



Check out our website at www.diakoniausa.org!



Zoom Classes Forming

Several synods are forming classes using the Zoom online platform! They are open to students from any synod.

Find out more [here](#).



5 Questions and a Cup of Coffee with...Carole Thomas

About Carole:

I grew up on a farm in the middle of Iowa, and have lived in Iowa, Germany, Oklahoma, Colorado, Tennessee, and now Pennsylvania. I am married to a wonderful man and have three grown children and four grandchildren.

I graduated from the Southwest Pennsylvania Synod in 2007.

I am a happily-retired social worker. In my career as a social worker, I was a child abuse investigator and a forensic interviewer. I then worked as an addictions counselor at a prison, and finally as an addictions counselor at a methadone clinic. Much of the work I did involved helping people find healthier methods of coping with the traumas of their pasts.

Can you describe your call to ministry?

I felt a strong call to ministry up to the time that I worked at the methadone clinic. I do believe that job allowed me to fulfill the ministry God was calling me to. It allowed me many opportunities to assist people to establish or expand their relationships with God.

I trained as a Stephen Minister over 30 years ago. I am currently a Stephen Minister to two people, and a Stephen Leader in our church. I am a firm believer in the power of Stephen Ministry.

What is the best part of your ministry now?

The best part of my ministry at this point in my life is that I now have the time to focus on ministry instead of sandwiching ministry into my job and family needs.

What is one thing about you that would surprise us?

People might be surprised that I spend as much time as possible in my kayak, and that I haul our camper-trailer around the country by myself as I spend time with my family who live all over the country. I probably drive 5,000-10,000 miles a year by myself, much of that pulling the camper.

What are three things diakonia students and graduates should keep their eyes on?

The things Diakonia students and graduates should keep their eyes on would include:

- Watching for opportunities that God provides for fulfilling ministries;
- Recognizing that ministry might be a part of your daily paying job or things you do in your church home or your neighborhood, and being aware that God often calls us to ministry in ways that we don't expect and perhaps even resist; and, at least in my experience
- Ministry is often challenging and seldom neat and tidy.

How can we pray for you?

Your prayers can help me find opportunities to use my knowledge about trauma and addiction and my passion for helping others in ways that meet the needs of God's people now that I am retired.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Tips for Computer and Internet Safety

By better understanding security threats associated with the use of computers and the Internet, and by understanding the manner in which these threats are exploited, you can better protect your congregation, your congregation's information, computers and computer files.

Read more [here](#).

STORYBOARD

Moving Forward in God's Story

Good Reads

Title: The Christmas Story Composition: Advent - Christmas - Epiphany Devotions for all ages in both English and Spanish.

Authors: Over 50 Contributors!

Thanks to a generous grant from the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd [Foundation](#) located in south Minneapolis, MN, [Storyboard](#) is offering free Advent – Christmas – Epiphany [devotions](#) for all ages.

Fifty people from around the USA shared their time writing, proofreading, translating, editing, drawing, publishing, and funding this resource. States represented include: Minnesota, Wisconsin, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Florida, South Carolina, Nebraska, Washington, South Dakota, Arizona, Maryland, New Mexico, Michigan, Connecticut, New York, Georgia and North Dakota.

We Need You!

Are you interested in being featured in or submitting a **Servant Story** for a future issue of **TheTool Box**? Are you an instructor who would like to share a bit of yourself in "Instructor



Get Social!

Join our Facebook Group. Click the logo!

Focus?" Are you a site coordinator who would like to give us a peak into your program? Do you have observations to share from your a class?

We can all learn from each other's journeys before, during and after the program.

[Email us](#) and tell us your story!



We're trying to build our own diakonia [YouTube](#) channel, but we need your help! If you have cool videos from classes, graduations or topics of interest, please [send](#) them our way and we'll upload them. [Subscribe!](#)



[Connect](#) with LinkedIn!