



# Building Bridges



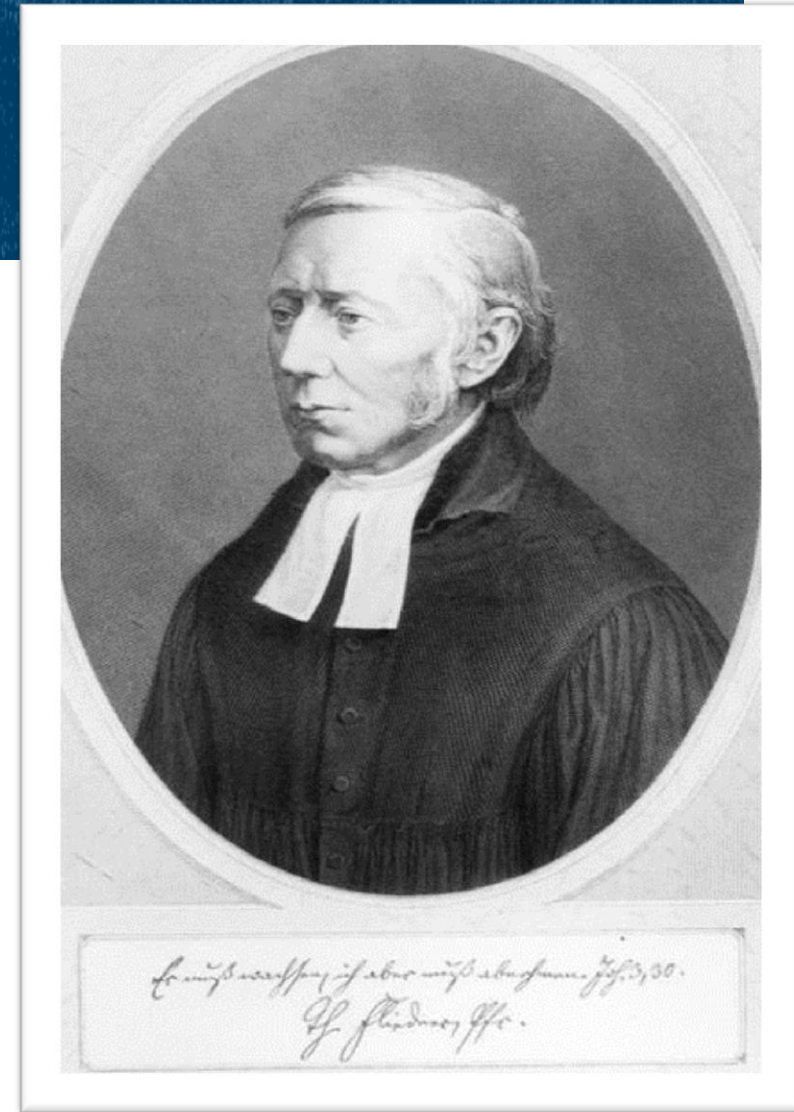
# The history of the Deaconess Community

- The contemporary history of the Deaconess Community of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America can be found in four areas:
  - Kaiserswerth, Germany
  - Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA
  - Baltimore, Maryland, USA
  - Omaha, Nebraska, USA



# GERMAN ORIGIN

- In 1836 Pastor Theodore Fliedner and his wife Friedericke Munster called women to serve as deaconesses in a small pastoral charge in Kaiserswerth, Germany
- This was part of a movement called the Inner Mission, aimed at reviving the ancient role of men and women to serve the lost and the poor.



- By 1884 there were 56 deaconess communities in Germany, France, Switzerland, and Scandinavia with a total of 5,653 deaconesses
- The ministries were directed to the vagrants, epileptics, those in prison and recently released from prison, the sick, the orphaned and anyone in need.





# DEACONESSSES MOVE TO THE UNITED STATES

- Throughout the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, pastors and deaconesses came to the United States from Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and various parts of Germany.
- They began hospitals and other institutions of mercy, as well as motherhouses in which to train deaconesses for service.



- In 1894, the various deaconess groups related through Lutheran Deaconess Conference in North America. This was the first inter-Lutheran agency in America.
- It is said that in the origins of every Lutheran Social Service agency in the United States one may find the name of a deaconess.



# ORIGIN OF THE DEACONESS COMMUNITY OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA



# PHILADELPHIA MOTHERHOUSE

- The 1884 inquiry was made as to the availability of deaconesses in Kaiserswerth motherhouse or other motherhouses to come to America to staff the German Hospital in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Seven deaconesses from Iserlohn, Germany agreed to come to America to work in the German Hospital





- Within a decade of their arrival, with the financial assistance of John D. Lankenau, these women cleaned up the German Hospital, entered into parish work, started a school for girls, a kindergarten and a convalescent home for the aging, as well as established a Motherhouse for Deaconesses.
- In 1953, the Motherhouse was moved to the outskirts of Philadelphia (Gladwyne).



# BALTIMORE MOTHERHOUSE

- In 1889, the Board of Deaconess Work was created by the General Synod of the Lutheran Church (USA)
- Deaconesses were designated as persons holding an “Office in the Church”
- The Baltimore Motherhouse was opened in 1885, and the Deaconess School in 1910.



- Deaconesses entered into the field of nursing, but not in hospitals. Rather they went into the homes of the sick. Deaconesses also went into parishes to complement the work of the pastor and entered the foreign mission field.
- The School was for all women church workers, offering courses for parish workers, church educators, church secretaries and pastors' wives. Deaconesses and missionaries also attended.



# OMAHA MOTHERHOUSE

- In 1890 Pastor E.A. Fogelstrom created Immanuel Hospital and Deaconess Motherhouse.
- He had sent deaconesses to Philadelphia for training
- Immanuel Hospital opened in 1890, as was the Deaconess Home
- Deaconesses served in Immanuel Hospital, the Immanuel Orphan Asylum, Bethesda Hospital in St. Paul, Minnesota





# MERGING TOGETHER

- On January 1, 1963 the Philadelphia and Baltimore Motherhouses, with Baltimore selling its property and moving to the Philadelphia Motherhouse in Gladwyne, Pennsylvania
- With this merger, they became known as the Deaconess Community of the Lutheran Church in America (LCA)
- On January 1, 1966 the deaconesses from the Omaha Motherhouse joined the Deaconess Community of the LCA.



- The Deaconess Community of the LCA then entered the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America as an intact community
- In 1996, the Deaconess Community decided to sell its home in Gladwyne, Pennsylvania for the sake of its mission and ministry.
- In 2002, the house was sold and the Community moved its offices to the Lutheran Center in Chicago.





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THE DEACONESS  
COMMUNITY



ELCA  
ELCIC





**The Love of Christ  
Compels us...  
II Corinthians 5:14**



# Our Mission

Compelled by the love of Christ and sustained by community, we devote our lives to proclaiming the Gospel through ministries of mercy and servant leadership.



# Core Values

- A gospel-centered purpose that proclaims and furthers the reign of God among us.
- A prophetic diakonia that commits itself to risk taking and innovative service on the frontiers of the church's outreach.



# Core Values

- ❑ 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.







**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**







# New Ministry Initiatives









**Draft  
Social Statement on Women  
and Justice**

For Study and Response  
Prior to September 30, 2018

ELCA Task Force on Women and Justice: One in Christ  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

November 2017







# LEARNINGS 101





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