

*"No Barrier can divide where life unites: one faith, one fount, one spirt, makes one people."*  
St. John Lateran Basilica 5th century

### October 2018 Prayer Letter

I have spent a large amount of time and energy these past few months reflecting on why membership in DIAKONIA World Federation (DWF) is so important to me. As my newly formed roster of Deacons in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, moves towards applying for membership in DWF, I have been re-reading some of my reflections from the last 9 years.

I first learned about DIAKONIA World Federation in 2009, when I heard that they were holding their World Assembly in Atlanta, Georgia. I remember thinking "I HAVE to attend this gathering, who knows when I might be able to attend another one." Then the Diaconal Ministry Community of the ELCA asked me to serve as their representative to DOTAC, and my relationship with this worldwide community of diaconal people began.

On July 21, 2009, while in Atlanta at the Assembly, I wrote this in my journal:

"Perhaps the supreme moment from this morning was when I stood in line and remembered the names of the two women in front of me: Linely and Alice from Malawi! I had participated in a short conversation with them the previous evening when we first met. We ate lunch together. And at one time, during a lull in the conversation, we just sat together in silence, listening to the conversations occurring all around us. I remarked: "This is what it truly means to sit in the presence of God. This is what the Kingdom of heaven will be like, truly a foretaste of the feast divine!" The tears remain close to the back of my eyes, I am overwhelmed by the relationship that we have with one another all around the world. Alice shared that her last name Kamkwamba means "remnant" and I reflected on my experience with remnants in the theater, and how a cherished small scrap of fabric can be the piece that completes a costume, turning it into the equipment that an actor needs to interpret the role they are portraying. Alice has been added to my costume, she is bringing me closer to being the person God has already created me to be, a person in relationship with the world, and with my sisters and brothers in Diakonia around the world. My cup overflows. "

Nine years later, so many people have been added to my costume, have impacted me in ways I cannot even express aloud. Yesterday was my birthday and I heard greetings from all around the world, picturing each person and giving thanks for their presence in my life. I have seen the pictures from Rwanda, and the results of the flooding, from Indonesia and the horrors delivered by the earthquake and Tsunami, from the Philippines, hit by another large Typhoon. I think about the retired United Methodist Deaconesses who live in North Carolina, and wonder how they are doing in the flooding after Hurricane Florence, and our sisters in the Caribbean, some still trying to recover from Hurricane Maria last year. In response, I lift up my sisters and brothers, the friends I have met who are living in these places, working to bring hope to a seemingly hopeless world

In the midst of this devastation, I praise God for the sisters and brothers called to serve in this world in Christ's name, to be diaconal people. I give thanks for each and every one of you, and the work you do as you serve God's people. Finally, I lift you in prayer daily.

This month, let us together give thanks for the work of our diaconal family in DIAKONIA and rejoice in the gifts they bring to a hurting world.

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