

Deaconesses IN THE LCMS



Contacts

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Learn more

Complimentary fact sheets and brochures about deaconess service can be downloaded from the LCMS website at www.lcms.org/deaconess. You may also contact Deaconess Grace Rao, director, LCMS Deaconess Ministry, at grace.rao@lcms.org.



Versatile Service

Women employed in the deaconess vocation have been trained, called and commissioned by the LCMS to serve Christ and His Church through **works of mercy, spiritual care and teaching the faith**. LCMS deaconesses (active, emeritus, candidate and non-candidate) are listed on the “LCMS Roster of Ministers of Religion-Commissioned” and are members of the Synod.

The modern use of deaconesses emerged in the German Lutheran Church in the 1830s and was embraced by North American Lutherans during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Since 1922, LCMS congregations, missions, institutions and Recognized Service Organizations have engaged deaconesses in a variety of diaconal ministries. In whatever capacity she serves, the LCMS deaconess brings her theological training to bear, endeavoring to spread Christ’s love and mercy for both body and soul.

Training and Placement

In 1980, the LCMS established its own deaconess-training program at Concordia University Chicago, River Forest, Ill. Additional deaconess programs were added at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in 2002 and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, in 2003. The Synod’s Deaf Institute of Theology, Center for Hispanic Studies and Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology also offer specialized courses for deaconess certification.

In addition to completing coursework and practical fieldwork, all deaconess students are placed in a paid internship for one year of domestic service or two years of international service. Periodic reviews and evaluation of interns provide guidance for their professional growth and development. Each training program places its own intern candidates and certified deaconess candidates, matching women with placements where they may be most beneficial. Congregations and institutions apply to employ interns or newly trained deaconesses by contacting the directors of the various LCMS deaconess-training programs.

Seasoned deaconesses already serving in the field are called and move to new positions through the same calling process used for pastors and other LCMS church workers. Those interested in engaging an experienced deaconess may consult with their district president for possible names.