



DOTAC Report to DUCC National Gathering 2024

Assembly



2023 DOTAC Assembly

Minneapolis, MN | August 14-18, 2023

Assembly

DOTAC planned and led a 5 day Assembly in Minneapolis in August of 2023. The theme “Gather at the River – Connect – Heal – Engage” and the location enabled us to gather on Dakota land, near Bdote – the sacred place where two rivers meet, to connect as ecumenical and international diaconal community, in lament of a world of racism and ecological gloom, poverty and pandemic, war and uprooted people, to claim healing for ourselves, the planet, and its people, and move toward holy joy in our work for justice.

Some thirty DUCCs participated.



The speakers theologian and poet Joe Davis, and artist and curator Angela Two Stars, offered time to mourn and time to create leading to inspirational hope. The Bible Study planning team included DUCC [Kathy Toivanen](#), focusing on Psalm 46, and offered intellectual stimulation and participatory process. The Worship Team included DUCCs [Bri-Anne Swan](#) and [Marlene Britton](#) and was filled with water imagery and scripture references that were engaging and meaningful. Preachers included Dr. Kelly Sherman-Conroy and Deacon David Rojas Martínez. Gathering Music was led by a variety of musicians including DUCC [Charmain Bailey](#). We were able to get the day off to a prayerful start with early morning spiritual practice sessions. Workshops covered a number of topics including one co-lead by DUCC [Eric Tusz-King](#). On Wednesday morning a number of site visit options included inner city ministries, Indigenous Sacred Sites, and the George Floyd Memorial. At Business Sessions, we heard from the

President and Secretary of DIAKONIA World Federation (DWF), and the Regional President of DIAKONIA Region Africa Europe (DRAE). The fun cultural night focused on Minnesota trivia and karaoke.



Board

The DOTAC Board meets about 4-5 times a year via Zoom and once a year in person for a longer period.



Many changes are anticipated for the membership of the Board. My term as DOTAC President ends July 11, 2025. My term as DUC representative to DOTAC ends at the same time. So **at this National Gathering we will need to have an election of the new DUC representative to DOTAC.** (see Appendix 1 for a draft job description.) It is hoped that the successful candidate would be able, and willing, to come to the DOTAC in-person meeting, November 3-9 in Houston, Texas. DUC has established a tradition of paying for the new representative to attend meeting before their term formally begins, to aid in orientation, at the rise of the DIAKONIA World Federation Assembly, in Tanzania. Also, DOTAC's Treasurer and Acting Vice President, Deaconess Lisa Polito, and Secretary, Sister Noreen Stevens will also be leaving the Board at the end of December, 2024. We will be holding elections for these officer positions at our meeting in November.

We have been thinking about all this transition and we wanted to be intentional about the planning of the future for the region. Some elements that we are considering include:

- Conducting a skills inventory of the Board
- Inviting the Past President to stay on the Board on an annual basis
- Asking communities/associations if terms for the Board members might reflect some consistent pattern
- Actively pursuing new member communities/associations
- Fleshing out the job descriptions of the Officers
- Developing an orientation package for new Board members
- Setting up a repository for documentation
- Using Email assigned to the Officers of the Board rather than personal email
- Having a formal moment to include 'goodbyes' in the assemblies, as well as at Board meetings

Spirituality

Since June 2020, DOTAC has been organizing a Monthly Prayer group via Zoom. We meet at noon Central time on the first of each month. This holy sacred time offers time for group worship but also a meaningful sense of diaconal community connection. To join the group send an email to teddodd@live.com and you will be sent the link and the litany created for that month. Thanks to [Karen Tjaden](#) and [Ian McLean](#), DUCCs who have stepped up to lead sessions.



Social Justice Committee



- The DOTAC Social Justice Committee has organized two “Theology of Reconciliation” events for 2024 (see Appendix 2)
 - September 16 - Bible Study
 - October 21 – Panel of diaconal folks doing reconciliation work of various forms
- The quadrennial DOVE (Diakonia Overcoming Violence Exchange) will, this year, explore issues related to immigration. Five Americans, 3 Brazilians, 3 Canadians (all DUCCs [Vicki McPhee](#), [Hyerim Park](#) and [Lynda Dickson](#)) and 3 folks from the Caribbean will comprise the delegation, from October 14-19 at the Texas-Mexico border.
- The DWF Justice Committee sponsored three Zoom events on *Diakonia and Climate Change*, co-lead by DUCC [Eric Tusz-King](#). The DOTAC Social Justice Committee did its best to promote and support these seminars in April, May, and July, 2024. Conversation indicates that the group would like to continue with some form of education and action.

- For the fourth year, the DOTAC Social Justice Committee will be leading programming related to *16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence*. From November 24 (International Day to Eliminate Violence against Women) to December 10 (International Human Rights Day), participants can follow a calendar of related activities, attend Zoom study sessions, and daily pray the intercessions written by DOTAC folks and posted on our Facebook page. Thank you to DUCC **Marlene Britton** who has served on the planning team since the beginning.
- Thanks to the thoughtful DOTAC Social Justice committee.

Education Committee

- Mondays in May, DOTAC's Seminar Series on Diakonia, for the fourth year, proved to be a great success. This year presenters, representing the Lutherans in Brazil, the Anglicans in Canada, the Methodists in the Caribbean, and the United Methodists in the US, shared about their diaconal communities/associations. This gave the small groups plenty of material to compare and contrast with their own communities/associations.



In 2023, a diverse group of scholars and writers, offered presentations that were challenging and thoughtful. The experiences were great for enhancing the study of diakonia but also led to community building, intellectual stimulation, and deepened diaconal awareness and identity.



- Next steps for continuing the conversation re: Diaconal Formation programs and resources, begun at the DOTAC 2023 Assembly and continued in January 2024, will be discussed at the DOTAC Education Committee meeting in August.
- Please take a chance to sample the videos that this committee assembled and are posted on our website. We asked each of our 12 communities/associations to profile one of their members asking how they got into the diaconate, what biblical reference guides their ministry, and a theological image that shapes their vocation. DUCC is represented by **Marlene Britton**. <https://dotac.diakonia-world.org/member-communities/diakonia-of-the-united-church-of-canada/>
- Thanks to this Committee. DUCC **Marcie Gibson** is one of the active members.

Communications Committee

- Our Website is a work in progress and keeping it current and advertising events is an on-going task. We do have profiles of the board, descriptions of each community/association and their diaconal formation programs, the videos mentioned above, and videos of Mondays in May and some of our Anti-Racism programming.

- Our presence on Facebook continues apace. As a Communication Committee, we try to post on a regular basis and keep the page fresh. We also share our posts with 13-14 other diaconal Facebook groups.
- Having a presence on other social media venues is part of our planning for the future.
- Thanks for the energy that this Committee, which includes DUCC **Kathy Toivanen**, extends to this work.

2027 DOTAC Assembly

Our 2027 DOTAC Assembly is in the early stages of planning. It will be in the Caribbean July 19-23, 2027.

Presidential Travels

As President of DOTAC, when invited, I have the honour and privilege of traveling to the meetings of the 12 DOTAC diaconal associations/communities.

Since our last DUCC National Gathering, I have been to:

- Brazil for the Deacons and Deaconesses of the Igreja Evangélica de Confissão Luterana no Brasil.
- Sorrento, B.C. for the joint meeting of the Lutheran and Anglican Deacons in Canada
- Michigan and Indiana for two Lutheran Deaconess Conferences
- Texas and Minnesota for two Annual Meetings of the Deaconess Community of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- Ontario for the Presbyterian Church in Canada – Order of Diaconal Ministries
- Texas to meet with United Methodist Deaconesses and Home Missioners

Plus Zooming with the Wesley Diaconal Community of the Methodist Church of the Caribbean and the Americas.



DIAKONIA World Federation

I have been serving on the Executive Committee (EC) of the DIAKONIA World Federation (DWF) since 2017. Traditionally, the EC of the DWF met once a year in person. Since COVID the pattern has changed

so that we now meet once a month via Zoom. The President attempts to keep the meetings to an hour and a half because those in Australia have risen at 5:30 am on a Wednesday, and the Europeans and Africans are struggling to stay awake late night Tuesday.



The Assembly of DIAKONIA World Federation (DWF) will be held in Moshi, Tanzania from July 7 to 12, 2025. The conference will take place at the Lutheran Uhuru Hotel. The theme of the Assembly will be *Dancing the Faith–Drumming up Hope*, and will be examined during worship, bible study, and speakers' presentations.

DWF's member organisation Ushirika wa Neema and the Evangelical Church in Tanzania, Northern Diocese will be the hosts of the Assembly together with the Executive Committee of DWF. Monday July 7 is the arrival day and the program will start at 6 pm. The event will close in the evening of Friday July 11 with Saturday, July 12 as departure day.

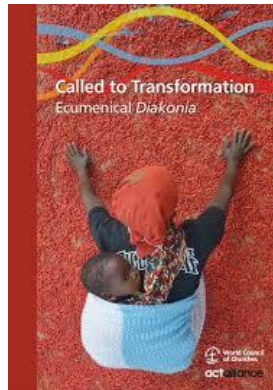
The main venue for the Assembly will be at Uhuru Lutheran hotel. Accommodation will be at the hotel and other hotels close by. Both single and double rooms will be available. Breakfast will be at the hotel where you are sleeping. The rest of the meals will be at Uhuru hotel.

Early bird registration is September 1 – December 31, 2024. After that prices will increase. The very last date to register is February 28, 2025.

The Assembly of Members (AoM) will meet twice through the Assembly and the agenda will include election of a new President, endorsing the new Executive Committee, affirming the Constitution and the Bylaws, financial statements, reports and other items. The voting in the Assembly of Members is done by delegates given the authority to vote from their organisation. The DWF Constitution states in that each member organisation can send one delegate for every 250 registered members, up to a maximum of five. So DUCC is entitled to have two voting delegates. **We need to name our delegates** either at the National Gathering or empower the Coordinating Committee to make that decision.

World Council of Churches Ecumenical Diakonia Reference Group

All being well I will be leaving a bit early from my community's Biennial National Gathering to fly from Calgary to Armenia. I have been appointed to World Council of Churches (WCC) Ecumenical Diakonia Reference Group (EDRG).



This group was created by the WCC assembly in 2022 and constituted in 2023. We have had one Zoom meeting, and this will be our first in-person gathering. The number one purpose of the EDRG is

- To make evident and promote the centrality of Diakonia (complementing Martyria and Koinonia) in our Christian faith, to help make the Good News of Christ a reality for all.

This group emerged out of the recommendations of the joint WCC and Act Alliance report *Called to Transform: Ecumenical Diakonia*. The wide-ranging scope of the work will involve developing an action plan that embraces research, capacity building, curriculum development. Cooperation with various WCC bodies working on the concept of “Eco-Diakonia” is also an expectation.

The EDRG is a large group with 8 people from Europe, 7 from Africa, 6 from Asia, 3 from North America and one each from the Caribbean, Latin America, the Middle East, and the Pacific. And of course, they represent a diverse set of denominations and church bodies. It promises to be a stretching commitment. Definitions of *diakonia* vary. In WCC it is largely defined as a form of Christian social practice and justice-making, without much reference to those of us in the diaconate. So it will be a personal goal to wave the diaconate flag to remind them of our presence and role in this important work.

Diaconal Studies Publication

While not a DOTAC project watch for this new publication:

Diaconal Studies: Lived Theology for the Church in North America is under contract with Regnum Books International. Editors are Darryl Stephens and Craig Nesson. Publication is expected in late 2024.

Contributors include many who made presentations at the last four years of DOTAC’s Seminar Series on Diakonia “Mondays in May:

- Margaret Ann Crain
- Norma Dollaga
- Mary Elizabeth Moore
- Man-Hei Yip
- Dionata Rodrigues de Oliveira
- Darryl Stephens
- Benjamin Hartley

<https://darrylwstephens.com/diaconal-studies/diaconal-studies-the-book/>

As well, many good friends of DOTAC have contributed: Sandy Boyce, Craig Nesson, Norma Cook Everist, Johannes Eurich. As well, I was asked to write one of the forewords.

Respectfully submitted, Ted Dodd, DOTAC President

Appendix 1

Draft Job Description – DOTAC Board Members – Representatives of Communities/Associations

ARTICLE III BOARD OF DIRECTORS

3.1 General Powers The business and affairs of DIAKONIA of the Americas and the Caribbean (DOTAC) shall be managed by its Board of Directors, which shall exercise in the name of and on behalf of the Corporation all of the rights and privileges legally exercisable by the Corporation as a corporate entity, except as otherwise may be provided by law, the Charter of the Corporation and these Bylaws.

Without limiting the foregoing, the Board of Directors shall have the power to solicit, receive and accept property, whether real, personal or mixed, by gift or bequest from any person or entity; to hold and administer such property in accordance with the terms set forth in the Charter and these Bylaws; and to distribute such property in furtherance of the purposes of the Corporation as stated in its Charter and these Bylaws.

The Board of Directors shall:

- 3.1.1 Communicate with DIAKONIA World Federation (DIAKONIA).
- 3.1.2 Inform representatives from member organizations of information from DIAKONIA.
- 3.1.3 Plan for periodic DOTAC Conferences.
- 3.1.4 Report to the Conference.
- 3.1.5 Seek new DOTAC members from among those organizations meeting membership qualifications.
- 3.1.6 Establish connections with other groups and organizations with similar commitments and concerns.
- 3.1.7 Promote diaconal ministry in organizations.
- 3.1.8 Respond to concerns regarding justice in relation to diaconal ministry.
- 3.1.9 Respond to concerns raised by member groups.

3.2 Board of Directors Membership. The Board of Directors of DIAKONIA of the Americas and the Caribbean shall consist of:

- 3.2.1 *Representatives.* A representative from each member diaconal association, sisterhood, or order, serves on the Board of Directors.
 - 3.2.1.1 The representative is appointed by the member organization.
 - 3.2.1.2 The member organization determines the representative's term on the Board.

Bylaws: DIAKONIA of the Americas and the Caribbean

Terms of Reference

Role:

Community/Association Representative on the DOTAC Board of Directors of Diakonia of the Americas and Caribbean (DOTAC). DOTAC is one of three member regions of the Diakonia World Federation.

Mandate/Purpose:

To represent the cares and concerns of the Representative's Community's/Association's to DOTAC and to represent the cares and concerns of DOTAC to the Representative's Community/Association; to inform the Representative's Community's/Association's about the activities, decisions, and directions of DOTAC and vice versa; and to facilitate deeper engagement of the Representative's Community's/Association's colleagues in looking beyond their own context, culturally, denominationally, and theologically. Also, since the DOTAC Board is a working board, the Community/Association Representatives is also expected to undertake some specific task(s) to assist with DOTAC's work.

Appointment Process

1. As per the DOTAC By-laws: each Community/Association Representative is appointed by the member Community/Association. Terms of service are determined by the member Community/Association. However, the DOTAC Board benefits from, and encourages, longer terms which engender continuity and a sense of collective history.
2. Communities/Associations are encouraged to circulate this job description and other information of orientation to DOTAC and the Community's/Association Representative position, prior to appointment, election, or selection of the Community/Association Representative.
3. Communities/Associations are encouraged to take care to select a representative and alternate who:
 - i. Reflects the Communities/Associations vision of diaconal ministry.
 - ii. Is an experienced, active, and involved member of the Community/Association with a good grasp of the identity, activities and vision of Community/Association.
 - iii. Has a grasp of the Community's/Association's denomination's diversity, witness, theology, practice, and understanding of the diaconate.
 - iv. Has an interest in and/or previous experience working ecumenically and/or in a cross-cultural context.
 - v. Is willing to consider taking on leadership roles within DOTAC.

Tasks and Expectations

1. Participate in orientation processes from DOTAC and from the Representative's Community/Association.
2. Attend annual in-person DOTAC Board meetings, (usually about five days in length in November).^{1 2}
3. Attend Zoom DOTAC Board meetings, (usually about four or five two-hour meetings in a year, usually on Wednesdays at noon Central Time).
4. Liaise with the Representative's Community's/Association's alternate representative to DOTAC. Keep the alternate informed of DOTAC matters.³

¹ These meetings are often held in North America, as travel is cheaper for the majority of the members of the Board. However, meetings can be held in the (Global) South which means a longer travel journey for those from the North.

² The in-person meeting on the year of a Conference/Assembly is held on the days before and after the Conference/Assembly wherever it is located.

³ DOTAC needs people who are committed to attending annual Board meetings. It is essential that each member

5. Attend the Representative's Community/Association meetings and share a report on DOTAC and DIAKONIA World Federation events and business.
6. Report on DOTAC and DIAKONIA World Federation events and business to governing bodies of the Representative's Community/Association.
7. Report on DOTAC and DIAKONIA World Federation events and business in the communication vehicles (e.g. newsletters, social media, group chats) of the Representative's Community/Association.
8. Be prepared to take on leadership in worship, and business matters at DOTAC Board meetings and Assemblies. As possible, accept responsibility for other work that needs to be done in between DOTAC meetings.
9. Be in regular email and social media communication with DOTAC and the Representative's Community/Association.
10. Encourage people to attend DOTAC, DOVE (Diakonia Overcoming Violence Exchange) and DIAKONIA World Federation events.
11. Provide names of recent consecrations/ordinations/commissionings to DOTAC Officers so they can provide congratulation and invite these new members of the diaconate to attend DOTAC and DIAKONIA World Federation events and programs.
12. The Representative's Community/Association may be asked to co- host a World, DOTAC, or DOVE event. The working committee for DOVE, DOTAC and World is usually Ecumenical. As appropriate, take leadership in these areas.
13. Enjoy the ecumenical connection with other diaconal folks and maintain Ecumenical relationships with others from your area.
14. Ensure DOTAC and DIAKONIA World Federation Fees are paid annually.

Finances

In-Person Board Meetings

Travel, accommodation, and meals for face-to-face board meetings will be covered for Community/ Association Representatives. Directors are expected to choose the least expensive means of travel that is reasonable. Accommodations and meals will be arranged with economy in mind. Directors will not be reimbursed for the purchase of alcoholic beverages. Donations toward the costs of meeting will be encouraged from those communities or individuals in a position to make this contribution.

Assemblies and Events

Community/ Association Representatives expenses for any meetings prior to or after a Conference/ Assembly, will be covered (except alcohol). Community/ Association Representatives are expected to cover the costs of registration, accommodation, and meals for the time of the actual Conference/Assembly.

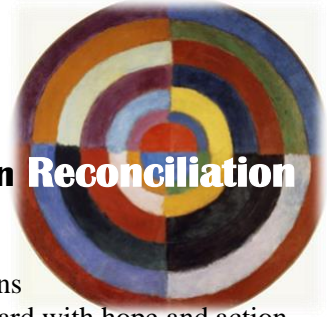
Termination

Should issues arise with respect to the character or quality of the Representative's handling of their responsibilities, the Board shall review the appointment, and shall determine if suitable cause is found to approach the Representative's Community/ Association and ask them to terminate the appointment. Suitable cause may include failure to attend or to report, misrepresentation of the Community/ Association or DOTAC, or egregious behaviour that has the potential to damage the relational ties between organizations or amongst members.

group have a representative at the table each time DOTAC meets. If the representative is not able to attend then the alternate representative needs to attend. In this case, the Community/Association representative needs to provide information well in advance of the meeting, so that the alternate can make arrangements to attend.

Appendix 2

Join DOTAC as we dwell in Scripture and call on members to share their experience and wisdom during two Zoom sessions on Reconciliation



Monday, September 16 at 1 pm Central Daylight Time

We will dwell in the Word and with quotes from commentaries and theologians as we open our hearts to reconciliation – listening, learning, and moving forward with hope and action.

Monday, October 21 at 1 pm Central Daylight Time

We will welcome a panel of our members who are actively engaged in reconciliation in their ministries. They will share their wisdom, experience, and knowledge from a variety of ministry contexts and ecumenical traditions. The panel will include a participant from the recent DOVE and -



Alison Iton

Chaplain of the Jamaica National Children’s Home Kingston & St. Andrew Child Diversion Committee Brasil (IECLB)
Deacon, Wesley Diaconal Community of the Methodist Church in the Caribbean & the Americas



Dionata Rodrigues de Oliveira

Theological Advisor for Formation and Diakonia
Deacon, Igreja Evangélica de Confissão Luterana do



Helen Ryde

Organizer, Reconciling Ministries Network
Home Missioner in the United Methodist Church
Order of Deaconess & Home Missioner



Claudette Taylor

Social Justice and Reconciliation
Epiphany and St. Mark, Parkdale, Toronto
Rev. Canon, Anglican Deacons Canada



Gathered into small groups, we will explore –

What are the needs for reconciliation in your context?

What actions might you commit yourself to going forward?

Are their corporate actions, we as DOTAC, might also explore?

Register to receive the link for the two Zoom sessions on RECONCILIATION.

<https://www.jotform.com/build/242036111087042> Contact Sr. Noreen with questions:

Noreen.stevens@elca.org

Confirm the time you will join the meeting with this time zone converter:

<https://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/converter.html>

