

## 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 with 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 Kristin Wassilak  
Concordia University Chicago  
708-209-3136 • [kristin.wassilak@cuchicago.edu](mailto:kristin.wassilak@cuchicago.edu)
- ▶ Deaconess Gillian Bond  
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis  
314-505-7114 • [bondg@csl.edu](mailto:bondg@csl.edu)
- ▶ Rev. Dr. James G. Bushur  
Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne  
260-452-3214 • [james.bushur@ctsfw.edu](mailto:james.bushur@ctsfw.edu)
- ▶ Deaconess Amy Rast  
Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne  
260-452-2225 • [amy.rast@ctsfw.edu](mailto:amy.rast@ctsfw.edu)
- ▶ Rev. Dr. Leopoldo Sanchez  
Center for Hispanic Studies  
314-863-2772 • [sanchezl@csl.edu](mailto:sanchezl@csl.edu)

You may also contact Deaconess Grace Rao, director, LCMS Deaconess Ministry, at [grace.rao@lcms.org](mailto:grace.rao@lcms.org) or visit [lcms.org/deaconess](http://lcms.org/deaconess) for more information.

## Providing Mercy under the Cross

Mercy can be as tangible as a loaf of bread pressed into the 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 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.

*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.

*“Therefore, you must always have God’s Word in your heart, upon your lips, and in your ears.” (LC I: 100)*



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## Deaconesses SERVING LCMS CONGREGATIONS



### *Living the Compassion of Christ*

*“That you, being rooted and grounded in love, may ... know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge ...” (Eph. 3:17b-19 ESV)*





## 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 it 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.

## 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 or counseling
- ▶ Youth ministry
- ▶ Cultural ministry
- ▶ Music ministry
- ▶ Women's Bible studies
- ▶ Volunteer coordination

## 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.

## 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, child care or educational programs
- ▶ Chaplaincy care at hospitals, convalescent homes or hospice
- ▶ Spiritual care and assistance through pregnancy centers
- ▶ Support for charitable organizations or programs
- ▶ Programs for the grieving terminally ill, or troubled families
- ▶ Programs for individuals with special needs