

Diaconal ministers are consecrated for service in ministries at the intersection of church and world. These rostered lay leaders work to seek wholeness in the world and to help the people of God to live out the Gospel. They are committed to alerting the church to the needs of the world.

Diaconal ministry is a ministry of Word and service, sharing the hope of Christ, helping where there is need, and equipping others for healing and justice in the world. Diaconal Ministers serve through agencies, institutions, and traditional church programs as they build bridges between the church and the world.

The Six Marks of Diaconal Ministry

Diaconal Ministry is a form of rostered leadership ministry designed to enable the ELCA to more effectively fulfill its mission. Diaconal Ministers are called by this church to positions that exemplify the servant life and seek to equip and motivate others to live it. Diaconal ministers shall seek in a variety of ways to empower, equip, and support the baptized people of God in the ministry of Jesus Christ and the mission of God in the world. As a covenanted community, centered in the Word, grounded in the biblical call to diakonia (servant ministry) and brought forth by the ELCA, we seek to encourage and support one another, and partner with others to address the emerging missions and ministry needs of the church and our world. Diaconal ministers are marked by these characteristics and shall:

Be Rooted in the Word of God

Diaconal minister are ministers of the Word of God, committed to Christ, and called to be spokespersons for the Gospel, the apostolic faith, and the theological emphasis of this church to God's world.

Be Trained to Carry Out a Particular Service

Diaconal ministers carry out a public ministry of service and witness. With demonstrated competence and expertise in a particular discipline, diaconal ministers may serve both within and outside of congregational settings, in each case bearing responsibility for making the linkages between church and world. Programmatic ministries within congregational settings should be marked by extension of the witness and service of the church into the wider community.

Be Committed and Prepared to Equip the Baptized for Ministry in the World and in the Church

Diaconal ministers along with pastors are called to lead and equip the baptized for ministry. Diaconal ministers support the ministry of the baptized through appropriate programmatic ministries and by working with the laity in discerning and encouraging their gifts for ministry.

Give Particular Attention to Ministries at the Boundaries Between the Church and World

Diaconal ministers carry public responsibility to speak for the needs of God's world to the church as well as taking God's saving Gospel to the needs of the world through the actions of God's people both individually and collectively.

Exemplify the Life of Christ-like Service Addressing all Forms of Human Need

The call to diaconal ministry is a lifelong commitment which supports and compliments the ministry of Word and Sacrament, focusing on ministry to the whole person. This "diaconal bias" provides the lens and vision for developing the diaconal mission of the church carried out among and through its members.

Be Grounded in Community

Diaconal ministers need the support and shared vision of a community of leaders committed to a common calling. This grounding in a diaconal community serves as the reminder to seek to build community in all ministry settings.

All who want to learn more about diaconal ministry in the ELCA are welcome here and we invite you to browse this site as you learn more about diaconal ministry and discern whether you might be called to a ministry of Word and Service as well. Blessings on your journey!

If I, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet John 13:14