

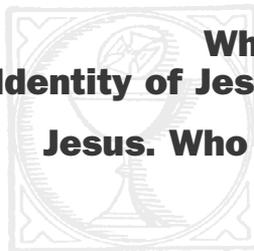
For the

LIFE of the WORLD

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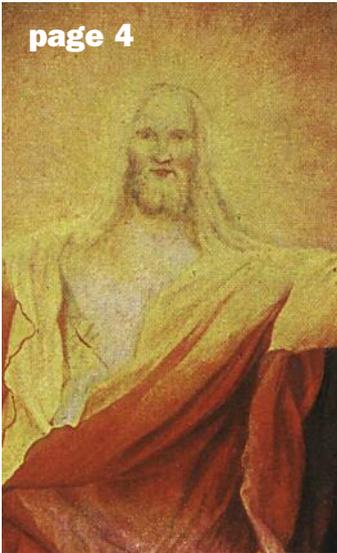


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FEATURES

**4 “Who Do You Say that I Am?”
The Identity of Jesus in the New Testament**
By the Rev. Dr. Charles A. Gieschen, Chairman of the Exegetical Department and Associate Professor of Exegetical Theology, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana
In contrast to the befuddled understanding of Jesus’ identity often presented by modern media, the New Testament presents a clear and uncompromising confession of Jesus as God incarnate for the salvation of the world.

7 Jesus. Who is this Jesus? Jesus is...
By the Rev. Randall L. Golter, President, Rocky Mountain District, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS)
Jesus, the Christ, true God and true man, the only-begotten Son of the Father, is the source of all spirituality. His blood erases and guarantees our sin-debt (Heb. 10:12-14), draws us near to God (Eph. 2:13), and brings holiness to the unholy (1 John 1:7b; John 17:17).

**10 Everybody Loves Jesus.
The Culture Cherishes a Counterfeit Christ**
By the Rev. Todd A. Wilken, St. Louis, Missouri, is the host of the nationally syndicated radio program, *Issues, Etc.*
Why does Jesus make the cover of *Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News & World Report*, and even *Popular Mechanics*? Why is He the subject of best-selling fiction and blockbuster movies? ... Everybody claims to know who Jesus was and what He would do. Everybody loves Jesus.

13 What Does This Mean?

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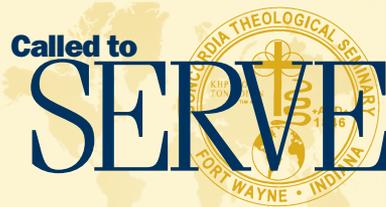
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How Does the Deaconess Serve?

By Sara M. Bielby

Deaconesses, throughout the history of the church, have responded to the needs of the times. The mercy of Christ can not help but reach out to those who are marginalized and isolated. It is this desire that has compelled women in all ages to dedicate themselves to such work. The cross a deaconess wears witnesses to her service in the midst of suffering among those who are bearing their own heavy crosses.

Our time is no different. We find ourselves in a culture which values death over life, feelings over dignity and worth. This same culture looks to a future in which it will bear the responsibility to care for a growing population of older adults and neglected children. Among their many needs will be a hunger for the comfort, intercession, and help of those who will lead them to the church to receive the gifts of grace, salvation, and true life in Christ.

We also find ourselves in a church that realizes its identity in Jesus Christ. We cling to and insist upon a theology of the cross, which sees Christ and His suffering in the poor, the weak, and the lonely. It only follows that the church would desire to show mercy corporately. As the Body of Christ, the church delights in supporting and sending out women who long to live out a life of dedicated service to those who are hurting and forgotten. A deaconess is not one who possesses a unique desire to show mercy; rather, she lives out and represents among us our own desire for mercy—the desire of Christ in us to show mercy and compassion to suffering sinners.

What is a deaconess? A deaconess, like all Christians in various vocations, goes out from the Divine Service bearing the love of Christ and expressing it in service to others. Her

particular vocation is to seek out suffering ones, to bear their burdens, to express the church's confession of Christ's mercy and care. Just as Christ comes to us incarnationally, in the flesh, so He continues to come to us and show His mercy through humble people who bear His presence. A deaconess focuses all of her time, energy, and skill to discern and meet various needs, and always to point toward the Source and the place where deepest needs are met.

But what does a deaconess do? Examples of practical human care for which a deaconess is trained include assisting older adults in navigating the available social network of services; assisting women, children, and families with such struggles as pregnancy issues and marital concerns; and offering grief counseling, women's Bible study, and visitation of the sick and homebound.

The diaconal work of the church is rightly done from a sound theological foundation. Deaconesses are well-grounded in Scripture and the confession of the church from which they proceed. Further, joyful diaconal service assumes a deep grasp of the Gospel that fuels it. The unique service of a deaconess is formed by study and by partaking of the gifts of Christ, as she lives and breathes His gifts of forgiveness and mercy in situations of suffering.

In all ages, the task of a deaconess is the same: to seek out human suffering and administer human care to communicate the love of Christ. "Deaconesses of the Future" will find boundless opportunities to use various gifts and skills of service. What a tremendous opportunity for a church in the midst of a culture of death, poised to confess God as Creator of life and Jesus Christ as its Redeemer through compassion and mercy in action.

If you would like more information on the Master's-level Deaconess Program at Concordia Theological Seminary, please call 260-452-2210, or e-mail us at Deaconess@mail.ctsfw.edu.

Sara M. Bielby is completing her Deaconess internship as Assistant to the Director of the Fort Wayne Deaconess Program, and also in service to St. John Lutheran Church in Monroeville, Indiana.

