

## **REPORT FROM THE REFERENCE AND COUNSEL COMMITTEE**

One resolution, “A Resolution for Hope: Learning to Action,” was submitted to the Reference and Counsel Committee for review by the March 1, 2021 deadline. No other resolutions were submitted. The committee recommends adoption of this resolution.

Any resolutions received after the March 1, 2021 deadline will be reviewed by the Reference and Counsel Committee, and they will weigh reasons given for the missed deadline. Assembly considerations may be proposed by a motion to suspend the rules of procedure for the purpose of considering the late resolution.

Sr. Deborah McClellan, Chair

Sr. Diane Montgomery

Sr. Marilyn Stauffer

## **A Resolution for Hope: Learning to Action – Deaconess Community of the ELCA Assembly 2021**

**WHEREAS**, Sisters of the Deaconess Community of the ECLA who attended the DOTAC gathering in Canada in 2019 and participated in historically illuminating experiences were reawakened to the pain and suffering inflicted on our Indigenous siblings by the colonizing oppressors; and

**WHEREAS**, these Sisters continue to be compelled by their call to seek justice for the flourishing of all of God’s creation and live into the promise of hope, healing, and wholeness that God offers through our Baptism; and

**WHEREAS**, the members of our community, emboldened by our history, have had strong relationships with many different communities, while remaining a predominantly white community, we recognize that we are missing voices from our table and we recognize we need opportunities to learn, lament, and pray to walk faithfully in seeking and building relationships; and

**WHEREAS**, God’s table is without limits, with room for everyone and the Holy Spirit leads us to learn and grow as a community as we take active steps by inviting and engaging new voices at our table; therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Directors of The Deaconess Community of the ELCA will establish a Working Group to discern, plan, and implement opportunities to prepare and engage members of the Deaconess Community in ways that will include, but are not limited to the following:

- **Develop our corporate and individual intercultural competency:**
  - For example: Designate funds for up to 4 community members to be trained as Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) “Qualified Administrators.” The cost of the training per individual for Non-Profits is \$1,800. The “Qualified Administrators” will then lead cohorts of community members and candidates that take the IDI.
- **Develop opportunities for community members to engage in learning and prayerful action in:**
  - Understanding our individual and corporate biases both implicit and explicit;
  - Learning the history of the oppressed that was left out or whitewashed in history books and our own history (e.g., Doctrine of Discovery, learning the history in the locations of the original Mother Houses of the Deaconess Community in the United States including relationships with Indigenous communities, slavery, and other forms of discriminative acts in that physical location, examining an individual’s history to their personal location);
  - Diversification of the voices in our theological education;
  - Join in advocacy for the flourishing of all of God’s creation (eg., advocacy training); and

- Learning about reparations and imagining together what it might look like for the Deaconess Community to take action.
- **Assess current relationships the Deaconess Community has fostered and look for areas where the relationships can be further deepened and strengthened** (e.g., Poor People's Campaign, Reconciling Works, ELCA, ELCIC, DIAKONIA, DOTAC, grant recipients, etc.); and
- **Develop intentional, new relationships with voices we are missing from the table of the Deaconess Community.** These relationships should engage our bodies, minds, and spirits in healing experiences that inspire us to acts of justice.

The Working Group will be accountable to the Deaconess Community. They will be responsible for reporting at least quarterly to the Community and to the Board of Directors.

Signed

Sr. Marie Arie

Sr. Ramona Daily

Sr. Donna Font

Sr. Ruth Ellen Rebelein

Sr. Virginia Strahan

Sr. Carol Weaver

Reference and Counsel recommends adoption of this resolution.