

I hear we're getting a deaconess intern. What's a deaconess intern?

Let's answer that, but first a little backstory...

In 2022 and 2023, Zion's leadership was dreaming and praying and asking God what the next steps of ministry should be. In the last few years, God has blessed us mightily to make accelerated payments toward our mortgage on the existing Multi-Ministry Center (MMC) expansion, has made possible the fast-tracking of some building renovations, and allowed expanded mission efforts. We have been sharpening staff job descriptions and opportunities, and we have deeply wanted to understand where God is pointing us in the years ahead. We deliberated between the opportunities of a preschool/ daycare and a person that could aid, expand, and facilitate our mission focus. By congregation vote, we decided to move toward the expansion and focus that a staff person could bring to help us in missions.

Some options presented themselves. First, we could call an experienced person from the field. Second, we could call a graduate of one of our Concordia system institutions. Third, we could attempt to get an intern from those same institutions. The graduate or intern route seemed best as this person would be growing into his/ her position, as we would be growing into our new direction. We'd be growing to become the congregation that can best utilize the skills and passions of an intern as he/she uses such skills in our mission together. We put our name "into the hat" for a placement candidate and we invested ourselves into the intern process of four institutions: Concordia Univ. – TX (CTX), Concordia Univ. – Chicago (CUC), Concordia Univ. – St. Paul (CSP), and Concordia Seminary - St. Louis (CSL). Why these?

We invested in these four because they equipped the type of graduates that seemed to best fit what we were looking for. So, we started the intern process for a Director of Christian Education (DCE) from CTX, a Director of Christian Outreach (DCO) from CSP, an undergraduate deaconess from CUC, and a graduate school level deaconess from CSL. Each presented opportunities to fill the needs/ passions/ skills we were looking for.

A team asked to aid in this selection prayed, met, refined job descriptions, interviewed a few candidates, and sought God's will in intern placement. By God's good and ample grace, we were able to be matched with an intern candidate from CSL! She seems to fit very well with what Zion was looking for (leadership at both CSL and Zion agreed). We now are excited and committed to a one-year deaconess intern from CSL! That's the quick backstory. That brings us once more to the question we started with: *What is a deaconess intern?*

The Deaconess Intern will gain experience/ use her skills in several of the following areas: **Learning (broad experiences)/ Exposure (to our ministry)/ Teaching/ Caring by:**

- Teaching and developing adult Bible study/ discipleship curriculum/ small group process.
- Engaging in children's, youth, college and young adult ministries
- Aiding in the focus of whole life stewardship for our church.
- Visiting the hospitalized, home-bound, visitors and disconnected members.
- Working with women's societies and LWML groups.
- Participating in/ investigating specialized ministries (e.g., grief, divorce, disabilities).
- Affording Christian counsel to women, youth and children with life struggles.
- Exploring and supporting congregational administration and governance.
- Exploring parish mercy ministries, caring for both the congregation and the community.
- Offering her unique talents (e.g. music, art, languages).
- Assisting in areas in which she has prior education or expertise (e.g. nursing, teaching, administration, social work, child development, gerontology, counseling).

As the hope of this position takes shape, the Deaconess will also work to: **Facilitate mission connections inside and outside of the congregation by:**

- Learning and developing ways to nurture and communicate current mission and ministry connections with new and existing congregation members.
- Assisting in the process to connect congregation members with opportunities to serve within the current ministry structure of Zion (*Pastor, Business Manager currently oversee connection process*).
- Overseeing the coordination and planning of 1 mission trip with staff and volunteer leaders.
- Starting to cultivate connections with community, domestic, and international missional opportunities along with missionaries. Investing in local, district mission entities as future regional resource.
- Connecting these entities with Zion for support and involvement.
- Coordinating with staff and volunteers to prepare the missions budgets necessary for vision success.
- Working with PR Coordinator to ensure all mission teams have a method of sharing their stories, so the congregation is aware of current missions and has opportunities to participate and support.

As one can see, the needs are great and we look forward to a fresh perspective and opportunities to learn and grow with and from her.

Costs?

- Salary: \$24,000 for the year she is committed to internship, 2025-2026.
- Health Insurance: Approx. \$5000.
- Housing: \$18,000 for the year, 2025-2026 – to help her find an apartment in the area.
- Utilities: \$6,000 for the year, 2025-2026.
- Mileage: approx. \$100/ month
- Moving expense: \$500, once I talk to her, we are certainly willing to help more if needed.
- Conference and Education: \$3,000, 2025-2026 – for at least one required trip back to CSL.
- Internship fee: \$605.

Total: \$58,305 – with the ability to be more generous with moving, travel, needed office furniture, expenses, and budget to work with in her missions role.

How long is the internship? 12 months. Call Day/ Intern Assignments, April 30th. (See [csl.edu](https://www.csl.edu/event/call-day-2025/) for Call Day service details if you'd like to see her assigned! <https://www.csl.edu/event/call-day-2025/>). Start date TBA.

Who is the supervisor? Pastor Jason, but she will certainly be working with many of the volunteers, getting to know much of the congregation, and working with all of the staff.

What happens after the internship is complete? The Deaconess Intern is complete with her studies once the internship is complete and she returns to CSL for debriefing and graduation in May 2026. She would then be eligible for a call upon graduation and Zion can create a call committee to call a full- time deaconess position at that time. Her position should be included in the 2026 and 2027 budgets if desired by the congregation.

Please be in prayer for our deaconess intern and as soon as Call Day happens, we will hear more about her and her start date! Thanks be to God for this gift of ministry and mission in a deaconess intern!