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Lemonade from Lemons: Continuing the Conversation 2021

by Scott Pearce, deacon, Church of the Covenant, Hackettstown, NJ

On Saturday, June 12, at the approximate time of what would have been the closing program of the OPC's Committee on Diaconal Ministry's fourth Diaconal Summit in Chicago, a hundred deacons from across the denomination instead gathered for instruction, encouragement, and networking...in a massive Zoom meeting!

Call it another lemonade-from-lemons moment associated with COVID-19. Call it another case of the heart of men planning a way, but the Lord directing the steps. Chalk up another "instead," another "alternate arrangement," another "in light of present circumstances..." after more than 15 months of cancellations, delays, and postponements. And yet, with COVID-19 seemingly fading into our collective rear-view, we might each actually come to refer to the 2021 diaconal summit as the last important event on our calendar that was significantly altered by COVID-19 (even so, let it be!).

If the 2021 diaconal summit was significantly altered in form, venue, and execution (and it was), be assured that it was not lacking in substance,



One of the "walls" of deacons. Over 100 participated during "Continuing the Conversation."

intimacy, or a sense of brotherhood. This was not your monthly corporate management meeting with that one co-worker oblivious to his dog's incessant barking. This was not your granddaughter across the country trying to show you her new bicycle but really only inadvertently showing you her nostrils and chin. The resounding testimony of this particular participant was that the 2021 diaconal summit was a great success and a blessing to those able to join in that sweet 90 minutes of conversation.

To be sure, there was a lot condensed into our 90 minutes together on that Saturday! To welcome us, David Nakhla played virtual host while we all configured our Zoom settings and looked to see who we might recognize on one of the other pages of video boxes. David greeted so many of us by name—and not just because we were “wearing a name tag,” so to speak. This is a brother who is personally familiar with the diaconate of our denomination, and it shows in many ways.

Retired Army chaplain and current CDM member Rev. Rick Dickinson opened the meeting with a brief devotional from John 16:32-33. He encouraged us with the words of Him who has overcome the world and challenged us to “learn and remember that the best opportunities to glorify and enjoy God will occur through circumstances we never would have chosen for ourselves.” There are many of us who perhaps knew firsthand the wisdom of that aphorism in the pre-COVID era, but Rev. Dickinson’s words certainly spoke to each of us who have deaconed in and after the COVID era.

Continue reading this article on our website:
OPCCDM.org.

OPC Disaster Response CPR Fund



The COVID Pandemic Response Fund continues to supply a cup of cold water to those in need. COVID conditions here in the States, for the most part, have improved, but in some countries across the world, the

situation in the wake of COVID is dire. The Committee on Diaconal Ministries continues to receive generous donations for the Fund, and is therefore able to respond to requests for aid. \$95,349.19 has been raised thus far. Praise the Lord! Go to the OPC Disaster Response website to find out where the funds have been distributed: opcdisasterresponse.org.

Do you get a copy of the Mercy Minute to your inbox? If not, contact the CDM Administrator, David Nakhla
david.nakhla@opc.org

Meet YOUR FELLOW Deacon



Robert Kunda (pictured here with his son) and his wife, Aja, grew up in Southern California. They met in middle school and were friends all through high school, getting married after Robert returned from a four-year stint in the US Marine Corps. They had two children while living in California, and then relocated to Oregon in 2013 where the Lord has blessed them with a daughter by birth, and just days ago, a daughter by adoption!

Robert has served on the diaconate at Faith OPC since 2019. He says that he was drawn to serving as a deacon because he desires to help the church in whatever way he can. For him, one of the greatest blessings of this office is having a front-row seat to members of the congregation as they serve and share in one another’s burdens—without the need of the diaconate.

Robert serves alongside two other deacons at Faith OPC: Clyde Petty and Steve Carmack.

Don't be shy! We'd like to include you and your fellow deacons in an issue of the Mercy Minute's "Meet Your Fellow Deacon(s)". Please contact Sarah Klazinga (sarah.klazinga@opc.org) to be featured in a future publication. It's quick and painless, we promise, and it can really help to strengthen the brotherhood of deacons in the OPC.

Don't Miss the July Issue of New Horizons!

CDM Administrator, David Nakhla, reports on his recent trip to South Sudan and explains how the CDM carefully considers each request for aid. "We on the OPC's Committee on Diaconal Ministries (CDM) always seek to minister mercy where there is also opportunity to pair the ministry of mercy with the ministry of the Word." --David Nakhla

*For the full edition of this
Mercy Minute, visit our website:*
OPCCDM.ORG/resources/mercy-minute