

## Deaconesses Celebrate 125 Years of Ministry in Methodism

New York, NY, February 21, 2013—During 2013 the Offices of Deaconess, Home Missioner, and Home Missionary are celebrating the 125th anniversary of the deaconess movement in the Methodist tradition. The theme is “Love, Justice, and Service,” echoing the ongoing commitment to cutting-edge ministries by deaconesses and home missionaries. Many celebrations are planned to commemorate the deaconess movement. **response**, the magazine of United Methodist Women, will feature a series of articles on deaconess and home missionary ministries beginning in the February 2013 issue. For a list of special events related to the anniversary, please visit our websites:

<http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/programs/deaconesses> and <http://www.dhmumc.org>.

Deaconesses are laywomen who are called by the Holy Spirit to devote their lives to Christ-like service and are in a continuing relationship with The United Methodist Church through United Methodist Women. In 2004, laymen received an equal opportunity to this relationship through the creation of the office of home missioner. Deaconesses and home missionaries are approved through a process established by United Methodist Women and are consecrated, commissioned, and appointed by a bishop. They are trained professionals engaged in full-time vocations of servant ministry as laity, approved by the bishop of their annual conference.

The Methodist Episcopal Church created the office of deaconess at General Conference in the spring of 1888 and the Rock River Annual Conference (now mostly Northern Illinois) consecrated the first deaconesses in October 1888. The deaconess movement spread through the branches of American Methodism in the years that followed. Today, nearly 200 active service deaconesses and home missionaries continue to fill a vital and important role in the mission and ministry of the United Methodist Church.

Anyone interested in learning more about the deaconess/home missioner relationship, or who might be discerning a call to ministry, is encouraged to contact Deaconess Becky Dodson Louter at [blouter@unitedmethodistwomen.org](mailto:blouter@unitedmethodistwomen.org), or use the physical address and phone number listed below.

Promotional materials and additional information about the 125th Anniversary of the deaconess movement are available on our websites: <http://www.dhmumc.org> and <http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/programs/deaconesses>. To find deaconesses and home missionaries serving near you and to organize a celebration in your conference, district, local church, or small group, please contact Elke Adams at [eadams@unitedmethodistwomen.org](mailto:eadams@unitedmethodistwomen.org), or use the physical address and phone number listed below.



Offices of Deaconess, Home Missioner, and Home Missionary

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