



BLUES NEWS...

An official publication of Concordia Deaconess Conference (CDC). Distributed eight times a year, it serves our members by circulating devotional thoughts and articles, professional submissions, and member announcements.

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OUR CONFERENCE

Concordia Deaconess Conference – Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is a free association of certified and LCMS rostered deaconesses, who subscribe to and live by the confessional position of the LCMS and who hold membership in a congregation or partner church of the same.

We work to provide opportunities for spiritual, personal, and professional growth and fellowship for deaconesses and support for diaconal service in Christ.

Donations for the work of the conference, a 501(c)(3) organization, may be mailed to Carol Schroeder at Epiphany Lutheran Church 4460 Lyons Rd Lake Worth, FL 33467-3614.



THIS ISSUE

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FROM THE PRESIDENT: MERCY IN THE NEW YEAR

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (Psalm 23:6)

We're rather fond of thinking of ourselves as vessels of God's mercy. After all, the deaconess vocation can be described as a ministry of mercy that compliments the pastoral office's ministry of Word and Sacraments. Whatever situation we serve in, we intend our physical and spiritual ministrations to embody God's love in actions that ultimately point those whom we serve back to God's Word and the formal administration of the means of grace.

At the same time, we recognize our own need to be pointed to those same means of grace. We know that our reliance on God's mercy is paramount to our ability to serve in His name. Any vessel that is to be poured out in service must first be filled, and as it is emptied, refilled that it may continue to serve.

We serve One who came into this world to serve others. We love because He first loved us. We forgive, because He first forgave us. We engage in acts of mercy because He first showed mercy to a dying world.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, by His Spirit, continues to provide for us to be filled with His Spirit. It is He who enables us to do the works of mercy that He expects of us, and indeed greater works—by the same Spirit.

St. Peter states:

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. Through these He has

given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. (2 Peter 1:3-4)

Yes, our Lord has called us by His own goodness, and we are confident that His goodness continues to follow us, to search for us when necessary, and to bathe us in His mercy. We are certain this will happen throughout 2011, but even more accurately, for all the days of our lives, until we go to dwell in His house with Him forever.

Reveling in His goodness and mercy!

Cheryl D. Naumann



CDC officers Cheryl D. Naumann and Deborah Rockrohr have lunch with students from the LCMS Hispanic Institute of Theology and Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

BLUES NEWS GUIDELINES AND SCHEDULE

This year we plan to publish six newsletters with the following schedule of themes:

- ❖ January: Mercy in the New Year
- ❖ March: Life together in Sorrow and Rejoicing (deadline February 15th)
- ❖ April: Teaching and Catechesis (Deadline March 1st)
- ❖ July: Rest and Care for Caregivers (Deadline June 1st)
- ❖ September: Security and Insecurity (Deadline August 1st)
- ❖ November: Ministry to the Less Mobile and Those Far From Home (Deadline October 1st)

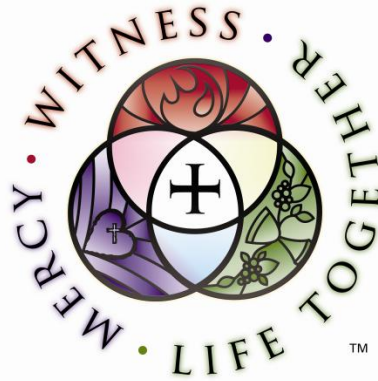
Please consider contributing an article, from one page in length down to one paragraph. From your experience share ideas, tips, and insights. We also publish reports, reviews and announcements.

BLUES News remains a tool in your hands. Worried about writing? We are happy to help, even converting notes into drafts. All articles will be formatted and edited.

Mary Moerbe

PARA LOS HISPANOABLANTES

“ Por la misericordia de Jehová no hemos sido consumidos, porque nunca decayeron sus misericordias. Nuevas son cada mañana; grande es tu fidelidad.”
Lamentaciones 3:22-23 (Reina-Valera 1960)



The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.
(Lamentations 3:22-23)

I find this verse a great reminder of the new mercies we receive daily from God. As we usher in the New Year, what new mercies do you suppose He has in store for you?

Just last month I was blessed to participate in a Mercy Medical Team trip to Kenya through LCMS World Relief and Human Care. I felt certain God was calling me to make the trip, even though I have no medical experience and cringe at the sight of blood and bodily fluids. How I would be of much assistance was beyond my understanding, but sure enough, God found plenty for me to do.

Admittedly I was out of my element the first three days as I worked in the medical clinic's pharmacy with the task of counting pills—sequestered away from people. It wasn't exactly what I had in mind in the way of serving God's people as a deaconess until I realized I was there under God's will and authority and not my own. Those dear souls needed medication that they did not ordinarily have access to and I was in a position to help provide it. Far be it for me to think He should have other diaconal duties more appropriate than counting pills to help His ailing children.

My trip brought about many blessings outside of the medical realm. I happened to be seated next an African nun from Mother Theresa's order on my flight to Kenya, with whom I took great delight in discussing various projects she had been involved with. And once in Kenya, our team had the opportunity to meet Bishop Obare of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya and to worship within Kenyan Lutheran churches. We also had the privilege of enjoying the company of many children who delighted in the American treats we brought.

The highlight of my trip came late in the week when I was able to meet with the deaconess students at Matongo Lutheran Theological College. I was in my element again! These delightful ladies allowed me to sit in on a few classes with them to experience their educational environment.

After experiencing the treat of peanut M&Ms with the women (I called them medicine for deaconesses), when asked what they needed most, their request was for Lutheran Study Bibles! They have a hunger for the Word and for Lutheran theology that was so refreshing to see.

I am not a fundraiser, but I could not help but want to come home and ask for support to send eleven of the new brown and pink Lutheran Study

WHAT NEW MERCIES MAY BE IN STORE?

Kim Schave

Bibles over to them. God yet again took me outside of my comfort zone as I asked for money and, through the generous gifts of friends and family, I was able to receive enough to cover the costs. As I type this, the books are being taken over by a staff member of World Relief and Human Care.

Do you know another way they answered when asked what they needed? They replied that they need more theologically trained deaconesses who understand that learning is much more than just an oral lecture, and such deaconesses who might be willing to make the trip there to teach some of their classes.

What if CDC could make an impact on the training of Lutheran deaconesses around the world by enhancing the classroom experience for them? How could we do this? What would it take?

So what do you think God may be asking of you in this New Year? Might it be showing mercy in a way that you could never have expected? "His mercies never come to an end"--not for us and not for those whom we serve.

Kim Schave

CHI RECOGNIZES IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF PHOEBE

On November 11, 2010, Cheryl D. Naumann received an Award of Commendation from Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, for her writing of *In the Footsteps of Phoebe* (CPH 2009). Included in the category of Major Publications, the Awards Banquet Program described the volume as “a well-researched and significant book documenting the deaconess movement as it developed in the LCMS from its early beginning to the present time.”

Upon receipt of the Award Cheryl responded: “Thank you, on behalf of all Missouri Synod deaconesses, for recognizing *In the Footsteps of Phoebe* and its important chronicle of the diaconal ministry of mercy carried out from the beginning of the Missouri Synod until now, through what was the first recognized church work vocation for women in our Synod.”



Cheryl D. Naumann holding Award Certificate from CHI. Nov. 11, 2010.

UPWARD SPORTS MINISTRY

Lauren Olsen



A soccer game through Upward Sports in Union, Ill. 2010

Several years ago, I was exploring various ways of sharing the Good News of God’s love in the community. In my experience at St. John’s Lutheran Church in Union, a rural area northwest of Chicago, I discovered that one of the many things that the Marengo-Union area is passionate about is sports. They love to have their youth participating in sports.

I became familiar with Upward Sports Ministry when I participated in a National Sports and Recreation Ministry Conference. When I returned from the conference, I worked with the congregation to work towards offering Upward Soccer to the community. We offered our first soccer league in the spring of 2007.

For over 14 years, Upward Sports has been conducting exciting children’s sport leagues and camps in the US and around the world. Upward Sports is a first-class sports experience that emphasizes healthy competition, sportsmanship, skill building and fun versus the “win-at-all-costs” mentality found in many children sports leagues.

Currently, more than 500,000 children, from five-year olds in Kindergarten to sixth graders, participate in Upward Sports leagues worldwide.

The first year that St. John’s started offering Upward Sports, they offered spring and fall soccer. Since that first year, the soccer league has grown from 36 players in spring 2007 to 114 players in the spring of 2010.

This fall St. John’s offered flag football and had 39 participants. This winter they added basketball and had 26 youth participate.

The impetus to adding basketball and flag football to our offerings was a failed tax referendum for the Marengo/Union School District. Because of the failed referendum, the middle school cut their sports activities. St. John’s felt that we could offer basketball and flag football to stand in the gap for the missing school programs.

Another bonus to the Upward Sports Ministry is that it is not based upon a player’s ability. The program is designed to create balanced teams through team assignment so that any child can join and benefit. Everyone gets to play and

play time is on a rotation basis so that no player will sit for more than a 6-minute period. This sports league even avoids scheduling craziness by having one hour-long practice a week and one game a week.

At practice, along with basic skills of the sport, participants hear about God’s love through a short devotion. They have the opportunity to share prayer requests and things that are happening in their lives. The coaches and referees use affirmation as a style of coaching and parents are encouraged to do the same.

This is how it works at St. John’s: I do registration and the pastors have divided the sports between them. All three may coach on occasion. The pastors train the coaches for their respective sports.

There are lots of opportunities for interaction with families. I participate and talk a lot at practices as well as at games. I produce and distribute a game-day newsletter that includes a devotion written by one of the pastors.

Several families have gotten connected with our church through Upward Sports Ministry.

Lauren Olsen



A boys’ basketball team through St. John’s ministry of Upward Sports.

CDC SCHEDULE

February 15th—Newsletter deadline for “Life Together in Sorrow and Rejoicing”

March 1st—Newsletter deadline for “Teaching and Catechesis”

June 1st—Newsletter deadline for “Rest and Care for Caregivers”

June 15-18th—Conference in Seward, Nebraska

CDC OFFICERS

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Cheryl D. Naumann

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Deborah Rockrohr

Secretary:

Jennifer Phillips

Treasurer:

Carol Schroeder

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Prayer requests can be emailed to the prayer coordinator at

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Digital pictures can be emailed to

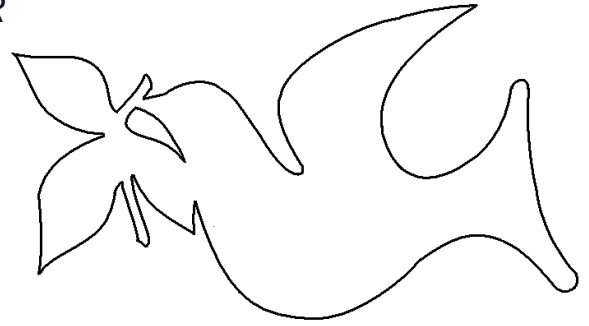
photos.cdc@gmail.com.

Email publicrelations@concordiadeaconesslcmcs.org with PR suggestions or requests for banners.

Members may purchase extra cross pins or insignias for themselves from Linda Cosgrove.

THE MERCY THAT NEVER FAILS

Rev. John Berg



The Professional Code of Ethics of Concordia Deaconess Conference states the following, "By the grace of God a deaconess is committed to grow in love for those she serves, to strive for excellence in her skills, and to adorn the Gospel with a godly life. In accord with the promises made at her commissioning, a deaconess of the CDC shall strive to: Seek opportunities to extend the Church's hand of mercy to the household of faith and the community."

How is that going for you these days? Have you gotten wrapped up in the things of this world and life and ignored your neighbor in need? Have you forgotten about them? Or have you taken their struggles upon yourself instead of placing them on Christ? If you are honest with yourself you can answer along with

me, "I have failed to show mercy to my neighbor."

Be of good cheer! Our Lord's mercy never fails! Your sins are forgiven! He answers our cry for mercy! He remembers us and has mercy on us not because He needs it, but because we do. He remembers us that we might remember Him. He comes and calls to us that we might call to Him, "Lord have mercy."

Despite our failure in showing mercy to our neighbor, our Lord does not withhold His mercy from us. He does not chastise us for our lack of faith and acts of mercy. The Apostle Paul says it so eloquently, "If we are faithless, He remains faithful—for He cannot deny Himself." (2 Timothy 2:13)

He remains faithful and gives mercy because to fail to do so would be against who He is. Even though we may be slow to seek Him; even though we may be quick to turn away from Him, or even to turn on Him; even though we fail to pray; even though we fall into the same pits again and again; even though we doubt His Word, His presence, and His goodness; even though we forget Him, His mercy never fails. It is unconditional! He does not take His mercy away from us. He is not like us. We may hold grudges against those who take advantage of us, and for those who may be ungrateful for our acts of mercy to them. But not our God! "If we are faithless, He remains faithful!" (2 Timothy 2:13) "Oh give thanks to the Lord for His mercy endures forever!" (Psalm 118:1)

Rev. John Berg