

# For the Life of the World

## Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne

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### **Preparing to Share His Story**

By Douglas D. Bauman

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By Douglas D. Bauman

Whatever the seminarian's story is before he enrolls at the seminary, whatever the congregation's story is where he is sent to serve, in the end it's all God's story, His story. The vocation of pastor is not easy. The work is often demanding and the devil's temptations are many and great, but there is no greater joy than serving the people of God with the gifts of God and bringing the Gospel of Christ to those who are in the darkness of sin and unbelief.

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By Jacqueline A. Duke

My admission into the Concordia Theological Seminary (CTS), Fort Wayne, Deaconess Program was not something that I had ever expected. It is, however, a testament to the power of God's living Word and His faithfulness. Not only did the Lord seek me, find me and deliver me out of the deep, dark pit, He chose me to be His instrument of peace and His hands of mercy.

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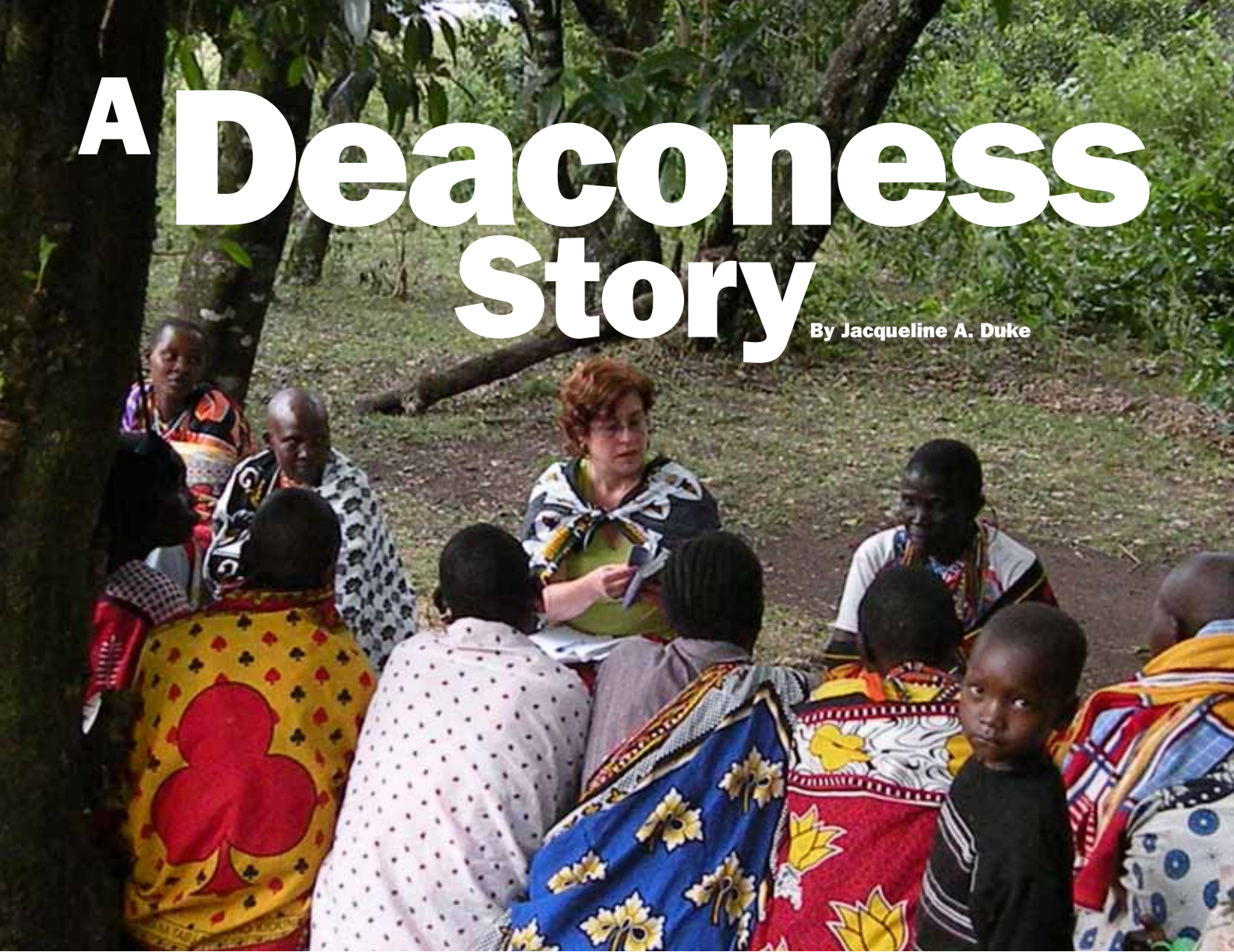
It was this theologically and liturgically rich life at seminary that impacted my ministry in Philadelphia. While it would be foolish to attempt a replication of the CTS campus, there is a lot that can be adapted. Much of my work in Philadelphia centers around care for, and evangelism of, the homeless population. I took this three-fold benefit of seminary life and applied it to the lives of those on the streets.

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# A Deaconess Story

By Jacqueline A. Duke



**A question** that one will hear around the seminary campus is, “What’s your story?” Everyone has a story to tell about their journey to Concordia Theological Seminary, and the following is mine.

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**In my mid-forties something happened. I don’t know how, but suddenly I was overcome with the desire to go back to church. After having visited other churches I made my way into Our Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church of Smithfield, R.I. At the age of 45, I was catechized and became a member of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.**

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Deciding what one wants to be when they “grow up” can be quite the challenge for some. And this was certainly true for me. After completing my undergraduate degree in the Fine Arts, I floundered for many years searching for “success” and a sense of fulfillment in vocations that seemed just to fall into my lap. Though these vocations were certainly commendable, something was always missing. It would not be until much later in life that I would discover exactly what that missing piece was: Christ.

For most of my adult life I thought I knew who God was. As many today still

seek a god that they have created to suit their desires, I too had sought my own god. I had my own relationship with him, and that was all I needed. Church? Church was for other people, not for me.

In my mid-forties something happened, though. I don’t know how it happened, but suddenly I was overcome with the desire to go back to church. To make this long story short, after having visited other churches I made my way into Our Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church of Smithfield, R.I. Having been brought up in the Episcopal

Church, this was an unlikely church for me to join. But, at the age of 45, I was catechized and became a member of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

My admission into the Concordia Theological Seminary (CTS), Fort Wayne, Deaconess Program was not something that I had ever expected. It is, however, a testament to the power of God’s living Word and His faithfulness. Not only did the Lord seek me, find me and deliver me out of the deep, dark pit, He chose me to be His instrument of peace and His hands of mercy. I know that it is not a coincidence that the pastor of the church to which God had guided me would have a daughter who happened to be a deaconess *and* the recruiter of the CTS Deaconess Program.

But did I just answer His call with a “Yes, Lord! Here am I!”? No! As a mature woman, the thought of living in a dorm was not so appealing to me. And the thought of leaving my place of employment of 20 years and the comfort of its security, of leaving my family, my friends and the life I had known for so many years was downright frightening! Words cannot describe the tears and fear that I endured for months. I thought that a lightning bolt would have to hit me in order for me to know for certain that this was God’s call for me. But instead it was only through continual prayer and trusting in God’s faithfulness

that a quiet courage slowly developed within me.

Campus life was terrifying ... at first! During the first months at the seminary there were several times that I thought

about leaving. “I can’t do this!” was my cry to the Lord. “Why did you bring me here only to have me fail?” I felt unequipped and unprepared for the vigorous load. I also missed my family, my friends, my church, my life. But I did not leave. Instead, through much encouragement from others and through continual prayer, campus life became a great joy. I thrived in my classes. I even received a bonus prize! During my first year at CTS I met and married a seminarian! My husband and I were blessed to be able not only to serve our vicarage and internship together in the same parish, but we also had the incredible opportunity to travel to Kenya on a missionary trip with other seminary students.

I continue to be exceedingly blessed. Today, while my husband serves a small congregation in the city of Pittsburgh, I provide spiritual care daily to residents and hospice patients at Concordia Lutheran Ministries, a fully accredited aging services network in Cabot, Penn. As a deaconess in the chaplain’s office, I have had the honor and the privilege of providing the comfort and encouragement of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the aged, the sick and suffering, and to the dying. I also teach weekly Bible studies and provide a weekly preschool devotion.

Even in the short time I have been a deaconess, God has blessed me with wonderful opportunities to see Him at work through me. One was a distressed hospice patient who refused to take medication, as she felt she

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**Even in the short time I have been a deaconess, God has blessed me with wonderful opportunities to see Him at work through me. One was a distressed hospice patient who refused to take medication, as she felt she deserved to die in pain. Hearing the Gospel spoken in a way that was new to her, the patient declared that she had never known such peace. She took her medication and did, indeed, die in peace.**

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deserved to die in pain. Hearing the Gospel spoken in a way that was new to her, the patient declared that she had never known such peace. She took her medication and did, indeed, die in peace. In another example, I catechized an 85-year old woman to prepare her for baptism. This woman remarked after her baptism that she was in awe of how I explained things to her. “You should write a book,” she said. My reply was that these books have already been written. It is enough for me to know, without a doubt, that through the superb education that I received at CTS, and the strength and guidance of the Lord that I receive daily, I am fully equipped to serve God’s people.

I now know for sure what I want to be when I “grow up.” I want to be the humble and faithful servant that God has called me to be. For, you see, with God’s help I’m still working on it. 🙏

*Deaconess Jacqueline A. Duke serves as a deaconess at Concordia Lutheran Ministries (www.concordialm.org) in Cabot, Penn.*



*Upper left: Deaconess Jaqueline Duke teaches in Kenya. Bottom right: Jacqueline serves the residents of Concordia Lutheran Ministries in Cabot, Penn.*