



## BLUES NEWS...

An official publication of Concordia Deaconess Conference – Lutheran Church— Missouri Synod (CDC). Distributed six times a year, it serves our members by circulating professional submissions, devotional thoughts and articles, and member announcements.

Digital subscriptions are free of cost. Print subscriptions for non-members are \$9 for six issues. All subscription inquiries and submissions can be directed to our newsletter editor at [editor.bluesnews@concordia.deaconesslcms.org](mailto:editor.bluesnews@concordia.deaconesslcms.org) or Trinity Lutheran Church PO Box 545, Blackwell, OK 74631-0545.

## OUR CONFERENCE

Concordia Deaconess Conference 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. As a Recognized Service Organization of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, CDC works 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 Kim Schave Saint Paul Lutheran Church 5433 Madison Rd Cincinnati, OH 45227-1507.



## GRIEF & END OF LIFE

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## FROM THE EDITOR: FLEXING FEELINGS

Every once in a while, Good Friday is on a particularly beautiful day. Or maybe the season of Lent was especially busy. Perhaps it just happened to correspond with a specifically happy time in your life: an endearing stage for your kids, surprisingly productive time, or a great many other things.

I am partial to Good Friday in part because it is a time set apart to remember we are mortal. When Jesus goes to the cross, when He goes to die in our stead, He goes because death waits for all of us. He takes our judgment and punishment upon Himself so that we are freed from our sin before our heavenly Father.

Seeing how the Trinity confronts death head-on, under a crown of thorns, encourages me in so many ways. But, some years I cannot find the emotional catharsis I am looking for in Lent and Holy Week. While the Spirit continues to work repentance and faith within, my emotions just are not as prepared for grief and loss as when I might have flexed sadder feelings of trust during a penitential season.

Emotions are not everything, of course, but they are something! Grief and loss, or juggling end of life issues, is emotional, whether those emotions are buried deep and varying widely. Death can creep and death can spring. It can startle unlike anything else, yet at other times it seems to lend moments of closure to us as we await the Resurrection.

In a sense, death is as versatile as life, hanging out at the pool as well as hospitals or hospice. But just as death, sadly, can come any time for any age, life can flex its muscles too. There can be a lot of emphasis placed on happiness, by family, friends, and anyone else. Entire philosophies and lifestyles are laid out along the assumption that everyone wants to be happy, some going so far as to assume everyone wants everyone else to be happy!

Now, God will provide us with eternal delight, but there will also be times of sadness and grief.

As He uses our minds and physicality in faith toward Him and to reach out in love toward our neighbor, He can use our emotions too. Not as a litmus test! Not as interpreter of the Word! But as our emotions bouy up and down in the seasons of this life, we are reminded that we will experience suffering in this turbulent world.

The cycle of penitential and rejoicing seasons of the church year help to train our hearts and minds in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. But because Jesus is truly human, and because each of us carry our crosses after Him daily, the church year also helps us to train our hearts and minds—even bodies. They flex our muscles!

Our congregation just lost a beloved retired pastor. It is beautiful outside. Everyone is focused on their farm or garden. But the years that we have put away alleluias, only to take them up again because of the Resurrection, have built a little solace and strength into us for times such as this. We may not feel quite like we imagine we should, but we are joined into the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. And even as He embraces our brother in Christ—and as He too waits for the final Resurrection and restoration of all things—Jesus feels for us. He gives us His Word to equip and train us, and never leaves us alone.

Mary J. Moerbe

**GRIEF SUPPORT CLASSES IN PRISON**

One of the most difficult things in prison ministry is for people to trust you and share their pain. That is a basis to any grief support program.

It took two classes until I gained the women's trust, but what facilitated the sharing of painful memories is the use of drawing pictures of their feelings and then talking about them. This would be done besides the usual life line, stages of grief and appropriate DVDs.

The first picture would be a drawing of one's loss, memories of the past, a symbol that represents the past. Each person would share the picture and explain its meaning to others. I was amazed of some of the insightful drawings.

Other topics would be an image of the person's present emotion toward their grief, a symbol of their grief and at last a picture of a door, leading out of their grief. The pictures were a starting point for the women to share, using them as an aide to express themselves.

One of the most heart wrenching—but comforting—tasks was to write a letter to the loved one about your regrets, your anger and your feeling of abandonment. When those letters were read, there were no dry eyes.

I used the same program for grief support classes at congregations. Parts of the grief recovery program were taken from *Grief's Courageous Journey* by Sandi Caplan and Gordon Lang.

Erna Baehr Schmid

Walking in faith. Living in love.

Remaining steadfast in the hope of our Lord Jesus Christ.



**BODIES BROKEN**

Pamela Boehle-Silva

He leans sideways in his wheelchair, his broken body twisted and crooked. Dependent. Weak. Child-like. Poor. Humiliated. Unable to speak, his eyes convey his frustration, his confusion, his desire to be rid of this broken body.

Take, eat. This is My body, broken for you.

Surgeries meant to heal render him "useless"—at least as the world sees him. Friends, family say, "He wouldn't want to live this way," suggesting, "something be done" to end this tragedy. Suffering engulfs him and those who love him.

Take, eat. This is My body, broken for you.

Body broken. Immobile. Wheelchair bound. Hoyer lift moves him from chair to bed. Flopped like a rag doll into the desired position. Diapered, he has lost control of his bladder and bowels. Bibbed, he drools like a baby.

Take, eat. This is My body, broken for you.

The distorted face is home to eyes of brilliant blue, following movements, speaking words that cannot be spoken. An asymmetrical smile anchors lips still wanting to kiss. Uneven hands—one "good," the other "useless," still soft and beautiful—are reminders of times when this great man provided others protection and security.

Take, eat. This is My body, broken for you.

This broken body with its wounds and scars receives Christ's broken body in simple bread and wine. Familiar words are spoken: "Take, eat; this is the true body of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, given into death for your sins. Take, drink; this is the true blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, shed for the forgiveness of your sins."

Medicine of immortality given to this broken body—a body still bent with limbs that don't work—a mind still scrambled with synapses that misfire.

Twisted, crooked lips receive the body and blood of Christ, giving what it promises: forgiveness of sins and peace.

The world sees damaged goods. Christ sees a body, broken by sin and disease now restored, healed, reconciled—in Him.

\*\* This was written in memory of my father, Louis "Spike" Boehle, who suffered a major stroke during a surgical procedure in September 2010. The stroke rendered him totally dependent on

others for care. Unable to breathe properly, he had a tracheotomy and had to be on a ventilator for several weeks. Unable to swallow, he had a feeding tube for a time.

His last months of life were lived out in the hospital, rehabilitation centers and finally in a board and care home. He died on February 18, 2011, due to complications of pneumonia. Distance separated

us as he lay dying, but thanks to a hospice volunteer who held the phone to my father's ear, I was able to talk to my father, read God's Word and pray with him until his pastor arrived.

Pamela Boehle-Silva

This was published by *The Lutheran Witness*' online column, "The View from Here," on May 25, 2012. Her experience is also influenced by her years as a registered nurse.

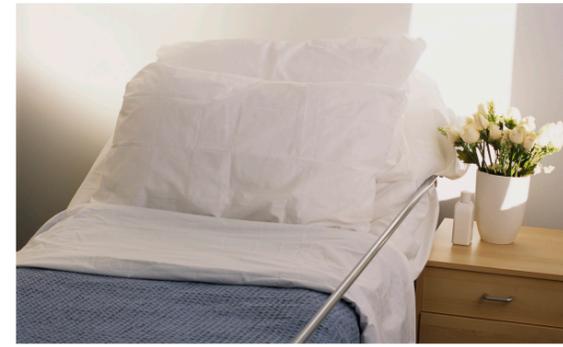
**ANNOUNCEMENT**

DOXOLOGY, an LCMS recognized service organization and program, rooted in the classic art of spiritual care and informed by the insights of contemporary Christian psychology, has announced a new conference open to pastors, church workers, and laity.

"Speaking the Truth in Love: A Compassionate Response to Same Sex Attraction & Same Sex Marriage" will be held **August 14-15, 2013**, at the University of St. Mary at the Lake Conference Center in Mundelein, Illinois.

This conference will help equip pastors, deaconesses, other rostered workers and laity alike with the desire and capacity to speak and act with confidence and compassion during the difficult days that will surely follow the Supreme Court decision.

More information will be posted to <http://doxology.us> and Doxology's facebook page.



**BOOK REVIEW & ANNOUNCEMENT**

**A BOOK REVIEW: THE COST OF HOPE**

Written by Amada Bennett (Random House, New York), the author chronicles her journey from the time she meets her husband in China until his death of a rare cancer twenty-four years later. Several years after his death, she revisits all the doctors, asking if the fight was worth it.

The monetary cost to the insurance company was extremely high. The bills for the last two years totaled \$618,616 for treatments, which no one can say helped in extending his life, but it kept giving them hope. She questions herself later, if she was the only one clinging fiercely to this hope, being afraid of living without him.

This book is not complimentary to the medical and insurance business. In Amada Bennett's eyes, their complex interdependence seems to be

based on a system which is designed for them rather than the patient.

I think the book deals with a problem of our times and many of us have dealt with it or will in the future. How long can we permit modern medicine to prolong one's death? This is especially difficult if one deals with a close family member or friend. At those times all our knowledge is suppressed by our emotions. Amada Bennett tries to make us see the whole picture and I think is worth reading.

Erna Baehr Schmid

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

**Help at Synodical Convention:** Are you going to attend the Synod Convention in St. Louis this summer? Do you live in St. Louis and want a reason to check out the convention? Do you want to go to St. Louis this summer? If so, we

need your help to host the CDC exhibit and raise awareness with convention attendees of deaconesses and ways we serve.

From **Saturday, July 20 to Thursday, July 25**, CDC representatives will be at the convention to highlight the work we do every day. This is a great chance to spread the word about deaconesses, discuss the benefits of having a synodically trained deaconess, and how the CDC serves our Synod.

Please consider sharing your time in St. Louis to help us. Please contact Doris Snashal at [snashal@pacbell.net](mailto:snashal@pacbell.net) if you are interested. We hope to get enough volunteers to take shifts at the exhibit.

**CDC CALENDAR**

**May 18th—Deadline for conference registration.**

**June 15th—Deadline for July issue: Adoption**

**June 19-22, 2013—Annual Conference in Fort Wayne, Indiana.**

**August 15th—Deadline for September issue: Inclusive Tips: Ways to welcome those with special needs.**

**ANUNCIOS**

Nos agradezca informale de que Rosie Adle ha traducido la solicitud de asociación y el Código de Ética en español. Rosie también tradujo a todas las formas de conferencias y materiales anticipadas. Damos gracias a Dios que nos ha ayudado con este!

El Dr. Sánchez se propone enviar un informe sobre el Centro de Estudios Hispanos de nuestra Conferencia de junio.

Cada boletín tendrá un artículo o anuncio español. Por favor, escribe para *BLUES News*. Envíe artículos para editor.bluesnews@concordiadeaconesslcms.org.

**WHY (NOT) ME? GROWING GUILT OF SURVIVER'S**

Assumptions are changing, and children are hearing very different messages than they once were. Abortion is no longer a topic adults automatically shield from children. Increasingly children of all ages learn from their parents that brothers, sisters, cousins, etc., were aborted.

One thing that this means is that people are considering themselves worthy of life because of good timing and corresponding fair conditions.

We should be aware that some people really do value themselves based on good timing and achieving the right circumstances. So that when these new "values" are missing, there is fear, grief, and ungroundedness. Not only does abortion, and any emphasis on one person's perception over another's, leave people feeling alone, it can trap them in their own perception of earning value or deserving survival.

Now, everyone talks about quality of life at some point, but the severe emphasis that abortion grants one person's perception really is staggering. Abortion cannot be "a woman's issue" because abortion affects everyone connected, from family to medical personnel to larger community.

How does one process the abortion of family members? How does one continue to honor those who have valued the lives given to them? Only by the grace of God.

How can we try to prepare ourselves if such a child walks through our door? Or a repentant medical provider? Even grieving fathers and grandparents? Let's share resources when we find them!

Abortion Recovery International is one resource to help siblings of aborted children find healing. You can call them at 1-800-395-HELP.

Mary J. Moerbe  
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## CDC OFFICERS

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### QUICK CONTACT INFORMATION

**Spiritual Counselor:**

Reverend Kevin Loughran  
(loughran\_kevin@yahoo.com, c: 727-612-9782)

**Prayer requests** can be emailed to the prayer coordinator at [cdcprayers@comcast.net](mailto:cdcprayers@comcast.net).

**Digital pictures** can go to [photos.cdc@gmail.com](mailto:photos.cdc@gmail.com) for publication or other conference uses.

**Newsletter submissions** and suggestions can be sent to [editor.bluesnews@concordiadeaconesslcmcs.org](mailto:editor.bluesnews@concordiadeaconesslcmcs.org).

Members may purchase extra cross pins (\$10) or insignias (\$7) from Heidi Bishop at 101 N. Spring St, Elgin, IL 60120.

To God be the glory

## GRIEVE BUT WITH YOUR INHERITANCE

Liz Borth

Grief is an expression of deep mental loss. Sometimes we reserve grief for death—temporal death—and forget that losing a job, moving from the family home, dissolving a marriage, visiting a child in prison, being asked to leave your church, watching your spouse forget you, or wondering where your prodigal son may be, are losses wrapped in grief. These situations force a daily encounter with a life unlike one envisioned and hoped for.

Despite education and instruction in caring for the hurting and lost and those confused over death and earthly separation, we struggle with comforting words and faith based convictions that express the truth of God's loving control in all these grief laden situations. We learn what to offer when questions of eternity arise, but these encounters are a different loss.

"I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord." Well, I don't really like these plans. They are beyond my comprehension; I don't know what my next steps should be; I have lost all control. I am grieved that I am a helpless mother, spouse, or provider, and I have lost my dreams.

"The Lord watches over you"—How does God watching over me help as I watch my daughter walk away from me? Will her tears fade from my memory and stop breaking my heart because I believe the Lord will not let me stumble?"

The short answer is "yes." The promise that our Lord has control of the plans designed especially for you must be coupled with the reminder your plans are not His. Jesus lived with deep emotional loss. He was rejected and abandoned by

family and friends; His best friend didn't recognize Him. He wanted to find another way to make a difference in the world, but He humbly followed the will of His Father, even though He knew it meant bearing so much Himself.

Along our self-hewn path, there will always be encounters with grief. We cannot deny our choices often lead to situations we cannot control or change, and ultimately we grieve that we were so foolish to forget God is the source of life. In spite of the temptation to believe God's Word is only platitudes of sympathy, share what you know is soothing and healing salve. Our purpose is not to live a peaceful life on earth, but to be in close relationship with God. In His mercy, He has given us an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.

Liz Borth

