connection with official Community responsibilities will be reimbursed at the mileage rate in effect at the time of such use.

1. The mileage rate is established annually by the ELCA Office of the Treasurer, in accordance with Internal Revenue Service guidelines.

2. Mileage between an individual’s residence and normal Community employment location is not reimbursable.

b.). Tolls and Parking: Tolls and parking fees incurred while traveling on Community business will be reimbursed using the expense form. Receipts for all such expenses are encouraged and are required for any expense greater than $10.

c.). Limitation: Mileage, tolls, parking, and other expenses associated with automobile travel will only be reimbursed up to the amount of the lowest airfare available to the event location. A traveler who chooses to drive, when flying is an option, should contact Direct Travel at least two weeks prior to the departure date to obtain a quote for the lowest available round trip air fare on the relevant travel dates. A copy of the proposed itinerary with air fare must be attached to your expense report with your mileage reimbursement request. Upon request, Direct Travel will also provide this information to the Leadership Team or treasurer for expense report approval.

1. An expense form that includes mileage reimbursement must indicate the origin, destination, and purpose of the travel.

2. A mileage log form is included at the end of this policy to facilitate keeping the documentation required for mileage reimbursement. If this form is not used, similar information must be provided with the expense report.
E.2. Telephone: Actual expenses for telephone calls related to Community business will be reimbursed. When making calls, travelers are expected to use the least expensive means available.

a.). Copy of Bill: All reimbursements for telephone charges must include a copy of the billing, showing specific calls made. This requirement applies to all types of calls, including credit card, hotel, cellular phones, or any other telephone service. Purchase of Calling Cards with pre-paid minutes will be reimbursed only if an itemized list of calls is available after the card is used.

b.). Business Purpose: A statement of the business purpose of each call, in addition to the copy of the billing, must be submitted with the expense report.

c.). Personal Calls: During domestic travel, reimbursement for personal calls is normally limited to one daily call to the family home. For international travel, reimbursement is provided for reasonable personal calls.

d.). Credit Card Calls: Follow the directions on the credit card to obtain the proper carrier. Telephone credit cards are often an expensive method of calling and are therefore discouraged. If an operator responds when reaching the carrier, advise her/him that you want the non-operator assisted rates to apply. These rates are normally substantially lower than operator-assisted rates.

e.). Hotel Telephones: Calls from hotel phones can be very expensive and should normally be avoided in favor of other means.

f.). Cellular Phones: Use of cellular calls should be avoided when the cost of such calls exceeds regular telephone rates.

1. Charges for business calls made from a personal cell phone owned by an employee or other traveler on community business will be reimbursed upon presentation of documentation as noted in E.2.a above. Phone charges included as part of “monthly minutes” will not be reimbursed unless an itemized bill of specific calls is included with the expense report.

2. The Deaconess Community may authorize the purchase of cell phones or other wireless connectivity devices for designated employees. Personal use of such devices is strongly discouraged.

3. When a cellular phone use is used, all charges related to a business call are eligible for reimbursement, including roaming and long-distance charges.

g.). Airphones: Airphone calls will only be reimbursed for emergency situations. The nature of the emergency must be indicated on the expense report and a copy of the charge must be attached.

E.3. Laundry: For trips more than five (5) days, laundry expense will be reimbursed. Such expenses for trips of short duration are not reimbursable except in emergencies. The nature of the emergency must be indicated on the expense report.

E.4. Gratuities: Normally, gratuities should be included on restaurant receipts, taxi receipts, or similar receipts. (If a traveler is uncertain regarding the appropriate amount to tip, please contact the accountant or Leadership Team for guidance.)

a.). Shuttle: Hotel shuttle gratuities should be identified on the expense report.

b.). Description: For other gratuities, a brief description should be included for reimbursement (e.g., coat check, housekeeping, airport baggage, or similar items) when a receipt is not normally provided.
E.5. Internet Connection: Charges for use of an Internet connection while traveling away from home on Community business will be reimbursed based on a receipt and a documented Deaconess Community business need. Travelers are expected to use the least expensive means for connecting.

E.6. Travel Health Insurance: Canadian travelers who are not on the ELCIC health plan must purchase out-of-country health insurance when they travel outside Canada on Community business. This is a reimbursable expense (about $10.00 CAN per day).

E.7. Miscellaneous Expenses: Miscellaneous expenses not listed above, if submitted for reimbursement, must be accompanied by a receipt and sufficient explanation to document the Community-related purpose.

F. EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

F.1. Timely Filing: Submit expense reimbursement reports promptly.

a.). All expense reimbursement reports normally are to be filed within 15 days of incurring the expense, or after the end of travel.

b.). Expenses will not be reimbursed 60 days after the expense is incurred.

F.2. Individual Report: Each individual must submit her/his own expense report.

a.). The expense report must include destination and purpose of travel, if the requested reimbursement is for travel. For other requests, the Community-related purpose of the expense must be provided.

b.). Attachments include travel-related statements and itemized receipts, as described throughout this document.

F.3. Documentation to be Attached: Documentation requirements for reimbursement of expenses are listed under the type of expense in this policy. If additional explanations are necessary to document expenses, those explanations should be entered on additional sheets and attached to the expense report.

F.4. Signatures Required: The expense report must be signed and dated by the person requesting reimbursement. Unsigned expense reports will be returned to the submitter.

a.). The expense report must be approved in accordance with signature authorities approved by the Board of Directors.

b.). No individual may approve her/his own expense report.

F.5. Policy Compliance: The Leadership Team is responsible for ensuring that travelers comply with established travel policy.

F.6. Restriction: No travel or entertainment expense is to be reimbursed through petty cash, regardless of the amount of reimbursement. An expense report must be submitted with appropriate documentation.

F.7. Consultation: Unusual situations or changing circumstances pertaining to airline tickets, external Community-sponsored meetings, or other expense situations should be referred to the executive director or treasurer.
G. PRECLUSION OF AIRLINE FLIGHT CLUBS

a.). Any purchase of airline flight club memberships with Community funds is precluded (e.g., United “Red Carpet, Delta “Sky Club” etc.).

b.). If an individual traveler wishes membership in an airline flight club, such membership is a personal cost that is not reimbursable.

H. DEFINITION OF “REASONABLE AND NECESSARY”

a.). “Reasonable” herein is deemed to mean efforts to practice good stewardship and conserve the financial resources of the Community, be cautious about all expenditures, avoid the appearance of extravagance, and not indulge in spending inappropriate for the work, programs, and activities of the Community.

b.). “Necessary,” in this context, involves legitimate charges that arise from the work, programs, and activities of the Community. Good, cautious common sense must prevail.

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1 Written requests for revision or clarification of this policy are to be submitted to the Committee on Finance and Audit. Inquiries related to the payment of items on an expense report are to be addressed to the Leadership Team or treasurer of the Deaconess Community.

1 This policy applies to staff, board members, committee members, work groups, advisors, and others who travel on behalf of the Deaconess Community. Procedures herein concern methods for making airline, hotel, car-rental, and other reservations. Explanations of expense-reimbursement forms also are included.

1 Examples of an acceptable statement of purpose at the time of purchase and for reporting on the expense report are: “Chicago, IL, to attend Board of Directors meeting” or “St. Paul, MN, to attend finance committee meeting.” Unacceptable would be: “To attend a meeting in Kansas.” Failure to document an acceptable statement of purpose may result in the expense report being returned, thus delaying reimbursement.

1 Notation on the itinerary will be made for travelers who refuse the lowest fare available. Travelers’ use of lowest available fares is also monitored via a monthly fare savings analysis report prepared by Direct Travel.

1 For example, if a traveler wishes to depart for a destination at 4 o’clock, the travel counselors have been instructed to look at availability for the period of 3 to 5 and will so inform the traveler. If the traveler insists on a more expensive flight, the itinerary will include that information.

~ Travel Policy for the Deaconess Community
Approved by the Board of Directors 5.2020
F. Financial Support during Formation

The following paragraphs describe primary categories of financial assistance that may be available for candidates in our DC formation.

1. Entrance Scholarship

Potential deaconess candidates are responsible for financing their own education. For this reason, a decision to enter our formation process should include a realistic assessment of available financial resources to pay for academic or contextual learning experiences, spiritual formation and daily living expenses. A candidate may be eligible for financial support from their congregation, synod, or seminary, and they 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 their future income as a deaconess.

The DC is committed to share in a portion of the cost of a deaconess’ preparation, beginning with their invitation to participate in formation events. The community will pay for a candidate’s transportation, meals and lodging for all required interviews and formation events. In addition, following approval for Rite of Accompaniment, 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, contextual 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.

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

This three-credit, seminary-level course was established by the DC 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/Rite of Reception requirement for all deaconess candidates, and the DC 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.
3. **Sister Janice Painter Memorial Scholarship**

The Sister Janice Painter Memorial Scholarship was established in 2020 with proceeds of a memorial gift received from the Women’s Power Hour Bible Study group of Calvary Lutheran Church in West Chester, PA. Sr Janice Painter, now deceased, served this congregation as a parish deaconess for many years. The purpose of the scholarship is:

*To fund the theological studies of women preparing to be a Deaconess. The candidates should have demonstrated financial need, with candidates of color or whose primary language is other than English, being given priority.*

The scholarship is administered by CoVE under guidelines established by Finance and Audit. Candidates for membership in the Deaconess Community who are already rostered Deacons may apply for support of further theological education related to their formation. Funds may be used for payment of seminary tuition, CPE tuition, or purchase of required reading materials or technological devices that will enhance the candidate’s theological studies.

To increase the number of candidates who may benefit, the maximum award is $1,000, and a candidate may receive only one scholarship from this fund. The funding cycle began in the spring of 2021 for the academic year beginning the upcoming fall. This cycle will continue each academic year until the scholarship has awarded all funds available. The application is available for download on the Sisters’ web site or may be requested from the Deaconess Community office. Completed applications should be forwarded to the attention of the DoVE, either electronically at [https://deaconesscommunity.org/2018/11/06/community-documents/] or via regular mail, at the address shown on the application. Following review by CoVE and approval by the board, scholarships will be funded through the Deaconess Community office. Scholarships for seminary or CPE tuition will be remitted directly to the candidate’s seminary or CPE site. Reimbursement for required reading materials or technology purchases, supported by receipts, will be sent to the candidate.

Recipients of the Sister Janice Painter Memorial Scholarship who withdraw from candidacy will NOT be required to reimburse this scholarship.

4. **ELCIC Candidates**

ELCIC candidates may be eligible for the Sister Anna Brandt Bursary. This bursary is used to support participation by ELCIC diaconal ministers and candidates in educational opportunities that help the participant develop their interest, skills and passion for music and ministry. ELCIC candidates should contact their synodical bishop for additional information.

5. **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.
The Importance of a Will

Each deaconess should have a will that directs how their property will be distributed after their death. If they die without a will of their own, their “estate plan” is dictated by their state or provincial government – which may not reflect their 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 them and provide directions for how they want those gifts to be used after they die. In this way, their will becomes an expression of whole-life stewardship.

1. 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 of sound mind. A durable power of attorney authorizes a designated person to manage their financial affairs if they become 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 their place of residence.

   Each deaconess is urged to prepare the above documents with the assistance of a qualified attorney. They should appoint a trusted friend or family member to serve as executor of their 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 DC or directing deaconess to any of these positions.

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

2. 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 many helpful publications that are available on its web site or by request. [https://www.elca.org/Resources/ELCA-Foundation#EndowmentFundA](https://www.elca.org/Resources/ELCA-Foundation#EndowmentFundA) or 800.638.3522. 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 Sheet” to state their wishes regarding burial arrangements and funeral service to place in their personal file at the Deaconess office.

Please contact the office for a hard copy of the information sheet or visit our website for a fillable form: https://deaconesscommunity.org/2018/11/06/community-documents/

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 888-786-6707, 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.
Please contact our office for a hard copy of the information sheet or visit our website for a fillable form: [https://deaconesscommunity.org/2018/11/06/community-documents/](https://deaconesscommunity.org/2018/11/06/community-documents/)

### Information Sheet

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<th>Preferred contact method:</th>
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<td>mailing: home work (circle one)</td>
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<td>phone: home work cell (circle one)</td>
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<td>email: home work (circle one)</td>
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### RELATIVES
Please list my spouse’s name in the directory: yes no (circle one)

RELATIVES CONTINUED

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<th>Name/relationship</th>
<th>Contact information. (add additional names to back)</th>
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End of Life Choices (circle yes or no)

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<th>Choice</th>
<th>Have you informed your family? Yes. No</th>
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<td>Organ Donation: Yes. No.</td>
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<td>DNR (Do Not Resuscitate): Yes. No.</td>
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<td>Living Will: Yes. No</td>
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<td>Power of Attorney: Yes. No</td>
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Name/contact information

For what power?
Medical Yes. No. Legal Yes. No. Other

Will: Yes No

Where is it located?

Name/contact information
| Executor of Estate: Yes. No. |

### Burial/Cremation

- **Cremation:** Yes. No
- **Have you informed your family? Yes. No**

If yes, what should be done with your ashes?

- **Mortuary Arrangements have been made with:** Name/address/phone

- **Prepaid:** Yes. No
  - **Amount:**

- **Family members aware of the plans:** Name/contact information
- **Cemetery Name/address/phone**

- **If burial, prepaid:** Yes. No
  - **If desiring a headstone, prepaid:** Yes. No

- **If engraved, what do you desire it to say:**

### Celebration of Life Service

- **Scripture readings:**
- **Participants:**
- **Hymns:**
- **Special Music:**
- **Other elements:**
- **Ideas or thoughts for the service/sermon:**

Background Aspects of your life/passions that could be used while planning the service or sermon. For example, share your baptismal story, call, life experiences, significant people or events:

As our Community celebrates the great cloud of witnesses that surround us in our journey, we give thanks for the tradition of passing our cross on to a new member of the community. Please instruct your family to return your Deaconess Cross to the Community, so your cross might be shared with a new sister in community.

- **Signature:** ___________________________ **Date:** ____________________