into hands of the hungry. Yet the church strives to accompany that bread with a loving and ongoing relationship rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

A deaconess is a church worker who strives to meet the needs of those around her, while pointing them to the church and Christ, who offers forgiveness, hope and healing. She differs from other congregational leaders or volunteers in that she has received a formal LCMS education in Theology—particularly in the Bible and the Lutheran Confessions—and training in strategies and skills for reaching out to others.

Every congregation includes sick, lonely, and marginalized people. Every neighborhood contains those who suffer in body or soul and need to know the love of Christ.

Equipped with God's Word, deaconesses bring a physical presence from the church to those who are suffering.

Deaconesses address specific needs within a church and its community, emphasizing that the Triune God works through good times and bad, in both Christians and non-Christians. Through physical aid, teaching, encouragement and other acts of kindness, deaconesses seek to bring the comfort of Christ and the assistance of His church to those in need.

Could a deaconess serve your congregation?

Since 1980, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has been equipping women with the Word of God, forming them with the Lutheran Confessions, and training them in human care to serve the church as deaconesses.

Each LCMS deaconess-training program places its own certified deaconess candidates, matching women in placements where they may be most beneficial. Congregations wishing to explore the idea of calling a deaconess candidate may receive more information by contacting the directors of the various deaconess-training programs:

Deaconess Jennie J. Asher
Concordia University Chicago
jennie.asher@cuchicago.edu

Rev. Dr. Erik Hermann
Concordia Seminary
herrmanne@csl.edu

Rev. Dr. James G. Bushur
Concordia Theological Seminary
james.bushur@ctsfw.edu

Rev. Timothy Eckert
Deaf Institute of Theology
deaflutheran@q.com

Rev. John Loum
Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology
loumj@csl.edu

Rev. Dr. Leopoldo Sanchez
Center for Hispanic Studies
sanchezl@csl.edu

You may also contact Deaconess Grace Rao, LCMS World Relief and Human Care under the Office of International Mission, at grace.rao@lcms.org or visit *www.lcms.org/deaconess*.

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under the Office of International Mission, 2011

Congregational Deaconesses

Living the Compassion of Christ

LCMS World Relief and Human Care

Mercy forever.

Serving the poor and suffering

As Lutherans, we find great comfort in the cross, where Jesus died to pay for the sins of the entire world. In this cross, we see that even though suffering can be severe, God works through suffering to give us new life and new hope in Christ.

On the cross, Jesus joined Himself to our suffering. He made every man and woman a potential brother or sister in the Lord! Yet, many suffer alone, forgotten or neglected by those around them.

Who may need a deaconess?

- Teen mothers, single parents
- Foster children, children of divorce and troubled youth
- Those with mental disorders or physical challenges
- The homeless, hungry and poor
- The addicted, abused or struggling
- The imprisoned and their families
- Those affected by abortion
- Immigrants or community newcomers
- Those suffering grief or loss
- The sick, lonely or homebound
- Overworked caregivers, church volunteers and pastors!

Deaconesses share Jesus' heart for mercy

Christ, our Lord, is the physical embodiment of mercy, and His church always strives to share His love with the world. Jesus, who gives new and eternal life, also cares for the bodily needs of the poor, hungry and sick. The church, therefore, brings Christ's Word and Sacraments into the world, and wherever possible, serves those with bodily need.

Deaconesses serve through acts of mercy, spiritual care and teaching the faith, primarily to women and children. This diaconal ministry of mercy supports and compliments the Pastoral office ministry of Word and Sacraments. Every LCMS deaconess is taught to point continually to Christ and the church, where our eternal needs are met through God's Word and Sacraments.

Service in congregations

- Teaching the faith
- Visiting the sick or immobile
- Family life ministry
- Pro-life ministry
- Disaster Response
- Older adult ministry
- Community outreach
- Grief support and assistance
- Disability ministry
- Children's ministry
- Women's ministry, counseling
- Youth ministry
- Cultural ministry
- Music ministry
- Women's Bible Studies
- Volunteer coordination

Additional service environments

By nature, deaconesses nurture community, especially within God's family. Additional environments related to congregational service may include:

- Service through food pantries, shelters, soup kitchens
- Service in school, childcare or educational programs
- Chaplaincy care at hospitals, convalescent homes or hospice
- Spiritual care and assistance through pregnancy centers
- Support and aid for charitable organizations or programs
- Programs for the grieving, terminally ill, troubled families
- Programs for individuals with special needs