



CONCORDIA  
DEACONESS  
CONFERENCE

# BLUES News

## BLUES NEWS

An official publication of Concordia Deaconess Conference (CDC). Distributed six times a year, it serves our members by circulating professional submissions, devotional thoughts and articles, and member announcements.

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## OUR CONFERENCE

Concordia Deaconess Conference is a free association of certified and LCMS rostered deaconesses, who subscribe to and live by the confessional position of the LCMS.

As a Recognized Service Organization of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, CDC works to provide opportunities for spiritual, personal, and professional growth and fellowship for deaconesses and support for diaconal service in Christ.

Donations for the work of the conference, a 501(c)(3) organization, may be mailed to

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## SENSITIVITY TO THOSE ABUSED

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### SENSITIVITY BY MARY J. MOERBE

Sensitivity has become a complex word, heavily dependent on context. For example, “sensitive” can be an insult, a compliment, or an indicator of pain, pleasure, or temperament. And to take that complication even further, everyone is sensitive to varying degrees, in nearly every sense of the word.

It is not particularly a Biblical word. There is no eleventh commandment: “Be Sensitive.” Yet, as we serve our neighbor, it benefits us all to consider how our words and actions may be understood. Sensitivity is one way we recognize needs so that we can love and serve our neighbor.

We all experience the fallenness of this world, though that often takes different forms in each person’s life. This leads to common metaphors at times ringing hollow or even hypocritical, largely because quiet assumptions are not being met.

To an abused child otherwise common instructions to not cry or tattle can be misunderstood to mean hide your pain and protect those who harm you. Quiet presumptions of a healthy life then cut papercuts or slices through proverbial skin, whether thick or thin.

It is impossible to guess what a person has experienced. Domestic strife is often hidden precisely because it happens primarily at home. Then, by the time a child is school-age, harrassment is nearly expected. A child can be grabbed, beaten, taunted, mocked by anyone coming into passing contact with him.

There are varying degrees of abuse, of course, and each person responds with his own timetable of grief, anger, and healing. A need for attention—positive or negative—may affect your interactions. There may be emotional barriers—even a protectiveness of their abuse.

One thing that we can do is listen for when common phrases or analogies cause unexpected reactions. These reactions are

telling. While we may never know details, it can be a turning point. In conversations, consider gut-reactions against obedience, submission, or body-related terms. Are the responses abstract or very literal, focused on ideas or fears?

Once authority or headship have been used to harm, there can be lasting scars affecting all sorts of things. Not only children are affected. The patterns and survival skills learned by those who have suffered can be passed down as others in their lives learn word connotations and responses from those affected by abuse and pain.

And, of course, anyone can be a victim of crime. Anyone can suddenly have a normal relationship blur past appropriate lines and go very, horribly wrong.

Each is a unique neighbor, connected to us in various ways. And in a sense that is liberating. Although it is impossible to be sensitive to a conglomeration of every survivor, it is possible to listen and look at the neighbor before you.

Sensitivity does not consist in mind-reading or controlling outcomes. When a conversation suddenly derails, we can ask what happened, repent, and use other words as necessary. We will not always understand each other, but we can still pursue careful, quality service as we love one another.

Mary J. Moerbe

**BEAR ME UP**

By Mary J. Moerbe

In Luke 5:17ff, several men were bringing a paralyzed man on a bed, seeking to bring him in and lay him before Jesus.

Many of us can consider who would bear us up if we were to fall onto hard times. Who could we call in the middle of the night? Who would visit us in the hospital? Who would tend our loved ones if we couldn't?

Sometimes we don't have that bed to lie on with those arms supporting us. As hard as it is, sometimes we must simply face this vale of tears.

As deaconesses, we meet hurt and broken people. Sometimes they have no one left. Some have been betrayed, hurt by those who should have lifted them up, protected, and provided for them.

There is an expression, "you've made your bed—you'll have to lie in it." It often refers to living with the consequences of your own actions, but, like Luke 5 demonstrates, not all beds are self-made. As we bear each other's burdens, we can recognize there are all sorts of beds to lie upon: circumstances that affect what care is needed.

Thanks be to God that we can seek to bring people into the Church—to additional help—and the most precious of all gifts, Jesus! For He alone can bear us up. He alone gives hope to the hopeless and help to the helpless.

Thank you, Lord, for those who bear us up: friends and pastors, family and professionals. May those in need be borne to the font and the table, to Jesus still active in this world with His merciful grace and life-giving gifts.

Mary J. Moerbe



**THE PAIN OF ABUSE**

Sarah Eiden

Forty-some years after her abuse, she finally dealt with it. One day, it all just exploded. There was a "trigger" experience and all the pieces began to fit together. She had memories of this abuse, but they were tucked away, minimized and never dealt with.

Throughout her life she struggled with low self-esteem, low confidence, and a tendency to turn inward. She had always felt "different," but wasn't sure why. She had difficulty connecting socially. These behaviors protected her as she "hid" from the pain and memories. She wondered how such an otherwise accomplished woman could remain so frozen.

The day she put the pieces of her abuse together she writes:

I screamed today. It came from deep inside, over and over. It's been years since I've cried as such. The wrong done to me . . . I wanted out of me. I felt as if I had been touched by evil. I hated what this did to me and how I have felt and thought about myself for so long. The screams echoed "NO." They voiced, "Help me" and "Save me." The screams said, "Get away," "Leave me." I was ready to be rid of this burden. I felt shattered in pieces. I felt broken and fragile. Like Tamar (2 Samuel 13), I felt desolate.

God heard her voice, but He also knew of this pain before she even acknowledged it. He hears the voice of the abused. He hears their cries. He hears their pleas for help, their pain. Over and over in the Psalms we read of people crying out to the Lord.

For those who have experienced childhood abuse, your experience of sorrow and pain have been yours alone, yet you are not alone in what is breaking you up inside. God hears your cry. Jesus knows your pain. This woman who voiced her screams confided, "I've grown attached to Galatians 2:20."

**"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me"** (Gal 2:20).

This passage speaks so well of the reality of who we are as Christian women. He lives through us in our vocations as we love and serve our neighbor. Galatians 3:27 tells us, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." We are in Christ, united with him.

This woman shares:

One night early on in my sorrow over the abuse, Galatians 2:20 came to mind.

I was lying on the bed and the verse started in my mind: "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live..." For a time, the verse ended there. There was no hope, no resurrection—only crucifixion. There was nothing I could do. I stretched my arms across the bed and just let it be. I thought, "Jesus, you are with and in me. I'm bearing this cross. Let me bear it. Give me a glimpse of your pain that I may know you better." She could not fight and the waves of sorrow passed over her.

This was for a time. She did not remain forever without hope. God's Word tells us that Jesus redeems body and soul. We place our hope in Him, that if not this day it will be in the last day that Jesus will complete our healing. Healing from abuse or assault will come in God's perfect timing and in His ways.

Be assured: "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure" (1 John 3:2-3).

In Christ, you are pure—you are well. Still, you are not yet what you will be. Rejoice in what is

now yours in Christ and hope in what is yet to come.

We are forgiven and healed; yet we still sin. Jesus takes all our brokenness and makes it right. He takes all our sorrows, all our sin.

A turning point in this woman's healing came one early morning:

I gathered my lifetime of sorrow and impurity and have given them to Jesus. He reached out his blood stained and scarred hands and took them. It is there that these hurts and sins remain - nailed to the cross. These sins and sorrows are no longer mine. Jesus has taken them. In return, He has given me his holiness and his righteousness. God's mercy and love given to me is masterful.

*Deaconess Sarah Eiden is an advocate for women hurt by sexual abuse . She authors the website [www.healingtamar.com](http://www.healingtamar.com), based on the story of the assault of King David's daughter, Tamar, and welcomes emails addressed to [healingtamar@gmail.com](mailto:healingtamar@gmail.com).*

**TOPICAL NEWS OF SYNODICAL EFFORTS**

Recently, a task force on Domestic Violence and Child Abuse was re-convened to carry out the work assigned by Synod in Convention in both 2007 and 2010 to "provide materials and trained individuals to assist districts, congregations, and schools in addressing abuse and ministering to the spiritual needs of those struggling with the effects of abuse" (6-06).

This task force is in the process of reviewing existing materials and developing new ones to address this issue with the hopes of having a comprehensive set of materials available by **December of this year**.

These materials will include a web site with free, downloadable resources, written materials as well as a training program for church workers and concerned laity.

Both Deaconess Kristin Wassilak and Deaconess Kim Schave have been appointed to this task force. If you are interested in organizing a training event for your congregation, organization, or district, please contact Kim at [kim.schave@lcms.org](mailto:kim.schave@lcms.org).

Kim Schave



**CALENDAR**

**April 24-26: Executive Committee Meeting**

**June 15: Deadline for our next issue.**

**June 23-25: Conference at the San Pedro Center in Winter Park, Florida**



Pictures from the installation and commissioning of Elizabeth Ahlman at St. Trinitatisgemeinde, Leipzig, Germany, Dec. 8, 2013. Left: Deaconess Elizabeth with Rev. Dr. Brent Smith, former Regional Director for Eurasia, who pinned her, and Rev. Markus Fischer. Right: Rev. Dr. Christopher S. Ahlman is holding Matthias, and Thomas is in front.

**MAMA'S LITTLE SHADOW**

Erna Baehr Schmid has accomplished a big project: a beautiful book honoring her mother, Adelgunde Dering Baehr, born in the German colonies under the Russian Empire and deaconess in Germany and briefly Poland. Titled *Mama's Little Shadow*, copies are available from Erna upon request with a donation to defray costs.

**BEREAVED MOTHER'S DAY**

By Mary J. Moerbe

Anna Jarvis officially founded Mother's Day to honor her mother, Ann, who experienced the death of 7 of her children. Sadly, Mother's Day is often the most painful day of the year to those who have lost children.

Those who suffer miscarriage or stillbirth may wonder if they were ever mothers at all. They often suffer with silent grief and uncertainties.

This year, there is a movement to use **May 4th** as a day to remember those too often overlooked: bereaved mothers of every kind. The website proposing involvement is <http://carlymarieprojectheal.com/>.

It is not a Christian website, but is written by an Australian artist, who is trying to help grieving parents and memorialize those whom they have lost. She also offers cards for social media that we may share them with those who may need a little extra encouragement as Mother's Day draws near.

Whether or not any of us set aside May 4th, it is encouraging that society is becoming more open about grief. Some who have been silent for a full generation or two are now able to grieve openly for the children they have lost.

Mary J. Moerbe

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## QUICK CONTACT INFORMATION

**Spiritual Counselor:**  
Reverend Kevin Loughran  
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**Prayer requests** can be emailed to the prayer coordinator at [cdcprayers@comcast.net](mailto:cdcprayers@comcast.net).

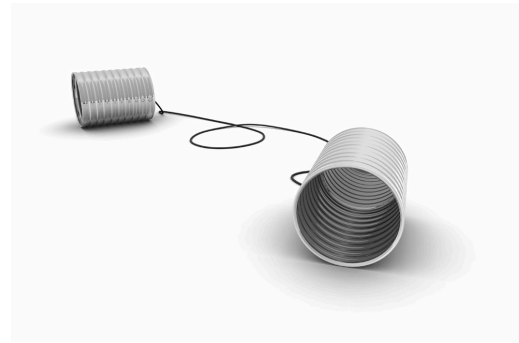
**Digital pictures** can go to [photos.cdc@gmail.com](mailto:photos.cdc@gmail.com) for publication or other conference uses.

**Newsletter submissions** and suggestions can be sent to [editor.bluesnews@concordiadeaconesslcms.org](mailto:editor.bluesnews@concordiadeaconesslcms.org).

Members may purchase extra cross pins (\$10) or insignias (\$7) from Heidi Bishop at 101 N. Spring St, Elgin, IL 60120.

## STANDING BEFORE GOD

Mary J. Moerbe



I recognize that Facebook is not a reliable source, but I saw a quotation attributed to Martin Luther that I thought was worth considering.

When you are challenged or asked about your faith, you shouldn't respond arrogantly. You shouldn't be defiant or forceful, as if you were tearing trees out of the ground. Rather, you should respond with fear and humility, as if you were standing before God and answering Him.

There are so many things that challenge us, even in simple conversations. When we try to comfort someone who hesitates about the things most comforting to us, it is easy to become frustrated and impatient.

Forgiveness can be a command rather than release, and even a man welcoming little children can draw upon fear for those who have

been preyed upon. Fathers are not always comforting figures. A shepherd who leaves 99 sheep in search of one can come across as impulsive and neglectful! Yet, there is still good news in the Gospel!

There is still a wealth of Scripture to supplement our more practiced soundbites of Scripture. There are plenty of ways to practice sharing the Gospel using other words, as we comfort ourselves, write newsletter articles and devotions, and simply read the Bible text before us.

I have been working on making myself a business card. I have looked at free images to make it a little eye-catching. I have selected colors, fonts, and spacing. But as much as I try to balance professionalism with personal marketing, each choice boils down to how I interact with my neighbor.

There may be different ways to package things, but there is one me, and one Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. There is one Gospel for the forgiveness of sins—our own and those who sin against us. There is one Baptism and one Bread of Life.

There is no reason to be arrogant, defiant or forceful. As deaconesses, we are not tearing trees out of the ground. We are tending the seed of God's Word and strengthen grafts into Christ as the Lord lets us.

With fear and humility, we select words and pray God may use them. We do our best. We remain in Word and Sacraments. We rest in the Lord, for truly only He grants growth and life. Only He convinces of truth.

Thanks be to God, He also provides rest!

Mary J. Moerbe