



In my denomination, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, on October 4, we commemorate two Renewers of the Church and Society, St. Francis of Assisi and Theodor Fliedner. I was privileged to be asked to preach on that day this year, which fell on a Sunday. I began my sermon with these words:

“Today is the commemoration of two wonderful saints of the church and society, one well known, and one who is not, but who is personally important to me. Francis of Assisi, who died in 1226, was born into the family of a wealthy merchant, and gave up his inheritance to serve poor people. He formed the Order of Friars Minor (called Franciscans), who took on poverty and the task of preaching "using words if necessary." Francis had a spirit of gratitude for all of God's creation. Many congregations around Seattle will honor Francis this weekend with liturgies blessing animals. These get great press and provide many wonderful photo opportunities. They also serve the purpose of reminding people that we are called to be in relationship with all of creation, including the non-human portions.

The second person, Theodor Fliedner, helped to bring about a revival of the ministry of deaconesses among Lutherans. The motherhouse he founded in Kaiserswerth, Germany, inspired many around the world to take up this ministry. I will venture to say that few if any churches will honor him today. He is not well known, photo ops do not abound. However, as a Diaconal Minister in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, I am part of a movement in direct descent from his renewal movement.”

What a joy it was to be able to share the incredible story of Pastor Fliedner and the legacy that has been shaped from his work over the past 179 years with my home congregation. They do not understand what a Diaconal Minister is...but *we do*. Since last Sunday I have been blessed with memories of the times I have spent with many of you at World Gatherings in Atlanta and Berlin, at Motherhouses in Bielefeld, Wittenberg & Kaiserswerth, after the Gathering in 2013, and at DOTAC Gatherings, DOTAC Central Committee Meetings, and the gatherings of individual communities within DOTAC.

What a gift these relationships have been to me, and what joy I have felt as I have spent time remembering and praying for all of you.

This month, on the 26th of October, we all join together once again to lift one another in prayer and to rejoice in this great gift of DIAKONIA in our lives. With this action we are truly “re-membering” the One Body of Christ in the World, for the Sake of the World.

So, this month, let us pray for:

- ❖ The members of DOTAC who will be travelling home from Porto Alegre Brazil on October 26th, following our 13th Conference, which begins October 21.
- ❖ Our members in countries suffering from natural disasters
- ❖ The members of the DIAKONIA World Executive who are preparing for a meeting in Chicago in November
- ❖ The members of the Planning Committee already at work preparing for the World Gathering in Chicago in 2017
- ❖ The communities in which we live out our diaconal calls
- ❖ Above all, let us give thanks for the ministry and mission of Francis and Theodor, who called the people of the church to live out their lives in service to our God

Amen and Amen.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jan Cherry". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Diaconal Minister Jan Cherry,

Diaconal Ministry Community of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
DOTAC Treasurer