

RECLAIMING DIACONATE WITH NEW FORMS

CONTINUED from page 10

Ministers who chose not to be ordained and to remain in that lay office. Persons who had started the process to become Diaconal Ministers were allowed to complete the requirements and be consecrated as Diaconal Ministers. A date was set after which no new Diaconal Ministers would be consecrated. The Office of Deaconess continued. So, UMC has The Order of Deacon, The Office of Diaconal Ministry and the Office of Deaconess.

Diaconal Ministers who were in good standing and had completed a minimum of three years in an approved appointment were eligible to become ordained Deacons in Full Connection by meeting these requirements:

- Completing a formation and education program that included an understanding of the meaning of appointment by a bishop, ordination and the interrelatedness of worship and the world;
- Demonstrating an understanding of the call to the Order of Deacon ;
- Meeting the educational requirements;
- Receiving a two-thirds vote of the clergy session.

I was privileged to be the Associate General Secretary of the Division of Diaconal Ministry when the new Order of Deacon was established. With the support of Bishops, Elders, Diaconal Ministers and the commitment of

the world ecumenical diaconate, we planned and implemented formation events. Six hundred Diaconal Ministers were ordained in 1997.

As we celebrated the tenth anniversary of the Order of Deacon in 2006, we remembered the struggles and obstacles overcome as the new order was being envisioned and established. More importantly, we celebrated the tremendous growth that had taken place in understanding and support of the diaconate. The ever-growing number of persons answering God's call to be servants of God in the world as deacons is exciting. Today there are 1,150 ordained Deacons; 319 probationary members; and 1,696 persons in candidacy for the Order of Deacon.

I am grateful that The United Methodist Church was able to struggle through re-ordering its life and ministry in establishing the Order of Deacon. In a real sense, I

The Order of Deacon, The Office of Diaconal Ministry and the Office of Deaconess

feel the Church finally caught up with the practice of the ministry of the diaconate that has been embodied in the ministries of thousands of person for decades

Whether I was a Christian Educator, Diaconal Minister or Deacon, I have always lived and worked in the spirit of the Diaconate. It was clear that God had called me to a ministry defined differently than that of the Elder, which re-



Deaconess Becky Dodson Louter at celebration of 120 years of the Deaconess Office in UMC. Becky is staff for the Deaconess Program Office.

quired me to use my gifts to bridge the church and the world. An ordained deacon was the right move for UMC because it allowed an opportunity to order its life, recognizing God calls persons to a myriad of ministries.

Jimmy L. Carr is the Executive Director of the Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center in the scenic mountains of North Carolina.

▶ 1964

Deaconesses made members of and accountable to church courts, decisions on deaconesses chaotic as each presbytery acts, no national decision making body

guaranteed salary scale added to regulations

▶ 1966

increasing recognition of deaconesses as ministers, disjoining when not working begins to disappear, new candidacy processes

“commissioned ministry” used but never approved

▶ 1978

salaries, benefits and pensions of deaconesses, certified churchmen and commissioned ministers equal with ordained

▶ 1980

Task Force on Commissioned Ministry/Diaconal Ministry results in one Order of Ministry: ordained and diaconal

term Diaconal Ministry (DM) adopted

DM could be licensed to administer the sacraments

▶ 1982

DM subject to Transfer and Settlement

CONTINUED page 14 ↗

THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL CHECK IN

FRANCIS SANDY THEOLOGICAL CENTRE

A Student’s Perspective – by Brenda Duckworth

Francis Sandy Theological Centre students have been enjoying exciting learning circles from a variety of thought provoking resource teachers. Our school year began with “Keeping the Vision”, promoting Ministry Identity, led by our own graduates, Rev. Maggie McLeod and Rev. Lee Claus; Ministry Matters followed with leadership from Diaconal Minister, Kellie McComb as we prepared and performed a Wedding, a Baptism and a Communion Service at Grand River United Church in Six Nations, where she ministers. November circle was a must-do for ministers, “Transforming Conflict Through Dialogue” led by Susan Nienaber of the Alban Institute. Practical work assignments naturally followed as we presented our personal response to real conflict in our lives at our next circle. We began the New Year with “Haudenosaunee Teachings” from a traditional spiritual leader Renee Thomas-Hill of Six Nations: Longhouse teachings through story. We learned about memory aids that go beyond the written word.

A new student, Susanna Suchak, joined us in 2008. Like all our students she brings many gifts to our circle and is already immersed in community ministry as a leader in Christian Education. An-

gela Whitwell participates in Christian Education and Outreach Work in the city as well as ministering in a First Nations community. Phil Schuyler ministers at Oneida United Church while also teaching a social work class and providing foster care to aboriginal children. We recently celebrated with Georgina Elliott who became one of the first Sacrament Elders in the United Church of Canada. Her spiritual presence grounds us here at Francis Sandy as well as her home community of Cape Croker. Fellow student, John Finlay, shares ministry with her there. We are especially appreciative of John’s extra-curricular activities behind the camera, online, and in the kitchen. John’s passion for justice helps keep us informed. Brenda Duckworth works on justice issues whenever they confront her with letters to incarcerated inmates, and letters to politicians reminding them of their promises to First Nations people. When not writing, Brenda serves as student minister-in-training in Wasauksing/Shawanaga pastoral charge.

Our April circle will bring us to DUCC which is being held right here at Five Oaks Centre in Ontario where FSTC is located. We look forward to meeting many of you there. FSTC will be making future connections with the Centre For Christian Studies by collaborating with Five Oaks in bringing Leadership Development in two parts to Ontario in October and November 2009.

April circle will bring us to DUCC

THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL CHECK IN

CENTRE FOR CHRISTIAN STUDIES

“We are called with all God’s people to be responsible agents of creative transformation...” No doubt, you’ll recognize this quote as part of the Diaconal Statement of Belief.

At CCS that reality continues to ring true as creative transformation has marked these past few months.

We are pleased to welcome Principal, Megan McKenzie, to our staff team. Megan has great energy and enthusiasm for the life and work of CCS. She is a quick study, a keen and eager lifelong learner in possession of an engaging sense of humour and a welcoming and hospitable presence.

The next few months are a whirlwind of activity with planning book launches and teas for the CCS History Book *Weaving a Changing Tapestry* and program evaluation at Reflections on Ministry – an event for recent grads ('02-'08) - piggybacking on to the front end of the DUCC

launches and teas for the CCS History Book

gathering, Megan will be facilitating these gatherings as time and scheduling permits. She welcomes the opportunity to meet with you, to hear your reminiscences of CCS, to gather news of the community and to listen to your thoughts and concerns on diaconal ministry.

Education runs counter-cyclical, so while the down turn in the economy is a challenge for many, it also creates an opportunity to

CONTINUED on page 14 ↗

DR. JESSIE SAULTEAUX RESOURCE CENTRE

As part of the 5 year curriculum in the ministry program at DISRC, students are required to complete a two week global trip. 2008 marked the first year of this undertaking with a trip to southern Australia. Connections had been established with Vince Ross, Director of Narana Creations two years prior. Vince received the Australian Elder of the Year Award for his work toward reconciliation.

Our travels began in Geelong and took us northward into the homeland of indigenous peoples in the states of Victoria and New South Wales. The final week was spent in and around Geelong with the Aboriginal Centre, Narana Creations.



Australian elder Vince Ross with Dr. Jessie student Agnes Spence during global trip that had a profound impact on the students.

These are some of the reflections offered by the students:

The Australian elder shared a lot of the history of the peoples and the land. The sharing that was done around the fire was awesome ... it was a very special moment that I will never forget. We were with our brothers and sisters (non-indigenous and indigenous) mixed together....there was no race of people, only one group of people and that was great

The journey has helped me understand who I am, where I come from and how blessed that I am ... I saw bits and parts of my past in the people of Australia. Now I know why our people, the Ojibway people had this caring and sharing like no other people had. They also had a vision. A vision in love with the land and all of creation. I’ve seen different groups come through the Narana Centre: Japanese, white people, black people and the red nation. All cultures in between. This is a journey that everyone is making. Being able to have time to process what I have seen and heard is a gift. What is God saying to me? What will God use me for in the next part of my journey?

CONTINUED on page 14 ↗

▶ 1984

Women in Ministry report identifies systemic discrimination, Ctes on Diaconal Ministry and Women in Ministry established, each with a half-time staff

DUCC founded for community and advocacy

▶ 1988

First Nations schools recognized for diaconal education

▶ 1998

Phasing out of "advocacy work" by national church, Cte on Diaconal Ministry and Women in Ministry Committee and staff positions ended, all GC staff responsible for all people in ministry

▶ 2000

GC considers one rite for ministry, sent for further study, no action taken

▶ 2000s

Policy assuring spaces on committees for dm changed, decisions on diaconal issues are often made without any structured involvement, or accountability to diaconal ministers



MORE NEWS FROM SCHOOLS

DR JESSIE CONTINUED from page 13

Ministry has to go deep that is where we will find the answers If we minister with a sound heart then ministry will work both ways. How do you minister to people who took your land and discriminated against you? When we are at the receiving end of that discrimination, we must minister in the spirit of love and humility. That is true ministry.

One of the locations where we stopped was a notable one for me. On a freeway underneath a particular bridge were beautiful Aboriginal paintings that depict the culture and tradition. The Australian Aboriginal people traveling with us shared that these pictures belong in a place of their own,



not stuck underneath a bridge where no one can see them. ... Their art is not depicted anywhere except in bookstores. We were told that the previous governments didn't encourage this because of the fear of independence that it brings. This is a form of suppression of communication and it is affecting the people.. Today, the government is starting to be involved and is looking at the Aboriginal peoples as more of an equal partnership.

CCS CONTINUED from page 13 .

consider furthering one's education. CCS is embarking on a student recruitment campaign which includes offering a second Leadership Development Module in other regions, the first being on Vancouver Island, later this summer.

Like other theological institutions, CCS faces the effects of the economic downturn and investment loss. The projected deficit for 2009 is approximately \$67,900. Central Council members recently committed to raising \$6,000 beyond their regular personal donations to CCS.

Central Council is responsible for the continuation of the program, and to be good stewards of

our financial resources. CCS is committed to keeping the Endowment Fund intact and using our resources to the best of our abilities.

CCS's strategic planning committee has four areas they are focusing on: 1) Programming both short and long term; 2) Communication that CCS offers leadership in transformational learning; 3) Governance that efficiently and effectively leads CCS in advancing its mission; and 4) Financial Sustainability.

Throughout the next year, we will continue to breathe energy into the areas of CCS that need revitalizing so that we can ensure that CCS not only continues, but thrives vibrantly.

UPDATE FROM DOTAC REPS

By Sharilynn Upsdell

As glorious deciduous fall colours lingered on the Smoky Mountains, North Carolina in November 2008, I joined eleven members of the "Diakonia of the Americas and the Caribbean Central Committee" who gathered from Brazil, the Caribbean, USA and Canada for a week of business and relationship building. Hosted by the United Methodist Brooks Howell Home for retired Deaconesses, we were surrounded by their love and understanding and graced with many personal stories of passion, courage,



Sharilynn Upsdell (l) and Linda Ervin are DUCC reps to DOTAC, with Russell Mitchell-Walker at last Triennial.

and strong ministry that enlivened the abundant displays of artifacts gathered from their many worldwide mission settings. We pondered the rich blessings of living in such a retirement community where so many share deep understandings of diakonia.

It was my first meeting with DOTAC. I am being graciously mentored into my role by Linda Ervin, DOTAC President for the last eight of the twelve years she has represented DUCC. Linda's passion, skill in facilitation, and dedication to the international work of diakonia are recognized as she is nominated by DOTAC for President of the World Federation. The election will take place at the World Assembly meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, July 2009. At the rise of the World Assembly, my official term as DUCC's representative to DOTAC will begin.

During our time together, we deepened our knowledge about our various member groups, their symbols, and the issues they confront; focused energy into compiling our policies; defining critical

targets of DOTAC for use in a new brochure for promotional purposes; initiated early plans for another DOVE (Diakonia Overcoming Violence Exchange) in Brazil or the Caribbean; and selected Oklahoma City as the location of the next DOTAC Conference for July 2011. Many stories of powerful ministry were shared and we began work on our presentation to be shared at the World Assembly Gathering DOTAC is hosting in Atlanta.

The DIAKONIA World Federation Assembly in Atlanta, July 20-27, 2009 will be an exciting event gathering diaconal representatives from 3 intercontinental regions DOTAC (The Americas & the Caribbean), DAP (Asia Pacific), and DRAE (Africa/Europe). Serving on the World Assembly Planning and Agenda Team for this past year, I've been involved in the many conference calls overseeing the arrangements for Theme speakers, Workshop leaders and many other details that will enliven the theme for our 2009 World Assembly: Diakonia: Crossroads of Grace - Revive and Reconcile.

Diakonia - Crossroads of Grace

...Revive and Reconcile

There is no experience to match attending a World Assembly. Strengthen and challenge your diaconal identity.

www.diakonia-world.org/2009/AssemblyUpdate06012008.ppt. To register go to <http://www.diakonoi.org/Registration.pdf> (\$1,100 before February 28, \$1,200 thereafter.)

**Diakonia 2009 World Assembly
Monday July 20 to
Monday July 27, 2009
Atlanta, Georgia**