



diakonia

"...equipping the saints for ministry;
building up the body of Christ"
(Ephesians 4:12)

Joel Rentz
Florida-Bahamas diakonia Steering Committee
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Dear Friend through Christ:

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this and consider the benefits of diakonia. diakonia is a program of lay formation which empowers the laity of our church to live out their baptismal calling more effectively. The program began in the ELCA in 1977 in Queens, New York. Since then, it has grown to involve eight synods of our church including our own Florida-Bahamas Synod. Your Synod is currently in its eighth year of the program and has over 100 graduates to date. diakonia in Florida currently has six sites; Jacksonville, Palm Beach Gardens, Miami, Winter Park, Seminole, and Cape Coral. However, new sites can be established if none of these is close enough for your location. There are four things required for opening a new diakonia site: a facility for classes to meet, a Pastoral Advisor, a Site Manager, and at least eight students. The Site Manager must be someone who is productive, organized, and committed as they do all of the record-keeping and recruiting of instructors for the program. The members of our Steering Committee and I will work with the Site Manager and the Pastoral Advisor to show them how they can effectively function in these positions.

The diakonia student commits to a two-year course of study with classes that meet for one three hour session per week with the exception of the summer months and holidays. Within the twelve courses of the diakonia program, the student will become more intimate with scripture, the faith and history of the church, and better equipped to live out their baptismal ministry in the world in which we live. The diakonia graduate uses this faith formation to become a more effective lay leader within their congregation and conference through identification and empowerment in the ministries which they feel called. Although, with their Pastor's agreement, some of our graduates have used the program as a stepping stone to become consecrated as Synodical Deacons (since the Deaconate accepts diakonia for the academic portion of their requirements), diakonia is not affiliated with the Synodical Deacon program.

Again, all of us involved in diakonia would like to thank you for reading this letter and considering what diakonia can do for you. We look forward to discussing the program in more detail with you. Please don't hesitate to email me at joelrentz@aol.com.

May the Peace of the Lord be with you,

diakonia
Joel Rentz, Chair
Florida-Bahamas diakonia Steering Committee