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## Remembering Our Legacy in Diaconal Ministry\*

Anne Keffer, Scott Knarr, Sherry Coman, Michelle Collins†

### Introductions

*Anne Keffer*

Hi! I am Sister Anne Keffer, and I've been in this Eastern Synod for a little while and now I am retired. I am actually in Palliative Care at Luther Village, and I am receiving wonderful care. Scott.

*Scott Knarr*

My name is Deacon Scott Knarr, and I serve the people of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in Kitchener through Music Ministry. I also facilitate Music for the Spirit, a program that deals with music and arts at Six Nations of the Grand River Territory.

*Sherry Coman*

I'm Deacon Sherry Coman. I am the Deacon for Spirituality and Internet Outreach. I am based at Martin Luther University College where I am also the Director of the Centre for Spirituality and Media.

*Michelle Collins*

I am Sister Michelle Collins. I serve as the Assistant to the Bishop of the Manitoba Northwestern Ontario Synod. I am also a member of the Deaconess Community with Sister Anne.<sup>1</sup> In this position, my portfolio includes synod youth ministry, congregational leadership formation, discipleship, and congregational mission, visioning, and strategy.

### Many Voices – Many Experiences<sup>2</sup>

*Scott Knarr*

So, as we begin our conversation today, maybe Sister Anne, you could give a bit of history of the diaconate in the Eastern Synod.<sup>3</sup>

*Anne Keffer*

Actually, I just received, fairly recently, some new information that I never knew about before. And that is, that what was called then “the Canada Synod” in 1947, they had a convention—and they had a Deaconess Committee.<sup>4</sup> I was absolutely astounded. And they talked about this Deaconess Committee, and I want to read just a very little bit of what they said. They talked about a “Deaconess Headquarters” that wrote to them:

Our two Motherhouses cannot meet even a small fraction of the constant calls from congregations, social agencies, institutions, boards and synods. Today we need (1947 remember), today we need parish, institutional, social welfare workers, church

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\* This Deacon Dialogue took place on June 17, 2022. Keffer, Collins, Coman, and Knarr are all deacons and use the title “Deacon” as members of the Deacon Roster. Keffer and Collins, as members of the Deaconess Community, are deaconesses and also use the title “Sister.” In this Dialogue, Rev. Dr. Stephen Larson was the Dialogue organizer and Rev. Karen Kuhnert produced and edited the video and transcript and is responsible for the Endnotes. The video of the Dialogue is available at: “Diaconal Ministry: Anne Keffer” <https://youtu.be/PzjMFL8xa3E>. More content is available at <https://canadianlutheranhistory.ca/diaconate>.

† See the Foreword of this issue of Consensus for biographical information.

secretaries, youth leaders, teachers, nurses and missionaries. Tomorrow will be here suddenly, and the tasks of tomorrow are colossal.<sup>5</sup>

1947 folks! 1947! And that was when Sister Florence Weicker began. Actually, let me talk a little bit first about the two houses that they were talking about there—Philadelphia and Baltimore. These were the *Deaconess Community's* “how to” places—places that deaconesses operated from. Philadelphia—began in 1884 and they focused on Lankenau *hospital*.<sup>6</sup> In Baltimore (a couple of years later), they were started by the church for the church.<sup>7</sup> Notably they focused on *parish* work (secretaries, all the kinds of ministries that one offers from a congregation).<sup>8</sup> Sister Florence Weicker, to my knowledge, was the first *professional* deaconess in our synod. And she started in 1947 and continued until 1972 at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in Kitchener.<sup>9</sup>

Actually, Kitchener-Waterloo was kind of a hotbed of deaconesses for a little while. They mostly had trained in Baltimore (as had Sister Florence). Sister Sheila Radke served with St. Mark's, Sister Velma Pomrenke with St. John's and Sister Helene Forler served at St. Peter's. And there were many others. And some became pastors, some became wives (they couldn't serve with the Deaconess Community anymore because women “only had one job” in those years), and some just simply resigned.<sup>10</sup> So, we have a number. The early deaconesses of our Synod served by being called by a congregation. Ginny Pfaff and Margaret Kreller, two deaconesses, were social workers and they found it almost impossible to be called into their profession in this place as deaconesses.<sup>11</sup> The church saw the congregation as the only calling agency. Things have changed—thank goodness—as is proven by these colleagues of mine on this Zoom Call. People who are here now in our Eastern Synod are Pam Harrington (who is a Member of the Lutheran Deaconess Association);<sup>12</sup> she is an independent therapist with a tie to a congregation, and both Scott and Sherry nevertheless bring a new and prophetic voice to the Eastern Synod. Thank God for you!

I was “set apart” in 1954 and I served with St. Mark's following Sister Sheila Radtke—who wasn't easy to follow—they loved her a lot! But also, in the same [geographical] area was Elfreide Hartig,<sup>13</sup> a woman we must not forget, who had done Sunday School by Mail for many, many years. From the West she came to St. John's as a parish worker. She and I would have lunch together and complain about our bosses. She was never formally named as a deacon but I think her work was really diakonia. I want to note one other thing, and that was that three deacons have been nurtured by one congregation; I think that is pretty special. That congregation is Trinity Lutheran Church in New Hamburg: Sister Helene Forler, Deacon Sherry Coman, and myself.

In 1991 at the ELCIC convention in Edmonton, the decision was reached that “this church shall have diaconal ministry.” I wept in joy, I almost collapsed. It was the first time any official church body had recognized and accepted my call. What is unique in Canada as a whole country, as a Canadian diaconal ministry began to take shape (thanks largely to the leadership of Pastor Richard Stetson) is that the Canadian Roster of Deacons includes ALL diaconal ministers: those from the Lutheran Deaconess Association (LDA), which is an independent community originating in Valparaiso, Indiana (historical roots in the Missouri Synod, but now very much split between the Missouri Synod and the ELCA in the States and ELCIC here in Canada), the Deaconess Community, and newly trained Deacons. So the roster is of these three strains of diakonia all brought together in one roster —that's our Canadian way! Inclusion and support for one another, and being small, has its advantages.<sup>14</sup>

Fast forward again to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and in 2019 our ELCIC made a bold decision to *ordain* Deacons following the example of Lutheran churches in Europe and Africa and being in tune with Anglicans colleagues who have ordained deacons for a very long while. Diakonia is the reason our church exists, any church exists. Diakonia is what brings us together as community. It is what Jesus lived and taught. Without diakonia we become a hollow shell or a country. Here ends the history time.

*Sherry Coman*

Those are fabulous, inspiring words. Thank you, Anne. And also, every time I hear that history, I hear it anew, I have to say; there is some piece of it that sticks out. But I just love your expressiveness! I am wondering if you can share with us your personal faith journey to becoming (I mean you have a little bit already) but to becoming a Deacon.

*Anne Keffer*

Well, I think it started when I was about two or three years old. My sister was asked by our dad (my sister is nine years older than me, so she had this little kid that she loved very much—she was so glad to have a sister). She was asked by our dad, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” And she was probably 11 or 12 years old, maybe older, I don't know, and she doesn't remember how old she was. And she answered, “I want to be a teacher.” Our mom was a teacher. And then she continued, she says (this is her story not mine), “and Anne, she is going to be a church worker!” I know nothing about that story except what she tells me. I hope I can believe her!

But my dad, as he did with Millie, did ask me when I was about 13 or 14, “What do you wanna do when you grow up?” And my answer was, “I want to be a church worker.” And I don't know where that came from except from the Spirit, and Millie through whom the Spirit worked.

And then I went to Camp Edgewood. I met a woman by the name of Sister Evelyn. And she wore shorts! And she wasn't perfect, but she was fun. And I thought, “Well if she can do it, I can do it!” And my dad had already shown me a picture of her actually—on a folder, a flyer—advertising the Deaconess Community—which was the only way for us women in the 50s and 60s to be able to work in the church in a *professional* way. So, I don't know where my Call came from; it has been there all the time.<sup>15</sup>

The other story I tell, is that when I was a little kid Mum had to keep on knitting mittens because I kept losing one mitten, because I would give one mitten away to someone who didn't have one. And I only did that because we all had to carry lunch boxes on our big walk to school, so one hand had to be covered. And these kids were poor. And they would lose theirs and I would keep one and give one away. So that's another story told by my family. I think part of my DNA is diakonia.

*Sherry Coman*

I would agree with that! Scott, what is your faith story?

*Scott Knarr*

Well, I came from a family of musicians, and a family of musicians that hangs out in churches. So even when I was the littlest of kids, I would be going from Lutheran churches to Catholic churches to Mennonite churches making music in worship. And so, growing up that became a thing. And after many years as a church musician, I had a desire to express a voice that went a little bit beyond playing the keyboard. And it seemed to me that life as a deacon

was a good expression of the diakonia that I was already expressing through my music and wanted to explore a little bit in other directions.

*Sherry Coman*

I will say that I share something of that, in the sense of the ecumenical, or the multiple denominational background, or exposure, because I was an Anglican (a cradle Anglican, I had grown up in the Anglican church) and came to this Region of Waterloo with my then partner. And I considered becoming a pastor but the church wasn't where it is now around LGBT ordinations. So, I had to redirect, and I began a ministry online and over time realized that was my call (part of my call) and that being a deacon was a much better fit for what I was doing and what I wanted to do. So that's how I came to it.

*Michelle Collins*

I think for me, the concise version is always a little bit hard, right? There is always more to the story than what can be summarized. But I grew up with my parents who were missionaries in East Africa, and so I was really formed by this idea that your faith impacts your life. That was sort of a non-question. And so, well, I was baptized in the Lutheran tradition because of my mom's background. And as a young child I was also invited to consider my own relationship with Jesus. I remember having a really intentional conversation with my dad deciding that Jesus was going to matter to me—not just because I was a missionary kid, but because I really wanted Jesus to matter. So, throughout my childhood, that was my internal angst: how can I make sure that Jesus really matters—not just because of my Christian context but because of my own conviction? As a teenager, a song that really resonated with me [included] this phrase: “I don't want to be a casual Christian, I want to light up the world with an everlasting light.” So I just had this internal desire that this was going to be real for me. I wasn't just going to be another lukewarm person in the church. Fast forward through all sorts of young adult angst and I went to a Lutheran university because that's where I could get financial aid, but graduated from the university really critical of the Lutheran tradition for all sorts of reasons. And then, I had a sort of life tragedy that left me without any resources to find my own way. So I landed with my parents in a Lutheran congregation in their community. And really, for the first time in a really long time, had community that helped me heal, that helped me grieve, that gave me language for ambiguity and paradox and mystery that I didn't have before. And that allowed me to be imperfect.

That led me to exploring seminary, not particularly because I felt a call to church work professionally—I was never going to be a professional Christian. But I wanted to be a vital one. And so I needed to have my theological questions answered. Then, in the context of seminary, I went to a diaconal ministry formation event where I met Sister Anne Keffer, who gave a presentation on World Diakonia<sup>16</sup> as part of her role in the Deaconess Community. And for the first time I had this alternative expression of “committed Christian” other than the context that I had been formed in.

Because of the diaconal movement around the world, there was another way of being in intentional community with a particular focus of service, grounded in spiritual life, connected in community, and that gave me a really dynamic alternative to the things that I was struggling with from my own origin story, so to speak. And so, I sort of landed in the Deaconess Community as I stumbled my way through all the other expressions of diaconal work, with a particular emphasis and passion for revitalizing congregational faith formation

and really helping the church recapture its vision to be not just a lukewarm community of social club people. But really, that “Jesus still matters to us,” is my sort of calling-card still.

*Scott Knarr*

There is something, Sister Anne, that I have really been wanting to hear more about, and that is your time in Nova Scotia. I know that that was a number of years ago, but that instance of team ministry, how is it that they ended up calling a deaconess in that context?

*Anne Keffer*

Well, I wasn't so sure about it. And they called me there for a year and I ended up staying five. So three pastors address me at Synod convention one year. They said to me, these three people, these three men (at that time they were only men) they said to me, “We need you in Nova Scotia! Will you come?” And I said, “Well, I have just resigned from my parish at St. Mark's—yeah, I'll come. I'm up for adventure in Nova Scotia. I'll come!” And so, I did go.

The funniest thing about it was that these three guys said to me, “Anne, for this first six months—you don't do anything.” I thought, “Don't do anything for six months—I'm only there for a year. Do nothing!” And they said, “No, no, Anne—you go visit. You go listen. You go—*be*.” And they had been given a mandate from the Synod to close down preaching points (to close down smaller congregations that were no longer viable). So what they had done, for—I don't know if they had been there for two or three years before I got there—they had really gotten into the parishes and into the congregations and they had developed a really respectful relationship. There were some 28 congregations and preaching points and they had begun to whittle them down. So when I got there, there was like 18. And their problem was that they could only preach and conduct worship on a Sunday, they didn't have time on a Sunday to do anything else. So anything else that met on a Sunday, like Sunday School, youth ministry, they could not be a part of. And that's why they needed me. And I went. And I had a marvelous time!

I've got to say, their advice was absolutely perfect. I did what they told me to do (I'm somewhat of an obedient person most of the time—some of the time anyway) and I did listen, and I watched, and I paid attention to what was going on in the different congregations and places of worship with the people. I was going to four services a day on some Sundays (different preachers, different sermons sometimes) but anyways, I got to know the people. And as I learned from the people I saw, I saw *something*, the area for me.

I was given a compliment that I won't ever forget, and that compliment was paid by a member of the Conquerall-Camperdown congregation. And what he said to me (he was the Superintendent of the Sunday School), and after I finally offered a workshop in January (when I had gotten there in September), I offered a workshop for the teachers and they came—and this man said after the workshop, “Anne, you are the only one from Upper Canada that we have ever heard that can meet us where we are.”

It was a great team ministry. It was great working with those pastors. We met every Tuesday.<sup>17</sup> Dick Tubbe was our team captain, he made sure that we did everything that we needed to do, and he sent in the reports since none of the rest of us were any good at that. But he was a great administrator for us. And we planned a lot of stuff together, such as Lenten Services. We would take a drama group all the way around all these different congregations. I remember one Good Friday, Rolf Meindl became Jesus. I organized and produced the drama, and we held it in a high school in New Germany, and here was Ralph going out and calling



the people out in the congregation to “Follow him” (he was Jesus) and then—we crucified him. And it was powerful, and the people will not forget that drama, I don’t think.

We worked with the United Church people, we worked with the Anglican Church people, it was always ecumenical, and that was an amazing thing throughout my whole ministry—it’s been ecumenical as well as team.

*Michelle Collins*

So I wonder, again, Sister Anne, if you, I mean you kind of talked about this a little bit, but what have been the variety of expressions of diaconal work that you’ve done? Maybe you can sort of get us started, and then others of us can share. Because being a deacon is more than one thing, right? And so, what has being a deacon looked like in various ways throughout your work, and then maybe the rest of us can sort of answer that for ourselves—what does that look like for us?

*Anne Keffer*

I started out as Director of Christian Education, and that was at St. Mark’s. I was doing Youth Ministry, as well. One of the things that happened at St. Mark’s was that the pastor and I actually had some disagreement about how Youth Ministry was done. Right at that moment, I was right at the cusp of Luther League dying and Youth Ministry starting. And that idea of what Youth Ministry was, was totally different than Luther League. The pastor was still in the idea of Luther League. So we kind of had some difficulty. So, I did (on my days off) the Youth Ministry that I adored, with a son of one of the pastors and a few other young adults and myself. And we started a group, a coffee house called the Fat Angel.<sup>18</sup> It was up above a store at the East End Kitchener. And we got people to pay the rent for us—because we didn’t have any money. And Satan’s Choice [bikers] apparently, had a gathering place across the street—which we didn’t know about. We got things to put into this place that didn’t cost anything, like great big spools from the electric company—we used them as tables. And we would have entertainment every night.

Well, the Choice came up the stairs one night, I didn’t know it was them, and they heard me called “Sister.” And one said, “What does that mean?” And you know, they were standing in the hallway—where they’re not supposed to be, in big leather jackets (and I don’t know at this point that they are from Satan’s Choice—they are just a bunch of guys, kids). So I said, “Come to the back of the hall, and I’ll tell you.” So as they turned in the hallway to go towards the back of the hall—then I saw “The Choice” insignia on the back of one of the jackets—and my knees went weak and I grabbed the coat racks.

Sister Keffer: And I said, “Oh, you guys are Satan’s Choice, are you?”

Bikers: And they said, “Yah we really are, and we’re free!”

Sister Keffer: And I said, Oh NO. You’re not really free—I’m free—but you’re not free!”

Bikers: And they said, “What do you mean you are free?”

Sister Keffer: And I said, “Well, I can do anything I want. But you are not free. If John your captain says anything, you have to jump to obey! Not me, I don’t have to do that.”

Bikers: “Oh.”

Sister Keffer: I said, “Look you guys, you are Satan’s Choice. You have closed down every place that has a place for young people in these Twin Cities. If you are going to close this group down, then close it down tonight so we don’t have to spend any more time.”

Bikers: “Well, what do you mean?”

Sister Keffer: “Well, all of us are volunteers; we don’t get paid for doing this.”

Bikers: “What? You don’t?”

Sister Keffer: “No, we don't get paid for this. So if you're gonna shut us down—do it now. And the way you shut us down is by bringing alcohol or drugs in here, or causing a fight. Cuz, we are going to have a cop up here every night, and we're going to give him coffee, and he's going to be a part of our work.”

Well, they never shut us down. They did not shut us down, and I left to go to Nova Scotia, and they [Satan’s Choice] ended up buying a house. And so the Fat Angel went on for a very long time. That is the kind of ministry I really enjoyed.

I also was a chaplain for university students and high school students at one time, both at UWO [University of Western Ontario] and at Regina. I’ve got a million stories about that one. I got to be the Director of an Ecumenical Centre which was started in Saskatoon by a Roman Catholic priest.<sup>19</sup> And ecumenism is my heart, I think. That is part of my DNA, and part of the diaconal call, always, to work together as Christian churches—and not just that but multi-faith as well. I have a feeling that is about enough from me. I must admit, that was kind of an administrative Call, but it had enough teaching and meeting one another that I enjoyed it very much. I was also the Directing Deaconess for the Deaconess Community. And I was also—I forget. That will be enough for now.

*Sherry Coman*

I would ask you to also mention your TRC work at Trinity New Hamburg.

*Anne Keffer*

Okay, that has certainly been a retirement project. It’s true, people in diakonia never truly retire. Once they retire from being paid, then they do what their heart desires. And my heart desired being part of—well, we started a small TRC team, and they have been taken over by other leadership, and I am so proud of them. They have started taking food to a group at Six Nations that were standing in opposition to land development. We stood beside our Indigenous Peoples as we complained about what the First Prime Minister of Canada did. That was the first time I had ever been part of a sit-in and I found out later what our presence meant; that our presence really mattered. These grey hairs had something to say to people! And they stopped their swearing, they stopped their driving past with the finger, they stopped a lot of stuff that had been going on—I was just sorry we hadn’t started sooner.

But the TRC group in New Hamburg, there are two of them in New Hamburg now. We had an Elder come to the Family Resource Centre for two or three days a week. And she has started a Women’s Healing Circle. And would you believe that they have asked me to come because they wish to drum for me, and I am so thrilled that I am being recognized, and prayed for, and tobacco being thrown into the fire for me because I am ill.

So even if you do start in one thing, you end up doing a lot of other things. I was also the Schmieder Resident at the Lutheran Seminary in Saskatoon where I taught Seminary courses. So who knows. It’s a variety of stuff.

*Sherry Coman*

And you have also just been an all-around badass. It’s just a fabulous thing. Always challenging us to rethink and to reconsider and to find new ways of being who we are. Thank you.



*Michelle Collins*

And maybe with that finding new ways, Sherry, perhaps you can say something about finding your own way, and how that looks in your particular diaconal contexts.

*Sherry Coman*

Sure! So, I came into the work I am doing sort of by accident. I had been doing campus ministry in Toronto. I was not ordained, but I was included among the Campus Chaplain leaders at the table of the Chaplaincy Committee. And I had a lot of trouble finding the Lutherans on the campus of the University of Toronto. I just couldn't locate them really. So, I discovered that my gift was (maybe) to provide space for ecumenical exchanges among youth and among leadership.

My particular advocacy and interest at the time was prayer, and wanting to increase our ability to understand and know what we can accomplish with prayer, and to understand the different ways that we pray. And so I created prayer vigils at the Multi-faith Centre at the University of Toronto that were four or five hours long. And I asked the different groups, the different ecumenical groups, to sign up for an hour and I provided the tea and muffins, and I required that everybody come early by half an hour and leave by a half hour late, so that we all could experience each other's hour, and so it wouldn't just be a silo. And it went really well; we had themes around creation and justice, and all kinds of different general themes. And people had far-reaching differences among us (some of us were very nervous about others of us), and so I discovered that that mix was really interesting. And so I began experimenting with online prayer, an online prayer community.

And I got hired to become someone who could actually work with an online ministry that had already begun, but it was a bit fledgling and it had not quite worked. And there was a website where youth could write pieces and share, and there were lots of problems. So I took this in a different direction, and suggested that we begin doing online devotions. So in Lent of 2011, I put out my first online devotional project and it slowly grew from there. And we just passed our twelfth Lent.

So for me, I discovered as the ministry grew, that people were reaching out to me, people were asking me questions, people were coming to me by e-mail or Messenger or whatever the way people might go to a pastor with questions. I also realized I had regulars. I had something that sort of felt a little bit like a parish in a way. And eventually, my own sense of *call* was coming alongside a very strong feeling that the person doing what I was doing should be vocationally formed. So that sense of responsibility to what I was doing coincided with my own sense of deepening *call*. So, I guess I would characterize my mission as being very much about helping people deepen their own spiritual lives and their own sense of faith formation.

And then, when I actually got ordained and became a deacon, and was located at Martin Luther University College, my other area of expertise—which is media and film—came forward, and I figured out that I could really have a dream come true. I'd been working—all my life—in the main areas of teaching media and film for years. These could come together in a way that might help the church figure out how to use media as it does mission and to bring some expertise about media to that, as well as to be with and alongside the church as it explores its uses of media. And all of that coincided with the pandemic when all of this was becoming very, very acute in our day-to-day community and worship life.

*Michelle Collins*

Yeah, so you used that phrase “with and alongside” as part of your work. And I wonder, Scott, if in your work as a musician, if there is some sort of connection with that. How do you see your work being particularly diaconal?

*Scott Knarr*

“With and alongside” for sure. Yes. So Directors of Music are typically very narrowly focused, and I’ve never been particularly narrowly focused, so I didn’t ever fit that particular way.

In fact, probably my diaconal work began before I was even a member of the Lutheran Church, in Montreal, when I was helping Mennonite youth visit soup kitchens and homeless shelters and discover urban realities in downtown Montreal. And as part of that Montreal experience, I became very aware of the Oka Crisis and the estrangement or distance between mainstream folks and Indigenous communities in this country. So that was always sitting in the back of my mind as I started to go (much later in Waterloo) as I started to go through my theological training.

I was seeking a voice to express my lived reality and connect with other people. And I knew from my musical training that music was a great medium to connect people and to build community. I always had that in the back of my mind, this Indigenous gap, or the lack of connection in relationship with that particular community. And when we had occasion to go to Six Nations that was like a lightbulb going off, it’s like, “Oh, this is the place, and the time, and the opportunity for connection!”

And so, not only did I go to Six Nations and start learning about Indigenous spirituality and practices, and needs, and resilience—I also dragged my choir. So I was at Mt. Zion, Waterloo, at the time, and I said, “Hey, what if we go down and sing for an Anglican church service.” And they were like, “Yeah, OK. Where is that? How do you get there? What will we do there? How will that work? Is this gonna be scary?” And so there was very much a ministry of accompaniment of making it accessible. Of finding a way to enter a community that seemingly was not—probably for most people—welcoming or accessible. And sure enough, we went, we sang, we had a great lunch. And after, everybody just got to know people. And the thing just snowballed from there.

Before I knew it, we were having regular exchanges with various churches in various communities. And somehow, I was, I don’t know, you could say a cog. I was one of the little gears that stayed oiled and well-tuned to help various communities—to help that cohesion and that understanding and communication occur, so their relationships may begin to form.<sup>20</sup>

*Anne Keffer*

You gotta know that Scott was one of my mentors in all of this.

*Scott Knarr*

Didn’t you get that backwards, Sister Anne? You gave me that beautiful porcelain foot washing bowl in that memorable service at St. Paul’s Anglican on Sour Springs Road [Six Nations Reserve]. And just being present on the Territory with an Anglican Bishop, and the Lutheran Bishop, and all our Lutheran friends, and all of our Indigenous friends—that was just such an incredible day.

*Michelle Collins*

So a lot of my work has been within the congregation (at least it looks like it has been within the congregation). But when I first became a Deaconess, when I first joined the Community, my passion was really early childhood education. And I really had this vision of working with young children, largely because of my relationship with Sister Ginger Patchen and Sister Val Sander—two other Canadian deaconesses (Deaconesses in Canada). I saw the way that they lived out their ministry to young children, and as I was reflecting on my own growing understanding of Lutheran theology, I saw the influence we could have—if we lived into our baptismal promises that we made—when we surround young children. And so, I had this vision of helping congregations sort of see the children in their midst in a different kind of way, rather than on the margins—really moving the early childhood spiritual experience into the centre of how they understood themselves as community. As I experienced Lutheran congregations with connected preschools, and just wanted to help congregations reimagine themselves as multi-age, multi-generational—whole communities—where this language of faith actually activates, and actually influences.

So my first congregation, when I was called to a congregation, they said, “We want a Youth Director!” And I said, “I am not your person—because I am not a program person. I am not gonna keep the youth in the room down the hall. I am not gonna segregate ages. I am not gonna do big entertainment things. But, if you want someone to help you sort of revision your whole community, and the place of children and youth in the context of that whole community—then I can help you with that.” So I started doing that.

Then I realized that children are influenced by the adults around them. So if I want to influence children I've got to start influencing adults. Which led me into leadership formation and leadership development—sort of seeing the whole congregational system and the misconceptions that we have around children and youth programming that has led us into some segregation or separation that isn't particularly helpful in faith formation.

So while I do a lot of Children and Youth Ministry, it's still driven by this idea of listening to different kinds of voices, listening to those that we tend to overlook in the first pass. And so in that way, that is how I would make some connections to my diaconal work.

*Sherry Coman*

Michelle, you have such an incredible gift for re-visioning. You are, and you have been more recently helping the diaconal community, to sort of listen to ourselves, and our understanding of who we are, and think about the future of the church. Yeah, that's something we should talk about, the future of the deacons and the church. I also know that we want to talk perhaps about the relationship between ordination and consecration and what that means.

*Michelle Collins*

Yeah, I wonder if, Sister Anne, as someone who lived through that, if you can just switch back and walk us through your experience of that process and how it impacted you—your understanding of yourself. How was that shifted by this conversation the church was having?

*Anne Keffer*

Somewhere in the 1980s I wrote a chapter for a book. I can't find that book anymore; I have likely thrown the book away, I guess. But the chapter I have, still on my computer, and it starts with, “I have been ordained!”

So, I believe in, very clearly, three rosters, three Calls—two very different ministries—but still *of* the church and *in* the church: bishop, pastor, deacon. We are very similar and should be treated in that way. But because, I believe, the diaconate started with women and they were second class—you know that, I know that—and we did service ministry—not in front of the congregation but “with” and “underneath” the congregation. We provided leadership, we provided training, we provided the motivation to serve like Jesus did: and why was Jesus crucified? Well, my theory says Jesus was crucified because He was a deacon. I’ve never said that before. I do think that diaconal service is really hard because nobody wants to be the underdog, nobody wants to be the one that is serving everybody else—not as a slave, not as an underling—but serving as Jesus did. And we have to, as diaconal people, have to keep that in mind or we will go crazy, or stop.

Ordination. Well as I said, in the 1980s I was bold enough to have it in print: “I have been ordained.” And people in this church knew me. And so my sense was—that what *is* ordination except the laying on of hands in the midst of the people in a call from the church and the Spirit is present (the prayers of the people)—well if that is what is ordination, then I was ordained—because that is what happened when I was set apart. That’s what happened when the other women were consecrated. When you were consecrated, Michelle. We, maybe, used different terms, but the actual action was the same.

So when this ELCIC started, I was asked to be on the Board [Division] for Leadership and Education in Theological Education—DTEL, we called it. As a member of that Board, I asked them to, and they said, “Okay, then you do it, Anne.” I asked them to have a study of ministry that could lead to some inclusion of the Diaconal Ministry. And so, we did.

And, as I have referred before, in 1991, this little Task Force went to that convention in 1991 with an incredible reference, and incredible results of the study. And I was part of this study. And it put the three Orders in tandem, and said—they should all be ordained. We had some pundits amongst us who checked it out with the rest of the people in the Convention of the national church. And they said, “That’s not gonna fly. So, if we want anything to fly, we gotta do it simply.” So that is why the motion was in 1991 that there had to be a Diaconal Minister.

Then, as I said, in 2019, our church changed it from consecration (setting apart) to ordination. And the committee that was responsible for that has created a document—FOD [Faith Order and Doctrine] and if anybody remembers the right words for that I’d like to hear it, but the group came to the Diaconal meeting for those across the church that were meeting in Winnipeg, and they said, “This is what we want to do; we want to hear from you.” And they heard the hurt and the pain of being consecrated, that pain of being second class (and that *was* how it was perceived), and the group said, “This is not right.” And so their work has led to the ordination of Deacons. I could not bother being second class, honestly. I just didn’t want it.

*Sherry Coman*

And so for me, I just happened to come along in the pipeline as the next person after that motion was passed. I just happened to be the next person, and so as the first person who was—in this context—being termed “ordained.” It was so extraordinary to not only have Anne present, but also putting her hand on my shoulder as all this was all taking place. I felt so beautifully accompanied. And also *sent*, as in the Apostles, right, the sending out. That was also at Trinity, New Hamburg.

*Anne Keffer*

The other thing that has occurred has been our church has made the Motion that all those who were consecrated or set apart in previous years would now be considered ordained. And I appreciated that very much. Michelle, where are you at in all of this?

*Michelle Collins*

So Sister Anne was at my consecration as the Directing Deaconess of the [Deaconess] Community, and I think one of the things I've always taken from your time in that role, Sister Anne, is that we were called to the whole church. You always made it really clear that this was a call from the church to the world. And that really impacted how I understood myself. And so there was always this broader *call*, broader, beyond our own boundaries, as something that I've always taken from you and learned from you. And I appreciate that a lot.

*Sherry Coman*

Scott, you were part of that whole development of the document for 2019. You were very much involved in that. Thank goodness! You were our voice in the process.

*Scott Knarr*

I wasn't the only one; as Sister Anne said, all of the deacons participated in that listening event in Winnipeg. And at the time when we gathered in Winnipeg it was Deacon Gretchen Peterson who was the Deacon on the Faith, Order, and Doctrine Committee, so Gretchen had a piece there, and she handed it off to me, and I continued on and helped with some of the writing of that document—which is still available. The *Reimagining Our Church*<sup>21</sup> document is something that gives that place to Deacons in a way that perhaps was not articulated before, and also calls on the collegiality of working across all baptized members of the church.

*Michelle Collins*

I think it goes back, at least for me, to something else that Anne said earlier about this church in Canada: there's one Roster of Deacons that sort of braids together the Lutheran Deaconess Association members,<sup>22</sup> the Deaconess Community members,<sup>23</sup> and the diaconal ministers. And so in some way I see that that's what ordination has done: it has allowed us to sort of braid our ministries into one unified expression of what it means to be called. And coming from the ELCA, I think that is what is the gift of what that action took for the previous diaconal roster, is that it calls us into oneness—which I think is all sorts of trinitarian. But also—really important as we wrestle with “What does it mean to find unity in community?”

*Anne Keffer*

While valuing diversity!

*Michelle Collins*

That's right. Yeah.

*Scott Knarr*

And I really appreciate what you just said because it's very true that the act of ordination being the same across the Orders does impact us as Deacons as well, within our community. Certainly, when I attended my formation event in 2012 there was a diversity within the gathering, and it was at times quite confusing—that diversity of terms. Some are “Sisters,” some are not “Sisters,” some are “Deaconess,” some are not “Deaconess.” What does this all mean?



*Michelle Collins*

Not to take someone else's role, but I wonder what that helps us imagine about the future of the diaconate in Canada. How might *we* envision this decision? Because I firmly believe that this decision will impact the next generation more than it impacts us. We are still navigating the particular impacts on our histories, or whatever, but I wonder what it's going to mean for the next generation brought up in this church that ordains the three equally. What difference is that going to make—do we imagine—for the diaconate?

*Anne Keffer*

I want to get one word in here before we answer that, because I said this before in a paper, but I wanna say it here, and that is, that I don't think that any of us as deacons, deaconesses, whoever we are, that *we* need to be ordained, at the end of the day we need *our ministries* to be ordained—*our ministries need to be seen as not just valid but as leaders* in the future of this church. I still think that our churches have dwindled because we have not responded to Jesus's Call. Jesus never said go worship, Jesus said, "Go do, go serve!"

*Sherry Coman*

I personally think that there is the possibility for the Diaconal community to only grow in the future because I think it will become increasingly one of the more attractive areas, in the sense of being on that edge between the church and the wider world. I think that, as you know, we have experienced the transformation of the church, the decreasing numbers, the merging of congregations, the ways in which congregations (partly because of the pandemic) have shifted their ways of expressing community in terms of trying to be both together in the building and also online, and doing other forms of ministry it is going to increase the understanding that the church is very diverse in its expressions. And so how do we come together as the church? And I think deacons can play a real role in helping to guide that conversation, and be with and alongside it.

*Anne Keffer*

I am amazed at what I'm hearing from different congregations and how much the congregations are now looking to say, "Who can we serve?" They are doing investigations of neighborhoods around themselves. They are looking at how their buildings and lands can be used. A congregation, St. Philip's in Kitchener, they sold their building to Indigenous people for their Centre for a very little amount of money. St. Mark's has sold its building to be able to have an incredible outreach in this city. So, I think that we're catching it.

*Sherry Coman*

I think we have to.

*Michelle Collins*

And I really like what you said, Sister Anne, about the ministry. It's not the individuals—and I think as we as Deacons allow for the diaconal ministry to be the emphasis or the point—I think that, like you say, Sherry, that might impact, that might draw people to the diaconal ministry of the church particularly, but it will also expand the diaconal work of the church— which is, I think, what we want. We feel particularly compelled to participate in that work, but it's not only our work—it is the work of the whole church.

After a Break for Refreshment



*Anne Keffer*

I was thinking, deeply, about what I want to have happen. I do want our ELCIC Deacons to come together in some form of community, because I think many voices are fine and differing opinions are wonderful, and we cannot do without them—AND (as I have behind me—that little ampersand behind me on screen) we [Deacons] need to come together with one voice sometimes. We have a ministry. We've been given a Call. And in that ministry and in that Call is the future of the church. There is no doubt in my mind that if the church is not a diaconal church, it will once again fail.

And not just diaconal but multi-faith. I know that I am a bit of a heretic. I've been called worse names. I believe deeply within my heart as I've worked with Indigenous folk, we never brought God to this country, we never brought God to Turtle Island; God was already here, and they knew the Creator and have continued to know the Creator—as have the Buddhists, and the Hindus, and the Muslims, all of them. All of the major religions, and those that are not so major, of this world. God is many forms to many people, and we cannot minimize who God is or—as has been written—our God is too small. This God of ours—is huge.

I've been through a lot in the last few months; people say that about me. I'm not so sure, except I did everything as it came. I had some time of being actually immobilized: two arms and a leg that I could not move, and that still bothers me, and I'm still not moving them all that well. My ability to talk never stopped, my thinking never stopped, and my love never stopped. And I was treated with love everywhere I went. But through it all, through all of that, I gotta say—God and I have had some struggles and we will continue. But I still say that this God is big! Bigger than you and me. Bigger than our ministry. Bigger than the church. Bigger than Christianity. Oh, if we could only incorporate all of that in our worship, in our thinking, in our actions! Scott take it from here!

*Scott Knarr*

Sure. Where shall we go? We have been so many places [in this discussion]. I just remember that gathering on Six Nations when we brought the Ecumenical Community together with the Traditional people, and we were thinking about the TRC Calls to Action, and we said, "What can we do? What can we do?" And the Haudenosaunee people invited us to clear our eyes and clear our ears, and clear our nose and clear our throats so that we could speak together in a good way. And I am sure you remember too, Sister Anne, when you came forward, and you probably didn't even know yet quite what you were going to do. And your hands just came up offering the space to our neighbor, and then spontaneously everyone in the room just was standing with you in a way that the Spirit moved.<sup>24</sup>

And I think that diakonia has this sense of feeling the Spirit of the times, the Spirit in the room, how the Spirit is moving in our hearts and minds and convicting us to put new ideas forward and be together as one—as one mind, as one community across our differences. And again, that moment, it just speaks to me really strongly. So I've been reflecting this morning as we've been talking, and there's quite a lot of breeze going, and the breeze comes in and out, and it just (I don't know, this is not at all the topic) but for me—this sense of Spirit and community is something that I have felt strongly in the ELCIC Diaconal community, in your ministry among us, in the way that I was welcomed in as a candidate, and just embraced even before I went through any kind of formal study or anything. And, yeah, I just wanted to say that we can sense when the Spirit is working among

us, and it is just such a really good thing. So I hear in your voice, and in your sharing today, that same sense of Spirit. And I'm feeling it in the breeze in the room where I am.

*Sherry Coman*

I just want to pick up on something that you both said about being alive to the moment and being aware of what is going on. I know, with the ministry of LutheransConnect, that in the early days I was, I was just sort of following a series of plans that made, that got shaken up with a tsunami in Japan or something, and I realized *I can't* NOT respond to that. So the next day I changed what I had planned, and I did something different that was focused on that. And there was a response from people.

And I suddenly knew that actually—I was only going to be able to be vital with this ministry if I did the devotions the day before. And that is how I continue to do them because then I'm actually able to hear the Spirit, the breezes that come through our prayers that sort of cause me to think twice about my own ego needs (that thing I wanted to show off, that I know, and what I can do) and go—no—we have to do this now, there is something going on that we have to pay attention to in this situation.

I think that is, you know ... there was something at the Worship Conference last year where there was that image of the porch, the front porch. And I think, in some way, of Deacons as being on the front porch of the church—walking on and off, going out sometimes, stepping right away from the church to go into the community, sometimes bringing the community right into the church, and working in the church. But there is something about being on the porch—you are maybe forced to pay attention to the breezes, and to the Spirit, and to the winds of change that are nudging us into new and different directions.

I'm going to say also, that for myself, I want to really have all of us remember that there are so many people out there who cannot—who do not—have necessarily a community. So many LutheransConnect followers are not actually part of faith communities, and they found us online. There is a world beyond the borders that we're used to that also really needs us.

*Michelle Collins*

One of the things that I hear, I think, in what all of you were sort of saying, is this hope, this vision for the diaconal voice to claim itself, if that's a way of saying it. One of the things that I have appreciated, and what I have learned from you, Anne, is your dream for the Deacons to claim who they are and who they can be for the sake of the work we do. Anne, you always challenged me, and I think others who have been impacted by you, to—you know—what you just said.

There are times when we have to bring our voices together. We like to have opinions. We like to be responsive. We like to evaluate what is going on but not always do we feel empowered to participate in the conversation, or in fact, to say that we can lead the conversation. And so, as it relates to diakonia, I hear in you this dream that the Deacons will sort of claim our authority and our voice to not keep the Word to ourselves but to sort of share the ministry with the whole church and claim our space in that. I think that is really convicting to me.

*Anne Keffer*

At the constituting convention of the ELW, I guess it was (I was a guest speaker, one of many), and I asked everybody in the group who are ministers to stand up, and the pastor stood—the people did not. Before too long I had them all standing, and I said, “You are all

ministers!" And I think that is our job, part of our job, to say to the people of this church—the pastor is not the leader only. We are all part of diakonia. We are all ministers. We all need to move together.

*Michelle Collins*

Can you imagine what a difference that would make in our communities if congregations were filled with people who felt empowered to name their minister-ness?

*Anne Keffer*

Yes! And I think we as Diaconal people, because people trust us in a way they don't trust the pastor because the pastor is—very often in our church because of our German roots—*Herr Pastor*, and I know that's receding, or getting distanced, and less. But it is still part of the roots, and we've got to change that. We have got to stop being a clerical-centred church and become a Spirit-centred church. Spirit-centred; not just people-centered, but Spirit-centered.

*Sherry Coman*

It comes back to the Priesthood of All Believers. What does that actually mean! And what does it mean in our contemporary contexts, and the ministry of all believers. I think, I will, I will hope, that we all can continue to be capable of the intense passion and energy that you have, Anne, for proclaiming what we have to do. That is, that is one of the greatest gifts that you've given to me, is that sense of being able to say without stopping and thinking first about it—who is going to hear this, and what will they think—but be able to say, "This is what we have to do!" This is our job as diakonia, and also as Deacons. So, I'm gonna carry that voice.

*Anne Keffer*

Thank you.

*Michelle Collins*

So maybe, as we (as I) sort of sense this conversation coming to a close, if that is ok, I just wonder as—like I said before, as one of the younger people in this circle, I came into the Deaconess Community really wanting and yearning for a legacy to participate in. I really was feeling all sorts of disconnection with my own, you know, with my own history and story, and I needed a new story to connect to. And so, in the Deaconess Community I found this legacy of women who had lived radically, who had lived passionately, who had lived from a place of conviction, and I was not that—I was not passionate, I was not radical, I was not convicted, and I just, I wanted so badly to be inspired by women whose stories had been formed, and would inform mine. And so I just wanted to say, Anne, that yours has been one of those stories. That as you have lifted up the history of the Deaconesses, and the history of women who have come before you, and as you have invested in those of us who are coming after you—I have been formed and informed by the legacy that you've participated in. And so, I am really, really humbled by that. I am humbled by your confidence that this work can continue, that you trust those of us who are younger to carry it on, and that you believe that we have what it takes to do the work. And so I think that is really important. And so, I am really humbled for my name now to be in community with yours, and whose story is now formed and informed by your story, so I just want to say thank you so much.

*Anne Keffer*

Thank you, Michelle, you humble me.

*Sherry Coman*

As somebody who does work that is largely in a silo, you, Anne, have really encouraged me to think in terms of community, and to always be mindful of the community—whatever community that might be. My work does go out to a community, but the work that I do is often in the privacy of my own room. Though now, not so much when I'm at the college now. So I am so grateful to you, Anne, for modeling and encouraging me to widen and deepen my sense of what community is.

*Anne Keffer*

We need to have community; it has always been important to me and likely always will be of prime importance to me. The ability to hear differences and love them, yeah, and to be a part of one another—the body of Christ, I guess. Thank you.

*Scott Knarr*

You have done some very hard work, and we haven't talked about the story of a Directing Deaconess, but I know that there was a lot of work and energy expended at great expense to your well-being at the time. So seeing how you spent your retirement years—flamed with passion for Indigenous Peoples to the point of organizing that group in Wilmot Township to achieve something that no one else could imagine going on. It was just so inspiring, as someone else doing work with Indigenous communities, to see the effort and passion and willingness and stubbornness and perseverance and all of those wonderful characteristics that were on display, whether it was at a protest, or coming before Wilmot Council with a recommendation ... You know, it was just really an encouragement to my own being, to see others bringing these issues forward. Thank you for accompanying my work, and my journey to diakonia. It has been a blessing for me, and will continue to be.

*Anne Keffer*

I have some Kleenex here and I may have to use it. Your words and your sentiments are more than I could have imagined, and I thank you for them. The work of diakonia will never be done, and that is the joy, the blessing, and the difficulty. We can't close the door and say, "Oh, that's done!" As much as I'm no longer able to be active as a leader, I still think my presence as a diakonia-person still makes a difference, and yours does too. You are right! I can't do a whole lot of stuff that I used to do, but I can watch you guys do it, and have joy in what you are doing and how you are doing it. May God give you the strength, and the passion, to stay who you are, to continue to be wide open to all kinds of opportunities and challenges. The challenges are great, the opportunities are great, the blessings are more than any one of us can hold. God is with you, peace be yours.

*Sherry Coman*

And with you, Anne.

*Anne Keffer*

Thank you. Let us pray,

Oh God, Through the ages you have Called women and men to the diaconate in your church. Let your blessing rest now on all who answered that Call. Grant them understanding of the Gospel, sincerity of purpose, diligence in ministry, and the beauty of life in Christ, that many people will be served, and your name be glorified, through your son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Sister Anne Keffer was “set apart” in 1964 using the Rite of Consecration; Michelle Collins and Scott Knarr were also consecrated using the Rite of Consecration. Sherry Coman became a Deacon through the Rite of Ordination. Keffer was in attendance for all four worship events within which these Rites were conducted. See more references to the date of 1894 and the tradition of the Lutheran Deaconess Conference in North America at <https://deaconesscommunity.org/history/>.

<sup>2</sup> Since starting at LUTHER, Sherry Coman has been taking an active role in the development of *Consensus*. Readers may appreciate *Consensus* Volume 43:2 organized by Coman (see Sherry Coman, (2022) "Queer(y)ing Labels: Dialogues of Identity," *Consensus*, 43, no.2, Article 1. DOI: 10.51644/LTAG1721, <https://scholars.wlu.ca/consensus/vol43/iss2/1>). See also *Consensus* 43:1 on the Subject of the *Diaconal Church* with numerous contributions from persons on the Roster of Deacons, <https://scholars.wlu.ca/consensus/vol43/iss1>.

<sup>3</sup> Sister Anne Keffer wrote “An Abridged and Personal History of Deacons in the Eastern Synod with National Amendments to Follow: In Honour of the First Ordination of a Deacon in Canada, December 14, 2020.” She had wished to update this writing. Much of the opening content in this Dialogue came from that 2020 source writing which was rooted in *her formative experience* of the “Canada Synod” (the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Canada) that became the Lutheran Church of America—Eastern Canada Synod and is now known as the “Eastern Synod” of the ELCIC). She points out in this Dialogue that from the earliest times in North American Lutheranism, until recently, there have been gender and sex role stereotypes related to ministry. Stepping outside of her paper, this can be corroborated by Lutherans in the ELCIC (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada) and ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) in the 2000s remembering to commemorate Rev. Theodore Fliedner as the founder of the Motherhouse and Deaconess Ministry traditions that came to North America in 1849, without remembering the essential contributions of Friederike Fliedner as his partner from 1836 to 1842, see <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/12243102/>. The use of the words deacon and deaconess as used in the contemporary contexts of the ELCIC today should not be presumed to have a fixed gender or sex role aspect. Keffer’s writing on the *first ordination* of a Deacon in Canada is of nuanced import. In 2019, the National Church Council made decisions that were then recommended for adoption by the 2019 ELCIC delegates gathered to make decisions in Convention. In 2019, NCC recommended:

*That:*

1. (CC-2019-16)... *the ELCIC recognizes that “ordination” is the rite which marks and celebrates the acceptance of a first call into public ministry of a deacon, or a bishop or a pastor. CARRIED*
2. (CC-2019-18)... *the Program Committee for Worship develop a unified rite of ordination containing alternative and variable pieces appropriate to the ordination of a deacon, a pastor or a bishop. CARRIED*
3. (CC-2019-18)... *the ELCIC authorizes deacons to preside at weddings or funerals with the permission of the synodical bishop. Normally, a pastor presides at weddings and funerals by virtue of their call to a particular congregation or similar setting. Normally, a deacon’s invitation to preside at a wedding or funeral emerges from those relationships formed while exercising their ministry in the setting into which they are called. CARRIED*
4. (CC-2019-19)... *Reimagining Our Church—Public Ministry in the ELCIC be referred to the Program Committee for Leadership for Ministry for review and revision where necessary of (1) the ELCIC Candidacy Manual and (2) the policies regarding Authorized Lay Ministries, Synodically Authorized Lay Ministry of the Word and the Alternative Route for Admission to the Roster of Ordained Ministers. CARRIED*
5. (CC-2019-20)... *NCC refers Reimagining Our Church—Public Ministry in the ELCIC to ELCIC synods and seminaries to help inform their preparation of candidates for public ministry in the ELCIC. CARRIED*
6. (CC-2019-21)... *NCC share this document with ELCIC pastors, deacons and bishops; with ELCIC synods, congregations and other ministry settings; with ELCIC seminaries and schools; with the Deaconess Community of the ELCA and Lutheran Diaconal Association; with the Lutheran World Federation and ecumenical partners. CARRIED*
7. (CC-2019-22)... *NCC requests the Constitution Committee to review the ELCIC Constitution and Bylaws and replace terminologies such as “ordained minister” with “pastor” or “bishop,”*



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“deacon” to replace “diaconal minister,” and “ordination” to replace “consecration,” and bring draft revisions to the 2019 National Convention. CARRIED.

In 2023, the ELCIC meeting in Convention moved forward again on these 2019 Carried Motions and this will be addressed in an upcoming work by the Remembering Today for the Church of Tomorrow Project with Deaconess Judy Whaley.

<sup>4</sup> The “Report of Deaconess Committee” in the Minutes of the 84<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Canada, June 18–21, 1946 indicates that efforts were launched by the Canada Synod to open a national Deaconess Training Centre in Canada (*Minutes*, 100). The Report, by Committee Secretary C. S. Roberts, outlined the engagement points of the plan so that the Centre would be a national Centre in association with Deaconess leadership and clergy colleagues across Canada and the continental ULCA.

<sup>5</sup> The Report of the 85<sup>th</sup> Convention, June 10–15, 1947, preceding the words read by Sister Anne, read,  
*A growing consciousness exists throughout our Church as to the importance and urgency of the work of the Diaconate. For this our hearts overflow in gratitude to God. This new awakening has, however, not solved the problem. A very serious shortage of deaconesses and church workers of all kinds still prevails and is handicapping our Church considerably in her work. In the past two years many formal requests have come to the Deaconess Board of the U.L.C.A., not to mention verbal requests from congregations which did not make formal application. To 75 of these requests the Board had to reply: “No workers available”* (*Minutes*, 87).

<sup>6</sup> Notably—there was a generation of Canadian Lutheran Deaconesses prior to Sister Florence Weicker. For example, Sister Ella Koch, also of St. Matthew’s, Kitchener, was a Probationer Deaconess in 1908 as recorded in the *Hand-Book of the Mary J. Drexel Home and Philadelphia Motherhouse of Deaconesses, 1888–1913*, Self-Published, Philadelphia, 1913, 7, see <https://ia800900.us.archive.org/26/items/handbookofmaryjd00mary/handbookofmaryjd00mary.pdf>. Canadian Lutheran historian Carl Cronmiller refers to Koch as a Nursing Sister that served for twenty years in the Lakenau Hospital, [sic. Lankenau] in Philadelphia, see *A History of the Lutheran Church in Canada, Vol I*, 1961, by Rev. Carl R. Cronmiller, published by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Canada for its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, 227. Before the Roster of Deacons was created, there was a shorthand practice of differentiating deaconesses based on their ministry setting/services, as well as by communities and affiliations. This was even more difficult for deaconesses in the field of Medicine than in Ministry (e.g., Deaconess Nurses vs. nurses in deaconess hospitals). In the 1960s Canadian Lutherans became more familiar with “parish Deaconesses” who could be nurses and “Parish Deaconesses” who trained for and served in congregations. Prior to the mid-Century, Canadian Lutherans were most familiar with the stories of Deaconesses who served in Foreign Missions as their stories were circulated to inspire commitment and raise funds. For example, the *Waterloo College Cord* (October 20, 1927, 1) recalls, upon her death, that *Cord* readers already knew Anna Rohrer, as a single female missionary to the Rajahmundry Mission Field beginning in 1915—this is before *Cord* readers began to know her as the wife of Professor Ernst Neudoerffer, a campus teacher and a pre-eminent missionary to India (beginning in 1900). The two married in 1917. For more on the Rohrer sisters and the Neudoerffer brothers see “Remembering Canadians in Global Missions and World Service” in this Issue. See the writing at *The College Cord*, Waterloo College, Waterloo, October 20, 1927, <https://scholars.wlu.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1016&context=thecord>. Carl Cronmiller in *A History of the Lutheran Church in Canada* remembers “Mrs. Neudoerffer” as “being a nurse” who “opened a dispensary which later developed into a hospital” (Cronmiller, 224). Theodora, the youngest daughter born to Ernst Neudoerffer, was “commissioned a missionary nurse to India in 1935” by the ULCA after the General Synod and General Council merged (Cronmiller, 224). Nurse Anna Rohrer was preceded to the Rajahmundry Mission by her sister, Dr. Amy Belle Rohrer, who arrived in India in 1907. Dr. Amy studied Medicine and was also trained by Deaconess Nurses while living at the Mary J. Drexel Home and Motherhouse in Philadelphia. Cronmiller remembers her as “Missionary Amy Belle Rohrer, M.D.” (Cronmiller, 223). In 1914 Dr. Amy married August Neudoerffer, brother to Ernst. Both sisters are listed within the text body notations of their husbands as “Foreign Missionaries.” In all these citations the connections of the Rohrers and the Neudoerffers to Deaconess ministries is missed, see George Dratch and Calvin F. Kuder, *The Telugu Mission of the General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America, Containing a Biography of the Rev. Christian Frederick Heyer, M. D.* (Philadelphia: General Council Publication House, 1914). See photo of Dr. Amy Rohrer at work at <https://flic.kr/p/9unPYH>. For more on the eras of addressing women like “Mrs. Neudoerffer,” see Kuhnert, 2SLGBTQIA+, *Consensus*, 2022. The *Waterloo College Cord* is a notable place to find stories by and about deaconesses. For example:



- *The Cord*, April 6, 1962: “Philadelphia Associates in Deaconess Services (AIDS)” featured <https://scholars.wlu.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2414&context=thecord>
- *The Cord*, November 1, 1954: Hauser welcomes deaconesses p. 13 <https://scholars.wlu.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1117&context=thecord>
- *The Cord*, December, 1953: training of women for the diaconate in Lehmann’s tribute to Leupold <https://scholars.wlu.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2385&context=thecord>
- *The Cord*, November 1, 1953: Writing from Baltimore by Alice Bald and Shirley Lohnes, <https://scholars.wlu.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1115&context=thecord>
- *The Cord*, December 1, 1950: Alumni update on Leona Nabert, Hazel Prensler and Bertha Becker <https://scholars.wlu.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1106&context=thecord>
- *The Cord*, May 1, 1949: Student Alice Bald writing, p. 15. <https://scholars.wlu.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1500&context=thecord>
- *The Cord*, May 1, 1948: “The church needs more pastors, deaconesses, parish workers and missionaries” <https://scholars.wlu.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1097&context=thecord>

<sup>7</sup> By noting 1884 as a start date, and highlighting Philadelphia and Baltimore, Keffer’s history is referencing the Deaconess heritage within the General Synod *after* congregations and synods had broken away in 1867 to form the General Council with Gottlieb Bassler as the first President. Canadian participation in the split is addressed in later Endnotes. What is important here to note, is that in this Synodical schism and parting of ways among leadership colleagues, the Deaconess traditions at Pittsburgh (1849), Philadelphia (1884), and Baltimore (1895), were narratively separated. This is pronounced in how subsequent commemorative publications remember the Deaconess tradition in their histories. Going back, William Passavant was a young and energetic member of the continental General Synod from the more regional Pittsburgh Synod, when he first invited Deaconesses to launch health care initiatives in North America in the 1840s. See E. Theodore Bachmann, *The United Lutheran Church in America, 1918–1962*, Fortress Press, 1997, on the relationship between Fliedner and Passavant, and the Pittsburgh Infirmary and Motherhouse (1849), Milwaukee Motherhouse (1893), Lankenau Hospital and Mary J. Drexel Home, 335–37. See also “Remembering Canadian Lutheran World Relief—Relationships: Mid-Century Concord and Discord, A Propositional History” in this issue. Passavant had traveled to Kaiserwerth, Germany, himself in 1846 (after an unexpected layover at Halifax), and he was so very excited to launch a similar Motherhouse and Hospital model in North America that he rented a building for an infirmary in 1848 and started to take inpatients beginning in January 1849—even though the deaconess nurses were only arriving from Germany six months later. At the consecration Service for the Infirmary on July 17, 1849, Rev. Fliedner addressed the congregation in German. The event is captured by G. H. Gerberding in the *Life and Letters of W. A. Passavant, D. D.*, Greenville, Pa, 1906, <https://libsysdigi.library.uiuc.edu/oca/Books2008-06/lifelettersofwap00gerb/lifelettersofwap00gerb.pdf>

*after which the Rev. Fliedner, addressed the congregation in German, explaining the design of the Institution as an Infirmary for the sick, and a Mother-house for the training of Christian Deaconesses for hospitals, asylums and congregations in other parts of the United States. The remarks of this eminent philanthropist, the restorer under God of this office of the Christian Church, were listened to with deep interest, and his earnest appeal to Christian females to consecrate themselves to this holy work will not soon be forgotten* (Gerberding, 188).

Years after the Philadelphia Motherhouse and Infirmary were launched, Passavant and his close associate Gottlieb Bassler, then became two of the most prominent critics of the continental General Synod and they most notably became prominent in the formation of the rival General Council in 1867. Most Canadian Lutherans (Nova Scotia Lutherans and Ontario Lutherans) left the General Synod with Bassler and Passavant and they helped to found the General Council (see Endnote 17). Passavant and Bassler had a strong outreach not just among German Lutherans but also among Scandinavian Lutherans, particularly Swedish Lutherans. The Motherhouse tradition in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (1849, General Synod) was started in the General Synod *before* the schism. The Motherhouse traditions in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 1884 (reduced General Synod) and Baltimore 1895 (reduced General Synod), among others, were launched *during* the schism. Many heritages of Lutherans participated in the establishing of Deaconess Motherhouses and ministries. These distinctive organizational affiliations impacted commemorative publications—and institutional histories—and have continued to impact subsequent story-keeping. The *formation (and/or re-formation)* of these North American Lutheran traditions as the United Lutheran Church in America (ULCA) happened in 1918. An excellent read for Deaconess research is *The United Lutheran Church in*

*America, 1918–1962*, by E. Theodore Bachmann, Fortress Press, 1997, as Bachmann’s family was connected to Deaconess communities.

<sup>8</sup> The Baltimore Motherhouse that launched in 1895 was governed from early days by a “Board of Deaconess Work” and English was its language of operation. Research related to the nature of the Baltimore Motherhouse can be confusing because of its long history. It is more recently known as a place for the training of workers for service *in church settings*, e.g., pictured here in the 1950s is “Alice Bald” of the Nova Scotia Synod shown playing ping pong with “Luther Leaguers” as part of her training for being a Parish Deaconess <https://flic.kr/p/2mCLoTD> (Image 04572 Folder 38 Student Life). And yet the ELCA Archives Flickr Album for the Baltimore Motherhouse of Deaconesses also shows “Jennie Christ” with a skull conducting a “class in nursing in 1898” <https://flic.kr/p/5sBih8> (BMD ULCA 61.5.5 b2 f18). The 1884 launch in Philadelphia was begun by Deaconesses from a Motherhouse in Iserlohn, Germany, rather than Kaiserwerth. The Deaconess traditions in Europe had evolved in their own contexts between 1849 and 1884, these including evolutions by Rev. Fliedner and his second wife Caroline (Bertheau) Fliedner. The different traditions of Lutheran Deaconess Motherhouse traditions begun before 1900 can be identified chronologically by sites and names in the photograph albums available through the ELCA Photostream on Flickr: ELCA Archives:

- 1884 – **Philadelphia** Motherhouse of Deaconesses, General Synod <https://flic.kr/s/aHsj15cQjS>  
LCA Deaconess Community at Gladwyn <https://flic.kr/s/aHsjdenH5h>
- 1885 – **Brooklyn**, New York, see “Norwegian Lutheran Deaconess Home and Hospital,” <https://flic.kr/s/aHsj185R7T>
- 1887 – **Omaha**, Nebraska, Omaha Immanuel Deaconess Institute, <https://flic.kr/s/aHsj15RghF>
- 1889 – **Minneapolis**, Minnesota, Norwegian Lutheran Deaconess Home <https://flic.kr/s/aHsjd1X4uL>
- 1893 – **Milwaukee**, Wisconsin, Institute of Protestant Deaconesses <https://flic.kr/s/aHsjcSCHda>
- 1895 – **Baltimore**, Maryland, General Synod <https://flic.kr/s/aHsj15cWgW>
- 1897 – **Chicago**, Illinois, Norwegian Lutheran Deaconess Home and Hospital, Chicago, an ancestor of Lutheran General Hospital, Park Ridge, established in 1891 <https://flic.kr/s/aHsj17tNf3>

As deaconess ministries spread from Europe to North America with waves of immigration, deaconess traditions also moved across North America geographically and culturally and they were impacted by the affiliations of their Synodical Bodies. They can be understood as belonging to groups of Lutherans.

- Institute of Protestant Deaconesses, featuring the **Milwaukee Wisconsin** Deaconesses <https://flic.kr/s/aHsjcSCHda>
- **Philadelphia** Motherhouse of Deaconesses <https://flic.kr/s/aHsj15cQjS>
- **Baltimore** Motherhouse of Deaconesses <https://flic.kr/s/aHsj15cWgW>
- **Norwegian** Lutheran Deaconess Home and Hospital, **Brooklyn** <https://flic.kr/s/aHsj185R7T>
- **Norwegian** Lutheran Deaconess Hospital, **Chicago** <https://flic.kr/s/aHsj17tNf3>
- Bethesda, St. Paul, **Minnesota** <https://flic.kr/s/aHsjd1WYdC>
- Bethpage, Axtell, **Nebraska** <https://flic.kr/s/aHsjd1WLwj>
- **Swedish Augustana Omaha** Immanuel Deaconess Institute <https://flic.kr/s/aHsj15RghF>
- **DANISH** Eben-Ezer, Brush, Colorado <https://flic.kr/s/aHsjd1YoBG>

The ELCIC in 2023 is, however, a result of the coming together of many kinds of Lutherans of many different heritages and traditions. ELCIC *Canadian* Lutherans can be found across many of these ELCA Archives Flickr Albums.

<sup>9</sup> In *A History of the Lutheran Church in Canada*, 1961, Cronmiller, writing for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Canada, includes the following individuals in his pages on “Deaconesses” (from the Index):

On page 71 in the chapter on the “Nova Scotia—Conference and Synod,” he writes, “Alma Conrad, Florence Reinhardt, Alice Bald, Shirley Lohnes and Marilyn C. Demone attended the Deaconess Motherhouse at Baltimore and Philadelphia.”

Writing in 1961, Cronmiller places the names of these students between the clergy and the reference to the Lutheran Layman’s Movement of the ULCA.

On pages 227 to 228, in the chapter on “The Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Canada—Part II” Cronmiller writes,

*The first Canadian-born Lutheran deaconess was Sister Marie Gerndt, daughter of C. R. Gerndt, then pastor of St. Peter's Logan (Bornholm), Ontario. Sister Marie served the church for forty years, 1902 until her death 1942. In 1942 Eva Alberti who lived in the Bornholm parsonage, 1921–1931, was consecrated as a deaconess. Nursing Sister Ella Koch, from St. Matthew's Kitchener, served for twenty years in the Lakenau [sic. Lankenau] Hospital, Philadelphia. Sister Lavina Schierholtz, also from St. Matthew's Kitchener, taught in the German Orphanage and went from there to China as a missionary.*

Notably, Lavina Schierholtz was a niece of Louisa Schierholtz Goos.

Cronmiller places the deaconesses just named, and the deaconesses following, within the history section on “Women's Groups.”

On page 228 he continues,

*Sister Florence Weicker was the first Canadian-born deaconess to be installed in a Canada Synod congregation. Sister Florence, a native of Kitchener, was educated for the nursing profession. After a course at Waterloo College and the Baltimore Motherhouse, Sister Florence was invested as a deaconess, October 23, 1945, and was installed in St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Kitchener, Ontario, July 6, 1947. Sister Bertha Becker (Mrs. Alfred Wedman), was the first deaconess to graduate from Waterloo College (1950) under the co-operative plan between the college and the motherhouse. Sister Esther Brose was the first deaconess consecrated in Canada, at Zion, Pembroke, October 20, 1954. Selma Lemp, was the first Canadian-born parish worker. Other Canadian-born deaconesses are: Sister Edna Monk, Sister Velma Pomrenke, Sister Sheila Radtke, Sister Grace Faber (Mrs. H. Saabas), Sister Alice Bald (Mrs. B. Lang), Sister Helen Forler. Among the young women from Canada who received training as parish-workers are: Marjorie Uffelman, Florence Reinhardt, Hazel Prensler, Leona Nabert (Mrs. H. Brose), Betty Schwichtenberg, Alma Conrad, Kathleen Mumford. Additional young ladies who have trained or are in training at the motherhouse are: Marlene Kerath, Marilyn Demone, Shirley Lohnes, Shirley Davey, Eleanor Wismer, Judith Carse, Agnes Casselman, Anne Keffer, Magdalene Kumm, Virginia Pfaff, Virginia Deichert, Ruth Suckow.*

His citations included “The Deaconess Tidings” from the *Canada Lutheran* September 1947: May and June, 1949; July–August, 1950; October, 1951. These publications are available at Laurier Archives.

<sup>10</sup> The deaconesses who arrived in North America on July 14, 1849 took charge of the hospital in August of the same year. In 1853, two of the Deaconesses that came with Fliedner married “and he [Passavant] lost their sorely needed services” (Gerberding, 258). These deaconesses had been trained by the Fliedners in the Kaiserwerth tradition, and they not only provided nursing services but were teachers of others in the Kaiserwerth tradition. They were not easily replaceable even in ideal conditions; these were not ideal conditions. In 1849, those at the first location for the Infirmary, a rental space “at the foot of Montgomery's Hill,” were met by angry neighbours who stoned the house/hospital when they discovered that Passavant had admitted cholera patients. The neighbours forced the patients out of the residential area, and the Infirmary was relocated on the run to a location Passavant had scouted “over a high hill on which stood a spacious building occupied by Rev. Dr. Lacy and his *female seminary*.” This became known as Lacyville, see G. H. Gerberding's *The Life and Letters of W. A. Passavant* (1906), 138, 186, <https://libsysdigi.library.uiuc.edu/oca/Books2008-06/lifelettersofwap00gerb/lifelettersofwap00gerb.pdf>. Some historians write that *female seminary* in this case meant school for women to study the Classics—meaning not ordination-track seminary; consideration needs to be given to whether these course were pre-Theology courses as given to ordination-track seminarians. That the Deaconesses from Kaiserwerth were teaching also means advanced education (and presumably theological education) for women in this era. The common image of the first “Passavant Hospital” is the facility at Lacyville. The branding of the Hospital as recorded in the FLICKR Photostream of the ELCA Album for the Institute for Protestant Deaconesses, Milwaukee reads: “The Old Pittsburgh Infirmary and Deaconess Motherhouse, Founded 1849. Pittsburgh, PA.” and the notation of “The First Protestant Church Hospital in America and the First Sphere of Labor of the First Deaconesses in America,” <https://www.Flickr.com/photos/elcaarchives/albums/72157615624977061/with/3383525840/>.

<sup>11</sup> The stories of Margaret Kreller and additional deaconesses are being gathered and posted on the Remembering Today for the Church of Tomorrow Project website so they don't become again forgotten, see <https://canadianlutheranhistory.ca/diaconate>. This is also in anticipation of a history update by Deacons including Deaconess Judy Whaley, writer of “An Undefinitive History of the Lutheran Canadian Diaconal Ministry: A Work in Progress,” April 30, 2007.

<sup>12</sup> The Lutheran Deaconess Association has changed its name to the Lutheran Diaconal Association. For more information on the LDA, see [thelda.org](http://thelda.org).

<sup>13</sup> Cronmiller in *A History* writes,

*In 1950 Elfriede Hartig assumed her duties as Educational Missionary for Eastern Canada as a member of the Parish and Church School Board of the United Lutheran Church in America. Miss Hartig was called to serve in consultation and co-operation with the committee of parish education of the Canada and Nova Scotia Synods. Her office was at the synodical headquarters of the Canada Synod, but at regular intervals extended trips were made to the parishes of the Nova Scotia Synod. ... Miss Hartig is a daughter of the late Dr. T. Hartig, a former President of the Manitoba Synod (Synod of Western Canada). Her sister Elizabeth Hartig has been in India for several years as a missionary nurse (Cronmiller, 228–29).*

<sup>14</sup> The Canadian Lutheran story is in many ways one of “smallness,” and consequently of not just institutional relationships but also of *personal* relationships and *personal* histories intertwined. These personal connections in recruitment and retention of church workers can be hard to track in the historical records. Yet they were critical to the lived experiences of the developing Church. In *A History of the Lutheran Church in Canada, Vol I*, 1961, Carl R. Cronmiller uses G. H. Gerberding’s *The Life and Letters of W. A. Passavant* (1906) to detail the story of Passavant landing unexpectedly in Halifax on July of 1846 on his way to the first General Council of the Evangelical Alliance with President Schmauk of the North American General Synod (Cronmiller, 58 and 273n5). After Halifax and the world-conference, Passavant travelled to Kaiserwerth, Germany, before returning to his Pittsburgh Synod home in the United States. From this unanticipated Halifax encounter, two pastors were soon sent to Nova Scotia by Passavant, these being William Bowers (who married Louisa Cossman) and D. Luther Roth (a graduate of Thiel seminary). A contemporary of Bowers and Roth, “Rev. ‘H’” [and also a student ‘K’ in Sabastapol], were exposed by Passavant and colleagues for misrepresenting their American credentials. The Pittsburg Synod and Canada Synod colleagues helped restore the Nova Scotia congregations after the controversies (see Oickle in this Issue, Cronmiller, 58, 62; Gerberding 142–43, 573). The Nova Scotia Conference of the Pittsburgh Synod (later the Nova Scotia Synod) came into being as a result (Cronmiller, 56–72). The Nova Scotia Synod and the Canada Synod merged in 1962 to become the Eastern Canada Synod of the Lutheran Church in America. Notably, Anne Keffer was hired in 1969 to help consolidate preaching points around Bridgewater that came into being *because* of controversies related to the misrepresentations by the “ministers.” Keffer helped to bridge these two former Synods. Sister Anne Keffer, of course, has another connection of note, one made clear in Cronmiller’s *A History of the Lutheran Church in Canada* AND Gerberding’s *Life and Letters of William A. Passavant* AND ALSO Ellis B. Burgess’s *History of the Pittsburgh Synod of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1748 – 1845 – 1905* (Lutheran Publication Society, Philadelphia), 1904—because she is *a Keffer*. In all these works, the story of Adam Keffer appears with prominence. And in the latter, the Keffer’s Sherwood congregation and the Canada Synod are featured significantly, in what Canadian Lutheran History might presume to be an American Church History publication, see <https://ia800504.us.archive.org/20/items/historyofpittsbu00burg/historyofpittsbu00burg.pdf>. At the meeting of the Pittsburgh Synod in 1849, notably between the time Passavant took on patients in the rented house at the foot of Montgomery Hill and the arrival of the Deaconesses July 14, 1849, the Mission Committee of the Pittsburgh Synod, including Passavant and Bassler, were meeting and discussing the launch of the Kaiserwerth Mission in North America, when out in a garden Passavant happened upon Father Adam Keffer who had walked 250 miles from Canada into Pennsylvania to petition the Synod for a Pastor for his “Sherwood,” Ontario Lutherans. After the meeting, Passavant returned to Pittsburgh to launch the hospital (July 17, 1849) and Bassler made preparations to survey the Mission Field in Canada (September, 1849). This led to Passavant and Bassler helping to form the Canada Conference of the Pittsburgh Synod June 16–18, 1853, concurrent with the two Deaconesses getting married and leaving the Philadelphia Infirmary, *Life and Letters*, 258). Bassler and Passavant later helped to found the Canada Synod six years after. This was done at Adam Keffer’s Church at Sherwood in 1861 (see Cronmiller, 73–146, Burgess, 98–99, 401–5). In 1867 the Nova Scotia Lutherans and the Canada Synod Lutherans faithfully joined Passavant and Bassler to help form the North American General Council, with Bassler as the first President (see Cronmiller, 147–205 and Ellis Burgess, 78). Adam Keffer’s petition and the Deaconess Motherhouse and Infirmary planning happened at the same Mission Committee gathering in Klecknerville in 1849 and the stories of these Lutherans unfolded more synchronously than is remembered in Canada or in the United States. The Mission Committee of the Canada Synod of the General Council in 1888 organized the “North-West Mission” until 1890. In 1890 the Mission Committee of the General Council took over the mission field, and this became the Synod of Manitoba and Other Provinces (Cronmiller, 192–93). And so it is that in 1918 the Nova Scotia Synod, Canada



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Synod, and Synod of Manitoba and Other Provinces were all equally Synods of the ULCA. Later these Canada Synods formed together the Canada Section of the Lutheran Church of America. LCA-Canada Section then merged with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada (with their Deaconess Motherhouse traditions) to form the ELCIC.

<sup>15</sup> For more on the timeline of Lutheran women breaking into professional participation in the Lutheran Church in Canada, see Karen Kuhnert, (2022) "2SLGBTQIA+—Sexuality in Changing Canadian Lutheran Contexts and Identities," *Consensus*, 43, no. 2, Article 7, <https://scholars.wlu.ca/consensus/vol43/iss2/7>.

<sup>16</sup> For more information on World Diakonia, see [diakonia-world.org](http://diakonia-world.org). For more on "DOTAC" see [dotac.diakonia-world.org](http://dotac.diakonia-world.org) and the ELCA Archives Flickr photostream from the 2002 gathering in Winnipeg, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/elcaarchives/albums/72157615860151734/with/3383741120/>.

<sup>17</sup> Photos of the Nova Scotia Team Ministry and other ministries Keffer was engaged in can be found on the project website <https://canadianlutheranhistory.ca/diaconate>.

<sup>18</sup> For more stories on the "Fat Angel" readers can turn to the *Canada Lutheran* publications of the era, as are available at Laurier Archives.

<sup>19</sup> Stories about the Prairie Centre for Ecumenism, and other ministries Sister Anne was involved in, can be found at "The many ministries of Sister Anne Keffer" <https://youtu.be/Fa6xqG7Qg9k>. In this video, for example, Sister Anne tells the story of being a Campus Minister discovering that a gay-conversion intervention was happening during her oversight shift (begins around 7:20 ff). This story helps set a time marker for what was happening in the lives of 2SLGBTQIA+ persons in Canada. There were many 2SLGBTQIA+ stories told in the Campus Ministry Oral History interviews. Sister Anne also talks in this video about her early involvement in responding to the TRC Calls for Action (2015).

<sup>20</sup> For more information on the Haldimand Tract Ecumenical Partnership activities see <https://htepartnership.ca/lutheran>. See also the video by the Award Winning film makers at Rebel Sky Media, <https://htepartnership.ca/2019-film>.

<sup>21</sup> *Reimagining Our Church*, as previously cited, is at <https://elcic.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/ReimaginingOurChurch-PublicMinistryintheELCIC.pdf>.

<sup>22</sup> For more information on the LDA, see [thelda.org](http://thelda.org).

<sup>23</sup> For more information on the Deaconess Community, see [deaconesscommunity.org](http://deaconesscommunity.org).

<sup>24</sup> For more on the November 2015 Six Nations and ecumenical participants Retreat in response to the TRC Calls to Action, see, <https://htepartnership.ca/2015-retreat>.