**Revised 2022 Diakonia Handbook/ Diakonia in a Box**

**updated April 6, 2022**

**Format / Table of Contents:**

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*These revised documents will be used to:*

*\*Inform our national website revision*

*\*Provide consistency in the Growing in Faith/diakonia program throughout areas*

*\*Form the basis of a set of orientation power points/videos for diakonia leadership, instructors and new and potential students*

**Mission Statement**

*Engaging in faith formation to equip disciples to live out their baptismal call.*

**Vision Statement**

*A world where all the baptized see themselves as blessed to be a blessing.*

**Theology of the Growing in Faith/ The diakonia Program**

(Rebecca’s first draft--may vary depending on curriculum changes)

From its inception, it has been Growing in Faith/**diakonia**'s purpose to provide an effective process for equipping and calling the Baptized for ministry in today's world. Passing down the teachings of our Lord to new generations enables God’s people to continue to thrive and grow in their relationship to God and to one another.

Our scriptures teach us how God has walked alongside the faithful from creation. They remind us that our faith (the ways of the Lord) must be intentionally taught:

Especially important was the recital (twice daily by pious Jews) of the ‘Shema’,

“Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the ordinances—that the Lord your God charged me to teach you to observe in the land that you are about to cross into and occupy, **2**so that you and your children and your children’s children may fear the Lord your God all the days of your life, and keep all his decrees and his commandments that I am commanding you, so that your days may be long. **3**Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe them diligently, so that it may go well with you, and so that you may multiply greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, as the Lord, the God of your ancestors, has promised you.

**4**Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. **5**You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. **6**Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. **7**Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise.”

*Deuteronomy 6:1-7*

The practice found expression in the conviction of *Proverbs 22:6,*

‘Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray.

In the early Psalms we hear God’s people cry out for teaching:

4 Make me to know your ways, O Lord;   
   teach me your paths.  
5 Lead me in your truth, and teach me,  
   for you are the God of my salvation;  
   for you I wait all day long.

11 For your name’s sake, O Lord,  
   pardon my guilt, for it is great.  
12 Who are they that fear the Lord?  
   He will teach them the way that they should choose. *Psalm 25*

We are finally reminded of Jesus’ call to action upon his departure from us:

“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’ “ Matthew *28:18-20*

Martin Luther was a champion of education. He felt that being informed was the key to success in both our spiritual and secular lives. His passion for educating children in the faith gave us the Small Catechism used to this day in many churches to teach the faith to adults and children alike. He was a passionate student himself and never stopped learning.

This is our Lutheran legacy, that we should continue to learn about our faith beyond traditional Sunday school and confirmation classes. Growing in Faith/**Diakonia** fulfills both our scriptural call to be instructed in the faith and Martin Luther’s desire that we live out our Baptismal covenant.

At our baptism a sponsor made promises for us and at our confirmation (Affirmation of Faith) we were asked if we would:

Continue in the covenant God made with you in holy baptism:

to live among God's faithful people,

to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper,

to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,

to serve all people, following the example of Jesus,

and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?

**We answered: I do, and I ask God to help and guide me.**

**Dear church, God provides instructors of the faith in many shapes and sizes; both informal and formal; who teach us in both word and deed how to follow Christ and live out the promises made in baptism.**

**Growing in Faith/Diakonia** is a national program of education for people in the Lutheran church. It is a two-year process of spiritual formation and theological education developed over 40 years ago by a Lutheran pastor (former MNYS Bishop Stephen Bouman) to help develop dynamic disciples.

**A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE diakonia PROGRAM**

The diakonia program was created by Rev. Stephen Bouman, a pastor in the Metropolitan NY Synod, in the 1970s to develop dynamic disciples. Looking for educated partners in ministry Pastor Bouman developed a two-year program of lay education.

Over the past 40 plus years this one program has expanded from one site in one synod to over 35 sites in 11 synods across the ELCA. More than 2100 persons have completed the diakonia Program course of study.

For a more complete history, visit http://www.diakoniausa.org/diakonia-program-overview/history/

**INTRODUCTION to the Growing in Faith/diakonia program**

**What is the Growing in Faith/diakonia™ program?**

Growing in Faith/diakonia is a one or two-year process of spiritual formation and theological education. This process occurs in three basic ways:

* By learning about texts, doctrines, history and practical applications of the Bible and its teachings.
* By identifying one’s spiritual gifts and learning how to share them in the parish and the world.
* By growing spiritually through worship, retreats, and a supportive community of fellow students, pastor-mentors and instructors.

GIF/Diakonia uses these tools to help equip God’s people for service in parish and neighborhood ministries. “Let the one who would be great among you be your servant (Greek: *diakonos”*) (Mark 10:4)

**What is the emphasis of Growing in Faith/diakonia?**

GIF/diakonia emphasizes the baptismal vocation of all Christians to serve as Jesus served. Participants may be leaders in their own congregations or simply Christians who are seeking to grow in their faith and learn more about the church or looking for the opportunity to serve the church in a variety of ways: teaching, administration, worship leadership, action for social justice, evangelism, visitation of the sick and homebound, community organization, youth work or ministry among the elderly. The diakonia Program helps participants to grow closer to the image and example of Christ the Servant.

**How is Growing in Faith/ The diakonia program structured?**

The GIF/diakonia curriculum consists of six Foundation Year courses, and six Practical Year courses. Courses may be held in person or virtually. Each course is five sessions in length and meets weekly for three-hour sessions. Weekly assignments and readings vary, depending on the class, and seek to relate the subject matter to daily life as well as providing a solid background on the topic. Students work at their own level, and assignments reflect the understanding that students are already busy in their families, jobs and congregations. In addition to class time, students, typically, average approximately 2-5 hours of study per week outside of class, depending on the course.

**Foundation Year:**

*This first year of study is required of all students and will provide a strong foundation which may be built upon in year 2 and subsequent study. Courses for the Foundation Year may be held in person in local churches with local instructors or virtually via ZOOM.*

***Christianity in a Lutheran Key***

***Introduction to Hebrew Scriptures***

***Introduction to New Testament***

***Living as a Christian in the World***

***Liturgical Worship***

***Lutheran Creeds and Confessions***

***Practical Year:*** *Students who choose to continue enroll in one of two ‘tracks’*

***Road to Service Track:***

*(This track is suggested for those considering congregational leadership or synodically rostered leadership where offered.)*

***Healthy Congregational Dynamics*** *(Family Systems, Boundaries, Gifts)*

***Pastoral Care*** *(Visitation, Eucharistic Ministry, Grief)*

***Church History*** *(Overview of 1st – 21st Century)*

***Anti-racism*** *(in-depth training)*

***+2 Electives***

***Faith Formation Track:***

*This track is for those who are looking to deepen their personal faith in a more general manner.* ***Church History*** *(Overview of 1st – 21st Century)*

***Anti-racism*** *(in-depth training)*

***+ 4 Electives***

*Courses for the Practical Year will be offered primarily online via the ZOOM platform and open to students across the country.*

**Program Organization**

The **Growing in Faith/**The diakoniaProgram, Inc. is a national, private, incorporated, not-for-profitorganization which provides theological education, spiritual formation, and practical lay ministry training~~.~~

The GIF/diakonia Program **has three levels of organization.** Each level of organization has unique functions which serve the mission of diakonia to equip and develop lay ministers/disciples, support spiritual formation and growth in our participants and maintain the quality, consistency, and integrity of the Growing in Faith/diakonia Program as it expands into different geographic Areasof the country.

**1. National**: The National diakonia Board functions as a board of directors for the Growing In Faith /diakonia Program, Inc. that establishes and oversees the geographic Areas of the program.

**2. Area**: Areas are defined geographically. Currently, the Areas of the Growing in Faith /diakonia Program follow the same geographic designations as the Synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Each Area has a Steering Committee which oversees the operation of the diakonia Program in their locality.

**3. Locations/Communities**: Locations are a physical place, often a local church, where the group of people in a class meet, where the diakonia Program classes are held. In some instances, physical locations change for each course so class groups may be referred to as “learning communities” rather than locations. Virtual locations/communities may also be formed for online instruction.

1. **NATIONAL ORGANIZATION**

The Growing in Faith /diakonia National Board of directors:

1.Provides vision and leadership on a national level through strategic decision making and program planning

2. Interacts with ELCA Synods and National expressions of the church

3. Maintains, updates, interprets, and follows the latest version of the GIF/diakonia constitution

4. Maintains national treasury

5. Maintains a national directory of graduates

6. Establishes operational policies for the GIF/diakonia program

7. Establishes and oversees the diakonia program in new geographic areas

8. Provides training materials and training as needed

9. Establishes, reviews, and revises program curriculum

10. Oversees national website and other social media communications

11. Hires and oversees consultants, specialists or other services as needed. (determined by board)

*12.* Develops and authorizes standard national publicity materials, trademark, logos, etc.

1. **Operations and Procedures**

Meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held at least two times a year, on a schedule determined by the Board as a whole. Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson, or by two other officers, as needed. Meetings may be conducted in person or via electronic media. The agenda for each meeting shall be provided by the Chairperson at least one week in advance of the meeting.

A quorum shall consist of 25% of the members of the Board. Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted. However, the Board may authorize a vote on a motion (not an election) by electronic media outside a formal meeting. In such cases, the date by which votes must be cast shall be specified, and passage shall require a simple majority of all Board members.

Robert’s Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings.

1. **Officers**

Officers of the Board of Directors serve without compensation and without furnishing of bond or fidelity guarantee. Candidates for elected office shall be nominated from among the active members of the Board. Election to office shall be achieved by majority vote of the Board at a formal meeting thereof, provided a quorum, as defined below, is present and accounted for.

Elected officers hold office for a three-year term and may be reelected to one additional term for the same office. No officer may serve in the same office after a total continuous term of six years. After one elapsed year, a former officer may be eligible to be elected to that same office. Nothing prevents an officer from being elected to a different office, but no person may hold two offices concurrently.

**Chairperson**

* shall be a non-ordained person who is a graduate of the diakonia program.
* provides the leadership for the National Board.
* presides at all meetings of the National Board
* consults with other National Leaders and area leaders for guidance as needed
* acts in an executive capacity between regular meetings of the Board
* calls special meetings of the Board as needed with 10 days notice
* authorizes disbursements from the treasury of **diakonia** national along with another Board member so designated yearly at an official Board meeting,
* The Chairperson and Vice Chair shall jointly appoint a three-person committee, at least one of whom shall be a CPA, to perform an annual audit and submit their report to the Board

**Vice Chairperson**

* shall be a non-ordained graduate of the program.
* acts as Chairperson in the absence or inability to serve of the Chairperson
* functions in the office of Chairperson if it is vacated, until the next regular or special meeting of the Board, at which a Chairperson shall be elected.
* The Chairperson and Vice Chair shall jointly appoint a three-person committee, at least one of whom shall be a CPA, to perform an annual audit and submit their report to the Board.

**Secretary**

* shall be a non-ordained graduate of the program or an ordained person on the active roster of the ELCA
* records minutes of Board meetings and preserves them
* maintains the roster of Board members and their term expiration date
* provides for the maintenance of a roster of GIF/diakoniagraduates with the year of their graduations (National Verified Graduate registry)
* sends notice to each Board member of regular or special meetings, as directed by the Chairperson.

**Treasurer**

* Shall be a non-ordained graduate of the program or an ordained person on the active roster of the ELCA.
* Serves as the first point of contact for all financial matters including tax and bank related communications.
* Maintains financial records and supplies reports thereof to the Board at least semi-annually
* Submits financial records for audit prior to the annual meeting
* Disburses payments as authorized by the Chairperson and a designated Board member and provides a standardized form for requesting such reimbursements and preserves these for future reference.
* Distributes/orders graduation crosses and other supplies to the Areas upon request and payment.

**Executive Director**

* Shall be an ordained ELCA pastor
* Provides pastoral leadership for the National Board.
* The Executive Director has no term limits and serves at the pleasure of the Board
* Provides spiritual and theological guidance for GIF/diakonia
* Acts as a liaison on behalf of GIF/diakonia with official church structures as necessary or advisable.

\*Add Voting, attendance expectations, special assignments/serving on sub-committees?

For certain essential, continuing functions, the Board may engage **Coordinator(s).** A person in such a position shall be a member of the Board ex officio, with voice but no vote, and may be compensated. Any function requiring a Coordinator shall have oversight by a committee drawn from members of the Board and as needed, person(s) with relevant expertise from outside the Board.

**National Board Members**

Board members are responsible for all national board matters. Acting as a team, the board members participate in discussions at national board meetings, preparing information as needed to support the tasks of the board.

~~Further details and helpful information for national board members can be found on our national website by logging in to the password protected area.~~

~~Go to~~ [~~www.diakoniausa.org~~](http://www.diakoniausa.org)

~~At top right of page: Enter username: national.board and password: Servabo.Fidem9!~~

~~Click LOG IN. Click member resources at top right, then click National Board.~~

**National Board Table of contents includes:** (should these be held by the secretary and chairperson?)

Diakonia constitution

Diakonia handbook

Financial and privacy policies

Incorporation and Trademark documents

National board meeting minutes

National board roster

**II. AREAS/Synods**

**Growing In Faith/diakonia** areas are the geographical area programs or synods of the ELCA. Upon application to the national Board of Directors, these program units are authorized by it to identify as GIF/diakonia programs, based on their commitment to the stated curriculum and to the provisions of the diakonia constitution.

Each Area has a Steering Committee which oversees the operation, management, and coordination of the diakonia Program in their locality. As with all other leaders of the GIF/diakonia program, these persons serve without salary. The Area Steering Committee is directly accountable to the National Board. In choosing members of Steering Committees and nominees to the national Board, diversity and inclusiveness are to be pursued. Each Steering Committee shall be entitled and expected to nominate at least one lay graduate to serve on the national Board of Directors; other persons, either lay or clergy, may be nominated in addition. These nominees may or may not be serving currently on the Steering Committee of that program but must have participated in GIF/diakonia.

Area Steering Committee Responsibilities:

1. Oversees the operation of the Area Locations (optional paid position to oversee area website pages/info)

2. Recruits and trains Location/Community Managers

3. Provides for an Area publicity strategy and public relations

4. Selects and trains Instructors and/or Pastoral Advisors as needed

5. Interacts with congregations & local synods

6. Plans and Implements Graduation; orders GIF/diakonia crosses from National Board

7. Plans & Implements Annual Retreat (as able)

8. Grants Financial Aid (if available)

9. Provides support for the National Board through an annual stipend (2022-23 - $750)

10. Maintains a central treasury for the Area

11. ***May*** provide a central treasury for operating the Locations

12. Maintains a central record of students, instructors, and graduates of the area

13. Provides the National Board secretary with a certified list of graduates each year

14. Develops other policies and procedures for the effective functioning and

efficient management pertaining to the Area which is not the responsibility of the National Board.

Finances: Each Area Steering Committee is responsible for setting up its own system for receiving and managing all the financial transactions of the Area and its Locations.

Area Steering Committees can choose to set up their finances in the following ways:

1. The Area Treasurer receives and disburses all funds through a central Area treasury

or

2. The Location Managers receive deposit and disburse all Location funds, providing

complete reports of all transactions to the Area Treasurer.

**Steering Committee Officers**

**(Encouraged to be limited to two 3-year terms)**

Executive Director:

* Shall be a rostered ELCA Lutheran pastor serving in the Area
* Is responsible for representing the program to the larger church
* Consults with Location/Community Managers and other workers within the program
* Provides theological and practical leadership in the ongoing mission of the program
* Is encouraged to serve on the National GIF/diakonia Board
* Shall ensure that a Synod liaison is appointed by the Synod to the Steering Committee to foster communication among the Synod’s rostered leaders and the Synodical Bishop

Chairperson:

* Shall be a non-ordained graduate of the Growing in Faith/diakonia program
* Sees that the Steering Committee meets regularly, that meetings are conducted smoothly, and that all the important tasks of operating the program are distributed among Steering Committee members or others and are carried out.
* Provides a semi-annualreport to the National Board

Vice Chair:

* Assumes the duties and responsibilities of the chairperson when the chairperson is unavailable to perform them.

Secretary:

* Records and sends out all Minutes of the Steering Committee meetings
* Notifies members of meeting dates and locations
* Sends and receives all correspondence for the Steering Committee
* Responsible for ensuring that mailing lists and student roster information (provided annually by the Location Managers) is maintained and kept up to date.

Treasurer:

* Receives and disburses all funds for the Area Steering Committee
* Maintains the bank accounts and provides financial reports at each Steering Committee meeting
* Ensures that all tax reporting responsibilities are taken care of in a timely fashion.

(Depending on how the Area Steering Committee has set up its financial procedures, the Area Treasurer will):

* Directly administer the income and expenses of the Area Locations through a central

treasury

**OR**

* Receive reports of the financial transactions from the Location Managers who are

directly administering the income & expenses for their individual Locations.

***Steering Committee Members***

Growing In Faith/Diakonia graduates, Pastoral Advisors, current students, and instructors are the most likely candidates for Steering Committee membership. However, the Steering Committee may also select members not from those groups who can advance the purposes of diakonia or serve specific needs.

Location Managers should be ex officio (voting) members of an Area Steering Committee. A Synod Liaison is also recommended.

The National Board requests an annual stipend from each of the GIF/diakonia Program Areas. This amount is set annually by the National Board and is used for such activities as to maintain the diakonia Program’s National Office, any part-time or temporary staff, mailings, travel expenses, and the like. If areas are unable to provide the full amount, a lesser amount will be accepted.

Student Financial Aid: It is the policy of GIF/diakonia to encourage as many people as possible to participate. Recognizing that some people may experience serious financial limitations, financial aid may be made available upon request and review by the Steering Committee if local funds are available.

Student requests for financial aid may be made at any time during the year to the Location Manager, Area Chairperson or Pastoral Advisor of the Location where the student is enrolled. Completed Financial Aid Request Forms (in forms section) should be sent to the Area Steering Committee as indicated on the form. These requests are normally presented at the next scheduled meeting of the Area Steering Committee.

Student Financial Aid should be granted solely on need and availability and the amount of such grants and general policies regarding financial aid is determined by the Area Steering Committee. Financial Aid requests must be submitted each year.

The names of those receiving scholarships or other financial aid, as well as the amount received, will be considered confidential information, shared only with those needed to make decisions on the granting of such aid. Financial or other background information may be requested as part of the request process, and this information will also remain confidential.

Students who receive Financial Aid are encouraged to return the funds at some future time, if they can, so that other students may be assisted.

~~Additional information and resources for Steering Committee members can be found on our national website by logging in to the password protected area.~~ **~~Go to~~** [**~~www.diakoniausa.org~~**](http://www.diakoniausa.org)

~~At top right of page:~~

~~Enter username steering.committee~~

~~password Ab.Origine9!~~

~~Click LOG IN. Click member resources at top right, then click on Steering Committee~~

**Steering Committee Table of Contents may include:**

After Graduation resources

Annual dues to national

Graduation resources

Publicity resources

~~Reference guide for Steering Committee members~~

Retreat resources

Sample forms, application and financial aid

Synod assembly sample resolutions

**III. LOCATIONS/Learning Communities**

1. The Location/Learning Community

The “Location” is the physical site, normally a church, where students meet for in person classes.

Some areas operate with Learning communities using a variety of locations for their classes, others may meet virtually with online classes.

Each location/learning community is designed to have a minimum of 4-5 students and a maximum of 15. If a Location’s enrollment will exceed 15, the Location/Community Manager should contact the Area Steering Committee which then decides whether to close the class enrollment at 15 and/or attempt to open another class. This smaller class size aids in the development of fellowship, sharing of class materials, and the ability to ask questions.

Locations/ Physical spaces must provide:

1. Classroom/Meeting Room space that will comfortably seat 20 people at tables to allow for instructors or guests etc.

2. Consistent availability of the room on the scheduled days or nights at class times.

3. Basic classroom equipment

4. Permission to serve light refreshments in a designated area.

5. Permission from the Location’s Pastor and/or Church Council to use the room.

6. The Pastor or member of the pastoral staff of the church may be asked to serve as the Location’s/Community’s Pastoral Advisor.

1. The Location/Community Manager: The Location or community Manager is an essential part of making the GIF/diakonia Program function smoothly and effectively. Location Managers are selected for their commitment to the program and its mission to equip lay persons for discipleship and ministry. The Location/Community Manager needs to possess organizational, communication and people skills since this person coordinates all activities of the GIF/diakonia Program at the local level. As with all diakonia leaders, location managers are volunteers.

**Location/Community Manager:**

* Secures meeting location, communicates as needed with the facility staff.
* Maintains student files: contact information, classes completed, collection of fees and other financial responsibilities (this varies from synod to synod)
* Recruits instructors, coordinates class schedules, supports instructors with information on program requirements, course guidelines and resources as needed
* Introduce weekly devotions, schedule students’ participations in devotions and assistance as needed
* Serves as liaison with Pastoral Advisor for the location
* Makes emergency decisions (i.e., weather cancellations); discusses special problems with Pastoral Advisor
* Provides location/community reports to the Steering Committee

~~Additional information and resources for Location/Community managers can be found on our national website by logging in to the password protected area.~~

**~~Go to~~** [**~~www.diakoniausa.org~~**](http://www.diakoniausa.org)

~~Top right: Enter username~~ **~~location.manager~~** ~~and password:~~**~~Mater.Dei9!~~**

~~Click LOG IN. Click member resources at top right. Click on “location managers”~~

**Resources in the appendix for Location manager’s Table of Contents may include:**

Certificates

Devotions

Forms

~~Location Manager Job Description~~

**Pastoral Advisor**

* Usually, the pastor at the location site
* Assists in providing an environment where students can receive counsel and advice on issues of faith, vocation and personal development.

**Expectations of Students/Instructors**

Students:

Students entering the Growing in Faith/diakonia Program are typically active members of the church and are expected to understand that GIF/diakonia theological perspective is that of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Ideally, students should have the support and prayers of their local congregation and pastor. Students should be willing to devote the time and energy necessary to participate in the GIF/diakonia program. Students will register and be provided with all information needed prior to the start of each course via the website. This includes instructor and student contact info, syllabus, book requirements, assignments, evaluations, etc.

For classes meeting *virtually*, a device with internet connectivity and the ability *to navigate and use the electronic format* used is required. Access to a printer may be helpful. Virtual Students will be provided with email or links for meetings, class lists, syllabus and book requirements, assignments, etc.

All students are expected to participate fully in the program through:

-Regular attendance at all class sessions. (In person or virtually for ZOOM classes)

-Participation in class/group activities

Willingness to share in group discussion, conversation and prayer with other class members

-Willingness to offer solidarity and friendship to class colleagues

Timely completion of all assignments

-payment of all fees and tuition, or apply for financial assistance as needed

Grades

GIF/diakonia uses a “Complete/Incomplete” system of measuring accomplishment.

Completion= Attend and participate in at least 3 of the 5 course classes and complete all assignments. If incomplete, students may work with the instructor to complete missing assignments in a timely manner.

Graduation/Completion

Upon completion of *the Foundation Year, a letter of accomplishment shall be issued by the Student’s area leadership. Requirements are:*

* 1. Class participation and completion of all 6 foundation year courses
  2. payment in full of all tuition and registration fees

*Upon completion of Foundation and Practical Year courses a certificate of completion and a cross necklace shall be presented. Requirements are:*

1. Completion of 12 courses, including class participation, assignments, etc.

2. Payment in full of all tuition and registration fees

Financial Obligations

Tuition payments (2022-23 $65/course) may be made for the entire year or class by class. The Location/Community Manager and area treasurer keep a record of the payments and follow up on delinquency.

Students may not be permitted to continue participating in the program if their tuition and fees are not up to dateor they have applied for, but not been granted, financial aid.

**Instructors:**

Most instructors in the diakonia program are recruited from local Lutheran clergy and rostered lay professionals. However, instructors may be, from time to time, recruited from other church bodies. A standard honorarium of $400 is paid for each course taught. Mileage may or may not be reimbursed.

Instructor responsibilities:

1. Review the Course Guide/Description and develop a 5-lesson syllabus, (sample syllabi and suggested texts will be provided) determine class materials needed.

2. Provide syllabus and book(s) needed for the course (total cost not to exceed $35/course) and any other materials to the students/Location/Community Manager 3 weeks prior to the start of the first class

3. Inform Location/Community Manager of any audio visual/or other equipment needs

4. Develop student reading or writing assignments (approximately 3 hours out-of-class time) Final assignments should either be project/papers or weekly assignments of no more than 1 pages.

5. Review student papers or assignments (constructive comments for students are encouraged.

6. Keep a record of and submit student attendance and grade reports /evaluations to Location/Community Manager within 2 weeks of the completion of the course. (in accordance with your area procedures)

Instructor Resources: (will depend on any changes to national website)

\*Sample syllabi and instructor forms: ~~The national GIF/diakonia website~~ [~~www.diakoniausa.org~~](http://www.diakoniausa.org) ~~contains a “back office” with special features for instructors—an instructor handbook, course descriptions, sample syllabi, diakonia in Spanish resources, and attendance and grade forms.~~

**~~Instructions to log in:~~**

~~Go to~~ [~~www.diakoniausa.org~~](http://www.diakoniausa.org)

~~At the top right: Enter username: program.instructor and password: De.Futuro9!~~

~~Click LOG IN. Click member resources at top right.~~

~~Click on: Instructor~~

\*Consultation with previous instructors on course content

\*Consultation with site manager in regard to assignment design, class dynamics, special needs of students

1. **Class Preparation**

**Class Syllabus**

The course syllabus is to be developed within the goals and objectives as described in the diakonia Course Guide/Description, although individual creativity in method and resources is encouraged. Instructors should be sensitive to the varying abilities and educational/social backgrounds of the students. Weekly reading and written assignments should be limited to no more than 3 hours out of class and are to be included in the syllabus. Introductory readings may be assigned prior to the first session, in preparation for the first class. Some instructors also choose to require a final project.

**Books and/or Other Class Resources**

Selected texts should (a) be written for adult learners without degrees, (b) might serve as useful reference works after the course is over, and (c) be consistent with the evangelical faith as reflected in our confessional tradition. The total cost of books should not be more than $25-35. If copies of materials are provided, instructors are responsible for obtaining any required permissions. Some locations have seminaries and/or church or public libraries that can be a source for books to be borrowed for the course.

**Teaching Methods**

Keep in mind that adult learners value variety and participation. Instructors are encouraged to be creative and varied in their teaching methods and in the resources they use.Diakonia students are highly committed learners and are eager to interact with the material, their classmates, and the instructor. A mixture of lecture and discussion is generally best.

**B. Class Session Format**

- Opening Devotions/announcements: led by student(s) as scheduled (10 minutes max)

- Class session approximately 1 hour

- 15-minute break: refreshment may be provided by devotion leader

- Class session approximately 1 hour

- Closing prayer/announcements (Instructor)

Class Cancellation: If a class has been cancelled for any reason, the instructor and the Location/Community Manager will confer to schedule a make-up class.

**C. Assignments**

1. Instructors should communicate content and due date of all assignments clearly in through email. If willing, offer to consult with students about alternative content or any creative ideas they may have. Extenuating circumstances should be worked out between the student, the location/community manager, and the instructor. Failure to complete all assignments will result in an incomplete. Students given an ‘incomplete’ will have the option to make up the work in a timely manner.

2. Instructor feedback is expected and appreciated on each student assignment. Students are vitally interested in your thoughts and insights on their studies. A “complete" is never a substitute for well-chosen, constructive, and thoughtful commentary from the instructor.

4. Instructors should plan to review and return non-electronic copies of assignments or e-copies to individual studentswithin 2 weeks after the final class session. The instructor teaching the last course of the year needs to be aware that the Location/Community Manager~~s~~ must have the instructor’s confirmation that graduating students have completed the final course. Time frames need to be adjusted accordingly.

**D. Grading and Honorarium/Stipend**

1. Complete and submit the student attendance/grade form provided by your location manager. Grading is "Complete/Incomplete". “Complete" signifies class attendance of at least 3 of the 5 classes, class participation, and submission of all required assignments. Incomplete students may be given a chance to make up missed assignments in a timely manner.

2. An instructor evaluation form may be distributed to students by the Location Manager. Student feedback will be provided to you after the completion of the class.

3. After all instructor documentation has been completed and submitted as required, the designated stipend is paid.

**Curriculum/Course Descriptions**

**Growing in Faith: The diakonia Program Course Guide**

**Foundation Year for both tracks – Six 5-week classes**

*This first year of study will provide a strong foundation which will be built upon in year 2 and subsequent study. Each synod should offer this foundation year of classes each year with in-person classes in order to establish the community that has been so important to this program. Zoom options should also be offered for those either not close enough, or with physical limitations, which prevent attending in person.*

**Christianity in a Lutheran Key** *(redesign of Lutherans in NA)*

Course Description

While all Christians share a common set of theological beliefs, Lutherans look at things through a filter of grace.   In this course we will discover more about our Lutheran roots.  Students will be presented with materials that will help them answer “I’m a Lutheran, so what?” We will also look forward to challenges that face us in the future.

Course Objectives

1. Review Reformation history, immigration to America, and the formation of the ELCA in order that students gain a better understanding of their denominational roots.

Review immigration from Europe and ELCA formation.  Include split from LCMS

1. Introduce ways to interpret scripture in a Lutheran key.

Review Lutheran interpretation of scripture (Reklau essay), sections from Erlander

1. Introduce how the ELCA handles social/ethical challenges of the day. (detailed in Ethics class)
2. Present challenges to the future state of Lutherans in America.

Using Fryer books, or similar, discuss challenges facing our churches today.

1. Make students aware of how ELCA is active in your community, and around the globe.

Discuss local and national resources of the ELCA, so students understand more about ministry

**Intro to Hebrew** *(First)* **Scriptures**

**Life Lessons from the Hebrew Scriptures: Blessed to Be a Blessing**

Course Description

The world of the Old (or First) Testament can seem very distant from ours. In fact, it is! In time, 2000-3000 years and, in distance, about 6000 miles lie between us. Barriers posed by different ethnicities, languages, cultures, geography, histories, politics, and even religious practices are daunting. The effort to bridge the divide can seem not worth the trouble. For too many, for too long, the New Covenant (Testament) in Jesus Christ has totally overshadowed the older witnesses to God's work in the world.

This course seeks to help group members recognize universal, enduring truths embedded in the particular lives of the people—our sisters and brothers in faith—who were the first to live as God's Chosen Ones. Strange though they may be to us, our aim is to enter with hearts and minds into their world so God's Spirit can reveal God at work in human life of all times and places, including our own.

Course Objectives

Growing in faith is the goal for all, so they may grasp more deeply and joyfully that they are “blessed to be a blessing.” In particular, each person will:

1. Become acquainted with the many challenges God's ancient people were required to face in the lands of the Fertile Crescent, where successive neighboring empires lurked and, more often, ruled them.
2. Gain an understanding and appreciation for what it meant to them to be God's *covenant* people, bound to the true God who bound God's self to them in grace and love, thereby *freeing* them at the most profound, truly countercultural level.
3. Contrast their understanding that they were called into relationship with God as a *people*, in community with all people *and* Creation, versus our culture's assumption that each relates to God as *persons,* seeing community identity as optional and self-aggrandizement as optimal.
4. Come to see how deeply intertwined worship and all of life were in that world, and consider how that might be a model for a believer's life today.
5. Through it all, bridge the gap, as much as that's possible, between that world and our own, coming to see, however imperfectly, a person-to-person relationship with Hebrews/Israelites who were just as much saints and sinners as we are ourselves, and to have our lives enriched in the encounter.

**Intro to New Testament**

Course Description:

The goals of this course are to understand the gospel message as revealed in the New Testament (NT), to explore the life and faith of the Christian church in the first century, to understand how the Bible came down to us in its present form, and to understand and use a variety of tools for interpreting the Bible. Throughout the course students will reflect on how the New Testament Gospel has shaped our Christian lives.

Course Objectives

1. Gain insight into the lives of those who first lived and loved the words of Jesus by viewing the NT as a collection of living witnesses that inform our faith and lives today.
2. Grasp the Jewish, Hellenistic, and Roman contexts within which the NT message and books

developed and were written and disseminated.

1. Understand the content and development of Christian faith and life in the first century church as reflected in the canonical books of the NT.
2. Gain insight into how text of the NT was transmitted, and the canon of the NT came to be.
3. Grasp, with enlightened minds of twenty-first century Christians, first century biblical

understanding and interpretation of the writings that came to be included in the NT.

1. Reflect on how the gospel, as presented in the NT, has shaped our Christian lives.
2. Bring to life the first century Biblical witness in such a way that it has an impact on the hearts

and actions of twenty-first century Christians.

1. More confidently prepare biblical devotions.

**Lutheran Creeds and Confessions**

Course Description

This course provides an analysis of the historical context and theological content of the Book of Concord (the Lutheran Confession), with an eye to establishing the importance of its witness for Christian mission and ministry.   To gain an understanding of the chief theological positions of the Book of Concord in their historical setting in order to apply them to the life of the Lutheran Christian today.

Course Objectives

1. Better understand the historical context that gave rise to the writings that were assembled

into the Book of Concord.

1. Be able to enumerate the writings that make up the Book of Concord.
2. Be familiar with the content and chief theological positions of the Book of Concord, especially

those contained in the Ecumenical Creeds, the Augsburg Confession, and the Smalcald

Articles.

1. Be able to apply these new insights to their current situation and setting, both personally and

in their local congregation.

**Living Every Day as a Christian** (Based on Daily Life of Christian & Biblical Images Classes)

Course Description

This course allows students to explore what it means to live as a Christian disciple.  Students will discuss and explore discipleship at home, in their Christian community and the community at large.  They will explore various spiritual practices that might be useful in daily living.

Class Objectives

1. Examine important images of the Christian community. Review concepts related to the bible and what it says about the call we all have.  Specific review of the following may be covered:

* To proclaim, preach, announce, (Kerygma)
* Fellowship in Christ (Koinonia)
* Personal rendering of service performed for another (Diakonia)
* Ecumenism, Body of Christ (Oikoumene)
* Church (Ecclesia)
* Teaching (Didache)

1. Explore various practices that will assist a person living their daily life in the church, at home and in the world. Explore implications for student’s baptismal vocation
   * Explore how faith intersects with home, work and church
   * Examine what it means to live into baptismal vocation
2. Examine spiritual practices for daily living

**Worship Matters**

Course Description

Why do we worship Sunday after Sunday? Is worship intended for an ‘in group’ to comfort and console? Is worship intended to equip for mission and service? Is worship for God or for us? As we explore these questions, we will discover tensions in worship: a God focus or a communal focus, a head focus or a heart focus, a structured worship or a free worship, a universal church focus or a focus on the local assembly and its needs.

How we worship as a community will be informed by our roots in the Western Church’s liturgical tradition as well as by social and cultural experiences in a particular time and place. Through our conversations we will challenge and equip one another for the ongoing renewal of the worship life of the church.

Course Objectives

1. To discover the origins of Christian Worship.
2. Have a deeper understanding and experience of the Central Liturgy of the Eucharist contrasting it with non-liturgical traditions.
3. Be equipped to use the various worship resources in the ELW (including how to use the ELW for one’s personal devotional life).
4. Recognize how the arts and architecture shape our worship.
5. Experience and champion ongoing worship renewal in the local congregation.

**Operations/Procedures/Resources/Forms**

**Procedure to open Growing in Faith/diakonia in a new area**

\* A sponsor/mentor from the national board or a designee diakonia graduate should assist in establishing the diakonia program in a new area.

\*A new area program should be approved by the national board/board president before opening/offering classes.

*What will be needed:*

* *Local person interested beginning the Growing in Faith/diakonia program in a new synod*
* *Synod approval and support*
* *Understanding of the GIF/diakonia program*
* *Agree to use GIF/diakonia program as approved by national board*
* *A diakonia grad willing to serve as location/community manager (if possible)*
* *An ordained person willing to serve as an executive director of a steering committee*
* *Instructors willing to teach courses*
* *An accessible physical location to hold classes OR a plan for teaching courses by ZOOM/remote learning*
* *Interested students (at least 4-8 to form a class)*
* *Means of publicizing the program locally*
* *Willingness to report regularly to the national board*

**Instructors**

Local Instructors are an integral part of the diakonia program. Resources to recruit instructors:

Synod office/bishop recommendation

Recommendations of Pastoral advisor/Executive Director

Recruit by listserve, other synod communications

Consider recruiting at nearby seminaries/colleges

Zoom /remote learning courses may recruit from existing instructor pools in other synods

Recruit at synod clergy events

**Forms**

For location managers: Program application, financial aid application, class schedule /instructor info, class student contact info, tuition payment record, student evaluation of course/instructor, (these will all be accessed online after revisions are made)

For instructors: attendance/grading record, student contact info (these will be accessed online after revisions are made)

*(All forms will be located on website-url should be given)*

*(application, financial and graduation records, etc)*

*ALL forms and letters should be evaluated/reviewed/revised and in digital rather than hard copy form (utilize word and excel documents, etc.)*

**Publicity**

*Ways to publicize the diakonia program in your area:*

*Page on your synod website*

*Information nights- in person or via internet*

*Display/kiosk at synod events*

*Distribute flyers to congregations*

*Temple talks by diakonia grads or pastors, synod staff*

*Direct invitation of prospective students (recommended by pastors, synod leaders, etc)*

*Digital announcements in congregational and synod communications*

*(find more info and samples at national website URL)*

GIF/Diakonia logo

*Icon

Description automatically generated with low confidence* A picture containing drawing

Description automatically generated

*The diakonia logo is found at http://www.diakoniausa.org/resources/branding/*

*Use the logo and color palate on all diakonia communications, printed and digital.*

Sample Bulletin Announcements

**Growing in Faith/the (synod name) diakonia program** students are committed to serve through the Church in a variety of ways: teaching, administration, liturgical leadership, action for social justice, evangelism, visitation of the sick, community organization, youth work, ministry among the elderly, and the like. In every way, they seek–and are helped by **GIF/diakonia**–to grow closer to the image and example of Christ the servant. For further information, please contact (Name Here) at (Phone number here) or go to ww.thediakoniaprogram.org

**Growing in Faith/the (synod name) diakonia program** is a faith formation program for laity. GIF/diakonia emphasizes the vocation of all Christians to serve as Christ has served us. Anyone interested in this opportunity to enhance their Christian education and equip them for ministry and service to the church is encouraged to contact (Name Here) at (Phone number here) or go to www.thediakoniaprogram.org

**Growing in Faith/the (synod name) diakonia program** is designed to prepare Christians to fulfill their baptismal calling as servants of Christ. This two-year series of 12 courses, taught by local pastors or experienced instructor/pastors online, offers solid theological instruction. For further information, please contact (Name Here) at (Phone number here) or go to ww.thediakoniaprogram.org

**Growing in Faith/The (synod name) diakonia program** is a two-year process of theological education and spiritual formation. It assists students not only with academic training, but with group interaction, spiritual retreats, and an opportunity to assess their God-given gifts and how best to apply them. For further information about this two-year theological program for lay persons, please contact (Name Here) at (Phone number here) or go to www.thediakoniaprogram.org

**Retreats**

Retreats are planned and presented by the area steering committee. This includes content and themes, speakers, costs, facilities and other details. If desired a subcommittee of the steering committee can be formed to work on retreat plans. Retreats may be held once a year and opened to area graduates, current students or potential students as the committee decides. It is not mandatory to hold a retreat or to require students to attend a retreat. A special focus, current societal event, specific content are all appropriate topics. Outlines of sample retreats and other info may be found at ++++++(in progress)

**Graduation/Completion**

*Graduation/Completion of the GIF/diakonia program is celebrated at the end of the program year when students have completed all requirements of both the Foundation and the Practical years of the program. The graduation/completion should take place within the format of a celebratory worship service and should include a celebration of the Eucharist and the Affirmation of Baptism. A diakonia cross and certificate of completion should be presented to each graduate during the service. The synod bishop should be asked to preach, but music, worship participants and other details can be decided upon by the graduates themselves with assistance from the steering committee.*

*The steering committee is ultimately responsible for the graduation/completion celebration.*

*\*Information about graduation procedures, forms, and certificates is currently being revised to reflect the updated program.*