PROFESSIONALISM BY NANCY NEMOYER

The Lord brought the nine founding members of CDC together from diverse backgrounds with common convictions and a shared vision. While there was soon a Constitution with By-Laws, no Code of Ethics was established at that beginning. Conduct and expectations were understood within our small group.

Under the bond of Christ’s love we could question, explore, and talk, usually resulting in more clarity about what we stood for as a deaconess conference.

As CDC and the LCMS training programs grew, common education fostered common deaconess formation that the intimacy of nine women living in a 200-mile radius could no longer accomplish. Even then, the numbers were growing and so were the questions about who we are as a body and what commitments were understood to be a part of the Conference. When our 25th anniversary rolled around, it was just the right time to pen a Code of Ethics.

Having a Code of Ethics is not unique to CDC. It is commonly found in other professional fields as well—e.g., social workers, librarians, nurses, educators, or accountants. In our Code of Ethics, as in others, there are three dimensions: core values, responsibilities, and a statement of identity both within the membership and to the public. Aligning ourselves to a code makes us professionals. We are part of a profession and we “profess” a certain set of core beliefs together with others in that same profession.

For the deaconess, professionalism is professing Christ and Him crucified; remembering that we serve Christ in our neighbor, and actually in all that we do in His name; and being Christ-like to those whom we serve in the church and in the world. The Code of Ethics touches on subjects that remind us how we want to carry out this professionalism, whether it be related to the care of the uniform and the cross, a kindly manner, proper delivery of law and gospel, attitude toward the pastor, bedside manner in the hospital, integrity in tough situations, keeping secrets, cheerleading other deaconesses, or attending CDC conferences.

No code can address all situations, but the statements are a definition of underlying principles, from which life applications can be drawn. CDC statements are based on Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. These are standards to which the membership can aspire and be held accountable by one another. Yes, it is a statement of law! Yet every member of CDC lives under the Gospel as a forgiven daughter of Christ, and we share that love for one another as sisters in Christ.

Our Code of Ethics grows out of our desire to serve because of Christ’s first love for us. We cannot by our own reason come to faith, nor can we by our own will live a right and proper life. But through the work of the Holy Spirit we can do works that grow out of faith. So, as we stumble along, desiring to be His example to church and world, we walk in forgiveness and grace. Our good works are His good works accomplished through us, for the extension of His Kingdom. Thanks be to God!

Nancy E. (Nicol) Nemoyer
The Concordia Deaconess Conference CDC, affirming its desire to glorify the Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—and to reflect His love and grace in Christ, establishes this Code of Ethics. The Code, rooted in Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, is intended to establish clear standards and definitions for the professional behavior and practices of its members. This Code of Ethics expresses the Concordia Deaconess Conference’s unity of belief and outlines members’ responsibilities and obligations to God, to the church, to colleagues and to each individual who is to be served. This Code serves the conference as a mirror, rule and curb, and is intended to teach, strengthen and affirm its members.

PREAMBLE TO THE CODE OF ETHICS

The primary mission of the CDC is to support deaconesses as they bring Christ’s caring presence, love, and perspective to others. A deaconess points to Christ, who is present in Word and Sacrament, provided by the Office of the Public Ministry. Biblical history and the tradition of the LC-MS have shaped CDC’s Code of Ethics. Diocesan service is mentioned in the New Testament, as in the case of Phoebe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchrea (Romans 16:1). Throughout subsequent centuries, interest in formal diaconates flourished and waned. Following a revival of diaconal ministry in nineteenth-century Europe, German Lutherans brought their vision of diaconial service to the United States. In 1919, the Lutheran Deaconess Association within the Synodical Conference was established, and in 1934, the Lutheran Deaconess Conference was founded. Changes within these two groups prompted nine deaconesses to establish the CDC in 1980, after the LC-MS voted to establish its own deaconess training program in 1979.

The following statements are an expression of these principles regarding the professional conduct of a deaconess.

THEOLOGICAL ETHICS

In her promises made at commissioning, 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 (John 13:15). In accord with the promises made at her commissioning, a deaconess of the CDC shall strive to:

1. Express the faith in word and deed.
2. Properly apply the distinction between Law and Gospel in her care-giving and teaching.
3. Continue education in the Scriptures and theology.
4. Continue education that is necessary to provide excellent service in her setting.
5. Demonstrate a servant attitude, e.g., loving, compassionate, hospitable, selfless, sincere, humble, respectful, approachable, encouraging, nurturing.
6. Maintain standards of professional integrity, e.g., uses appropriate language, speaks the truth in love, is trustworthy, manages time well, fulfills responsibilities, works diligently, and resolves conflict according to Biblical principles.
7. A deaconess respects the work of her colleagues, speaks the truth in love, and uses appropriate channels to express differences.
8. Maintain confidentiality, except in cases where immediate danger is perceived or safety becomes an issue.
9. Maintain government standards as they apply to her position; i.e., mandatory reporting, privacy and confidentiality laws.
10. Seek opportunities to extend the Church’s hand of mercy to the household of faith and the community.
11. Exercise servant leadership without prejudice or favoritism.
12. Uphold the sanctity of human life from conception to death.
13. Demonstrate competence in her areas of responsibility; i.e., health, music, education, care-giving, developmental disabilities.
14. Be devoted to the well-being of others: physically, spiritually, and emotionally. Maintain within her competence in counseling situations and refer to other professionals when needed.
15. Strive to avoid overlapping relationships that result in the impairment of professional discretion and impartial judgment.
16. Maintain appropriate sexual boundaries.
17. Limit sexual intimacy to heterosexual marriage as instituted by God.
18. Neither accept nor offer gifts that involve expectations that would extend, curtail or alter the service offered.
19. Encourage and uplift sister deaconesses.
20. Demonstrate commitment to her professional conversations, including the CDC.
21. Be aware of warning signs in her own behavior and mood and seek help to address these needs.

APPOINTMENTS

February 15th—Deadline for Annual Dues or Waiver Requests

February 15th also deadline for March BLUES News: Words from Abroad. We encourage our international workers to share their experience and wisdom.

DEACONESS IDENTITY

Joyce A. Ostermann

Mary Moore has published a children’s book, How Can (Help)? God’s Calling For Kids (CPH).

Joyce A. Ostermann

The age-old question in the Missouri Synod is “What is a deaconess?” In the early years (1970s) when we began our quest to establish an LCMS deaconess training program, our group frequently appealed to synod boards and committees—constituted of experienced synod leaders, both clergy and lay, men and women—where we would give a presentation requesting the establishment of a synod training program and then ask for questions. The first question was always, “What is a deaconess?” Thirty-five years later I realize that question should have been, “Who is a deaconess?”

Deaconess identity is established by the woman’s love for Christ and her desire to serve Him. In the LCMS this also means that she has met the requirements for rigorous academic training and has placed herself under the authority of Synod. She has committed herself to the inerrancy of Holy Scripture, the creeds, and the Book of Concord. As a member of the Concordia Deaconess Conference also have a group identify in the privilege to wear the uniform, including the very special CDC insignia and gold cross.

CDC deaconesses are everywhere. The distinctive blue uniform with gold arm insignia can be seen in many Synod publications and news releases. Live pictures from the 2013 LCMS convention scanned CDC deaconess uniforms on delegate tables, reading a resolution from the podium and playing other significant roles in the life of our Synod.

For the founding “mothers” of Concordia Deaconess Conference, these are thrilling moments. All praise to God!

Joyce A. Ostermann


Theologian W. Albert Lamb shows us that the book of Hebrews is not only the most extraordinary document in the New Testament, it is a faithful summary of the entire Bible, as well as the most complete revelation of God ever given to the world. Hebrews teems with challenges to the strongest and most shallow faith. Lamb’s work is meant to be a light in the darkness, a challenge to believers in the sense of a ‘matched-ball game’ between the demands of Hebrews and the practices and expectations of the believers who are reading this resource now. Hebrews is ‘The New Testament’s Greatest Book’. Order today.

Theological Ethics

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 (John 13:15). In accord with the promises made at her commissioning, a deaconess of the CDC shall strive to:

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please send wedding, birth, and death information to April Ramsey, our CDC Prayer Coordinator, at cpdprayer@ comcast.net or through her directory contact information. Live pictures from the 2013 LCMS convention scanned CDC deaconess uniforms on delegate tables, reading a resolution from the podium and playing other significant roles in the life of our Synod.

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Joyce A. Ostermann

What are your goals for your Synod? Let us know how we can help. Contact us today at marketing@bluesnews.com or call 855-258-4867.
WHAT IS MY WANT?  
“TO SERVE THE LORD AND HIS WRETCHED ONES”  

Betty Mulholland

“Working in faith. Laboring in Love” is the motto of a Concordia Deaconess Conference deaconess. In order to serve people who are in a state of need, down trodden or hurting in any way, compassion is needed to care for them.

Keeping both feet on Scripture by beginning and ending each day in God’s Word, the deaconess knows that the Bible says of our Lord in many places, “and He had compassion on them.” We strive to emulate our Lord.

Compassion is shown by the deaconess as she holds a mother in her arms—weeping with her—for the loss of her child; or as she listens and guides the “neglected and misunderstood” teenager. Immediately and long after, she shows compassion to those who have lost loved ones or possessions in a disaster.

In foreign countries a deaconess may be the only Christian around and the compassion she shows to the people with whom she is working is an astounding new experience to the unbeliever!

Deaconesses who serve in administrative positions bring compassion to the lives of their colleagues as they provide for the smooth running of those things that are necessary for the work of the kingdom of God; and those who teach show compassion by being well prepared and patient, with love for every child no matter how much or how little the child knows of Jesus.

A deaconness might have the privilege of showing compassion to the dying by holding their hand, singing hymns and Psalms, and praying with them as they depart this life. Even in retirement deaconesses can show compassion to those with whom they daily rub shoulders by assisting them in meeting their various special needs.

There are many elderly alone in their homes who are forgotten by their families. It is the compassion shown by the deaconess that brings comfort and hope to people of Christ when their biological family forgets them. Whatever job description deaconesses have, moments of compassion are a big part of our lives.

The deaconess knows she has the true deaconess spirit when she can look forward “WITH JOY” to cutting the gnarled, yellow, hardened toe nails of an old grandpa!—Now that’s compassion!  

Betty Mulholland

ABOUT THIS ISSUE’S AUTHORS

Betty Mulholland, Ruth Stallmann, Joyce Ostermann, and Nancy Nemoyer were founding members of CDC and are still members today. Ruth was the first CDC President; Joyce the second CDC President and Chairman of the Committee that penned the Constitution; Nancy the first CDC Secretary and the first Director of LCMS deaconess training at Concordia University Chicago, from 1980-90. Betty taught early deaconess formation classes at CUC and is currently the CDC Encourager.

ANUNCIO

El Código de Ética de los CDC está disponible a petición de los concordiadeaconessconferencelcms@yahoo.com.