

2014 Pre-Assembly Report on the Greater Milwaukee Synod diakonia Program

The Greater Milwaukee Synod's diakonia program has been in existence since 2006 and continues to thrive and grow. The goal is to prepare lay leaders for service in the church, the community and the world. Interest steadily continues to grow in this two year lay education program of spiritual formation and theological study. Classes meet once each week for two years during the school year, and are taught by clergy and lay leaders. 75 different pastors, rostered leaders or lay persons with special theological education have taught diakonia classes since the program began in our synod.

We currently have three active class locations in the Greater Milwaukee Synod; student count for each location is Our Savior's in Milwaukee (8), Kenosha (9) and Our Savior's in Oconomowoc (6) for a total of 23 diakonia students. At this point, we anticipate 10 students will graduate this spring. Our graduation is scheduled for June 14, 2014 at Our Savior's Lutheran in Oconomowoc at 2pm. Please join us!

Our steering committee meets twice a year and consists of 15 members; 12 diakonia graduates and 3 pastors. I am grateful for their dedication to the diakonia program in the GMS. Special thanks to our executive director, Pastor Sandy Chrostowski for her leadership and support.

Our financial situation continues to be strong and we are able to offer full scholarships for diakonia tuition. We also offer scholarships to diakonia grads to attend Anti-Racism training or other ELCA ministry training or seminaries. A new goal is to offer diakonia classes in Spanish in the Racine area in the future, and we plan to use part of our resources to develop the materials to make this possible.

We offer a variety of opportunities for our graduates to continue their learning. In November a dozen grads met for a bible study with our bishop, Rev. Jeff Barrow. 35 people attended our annual day-long retreat on Saturday, February 22 at King of Glory in Milwaukee. The theme was Sabbath Keeping: Creating Order Out of Chaos led by Deaconess Judy Schroeder. 14 graduates attended a field trip to the churchwide offices in September of 2013 and met with Bishop Hanson as well as spending the day learning about other national programs from churchwide leadership. Several grads participated and helped plan a Wartburg Lifelong Learning online class, "Here We Stand" taught by Winston Persaud. Diakonia grads and students are involved and integrated into the life of their own congregations, the wider church, as well as the community. The impact of the nearly 100 grads is hard to measure, but be sure that we are an active and faithful group!

Our Milwaukee synod web page and links on the national page have been updated. We have a Facebook page and an active email listserve to communicate with our current students, graduates and instructors.

We ask clergy and congregations to promote diakonia, encourage interested persons to participate, and utilize diakonia graduates in furthering their ministries. For further information please contact Diane Roznowski, [414-258-8893](tel:414-258-8893) or diane.roznowski@gmail.com

Respectfully submitted,
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