Diakonia Report to Greater Milwaukee Synod 2017

Diakonia is the two year lay education program used by the Greater Milwaukee Synod and nine other synods around the country. Our Executive Director is Pastor Alexander Jacobs and our Steering Committee is chaired by Diane Roznowski, 2008 Diakonia grad. We thank the many pastors and other rostered leaders that have taught classes and served on our Steering Committee over the years.

Diakonia Classes are currently being offered in 4 locations around the synod. We thank Our Savior’s Milwaukee (11 students), Lord of Life Kenosha (12 students), St. John’s Brookfield (7 students) and Christ the King Port Washington (9 students) for hosting our classes. We are very pleased to have been able to expand our reach across the synod this year. Because of a generous donation for lay education made years ago, we are able to provide full or partial tuition scholarships for those students who need financial assistance. We are also grateful to the the congregations of students who help support their studies by helping with the cost of tuition or books.

We are celebrating the GMS diakonia program 10th graduating class on Saturday, June 10 at St. Stephen the Martyr Church in Greendale. The Rev. Stephen Bouman, founder of the diakonia program will preach that day and Bishop Paul Erickson will preside. We have commissioned a processional cross that is being made by El Salvadoran artist Christian Chavarria Ayala. It will be displayed in the synod office after our graduation worship. We will have a grand total of 128 graduates of the program following this graduation.

We are working on creating a survey of our grads to find out “where are they now” and how has diakonia impacted their ministry and life. We also would like to create a listing of possible congregational or synodical roles for diakonia grads that could be distributed to pastors to let them know how they can utilized the gifts of diakonia grads. We are aware of 5 diakonia students that have felt the call to go on to seminary and are now or will be serving as rostered ministers in the ELCA.

2017 Retreat: We have an annual retreat for our grads and students and our topic this year was Children of Abraham: Muslims and Christians Together in the World. The president of the Milwaukee Muslim Women’s Coalition, Janan Najeeb was our main presenter and other members of the Muslim community were part of breakout groups and a panel discussion. Our bishop participated by leading us in Bible study.

Continuing education opportunities This summer we hope to offer a 5 week course to our graduates and present students exploring world religious faiths. More information will be forthcoming.

Communications Please contact us if you would like to host a display or have a speaker at your church to present an informational session on the diakonia program to your congregation. We have begun reporting to the synod council in November and May of each year to provide an update the synod diakonia program. Aside from the diakonia page on our synod website, we have a new national diakonia website at www.diakoniausa.org. We also have a facebook presence for both the synod diakonia program at https://www.facebook.com/Diakonia-GMS-248577631891523/?ref=aymt_homepage_panel and the national diakonia page at https://www.facebook.com/diakonianationalprogram/

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