

LEADERSHIP

“Nurturing the song of the church”

ELCA Deacon Ryan Hostler sees his life's calling as one that involves equipping others with the tools they need to sing and worship God.

As minister of word and service for music and worship at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Vero Beach, Fla., Hostler oversees the church's music program, plans services and serves as cantor. As a leader in the church, he draws on his music training and educational experience, particularly those gained at Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio.

Trinity is one of the ELCA's seven seminaries; each receive annual Mission Support grants to sustain their work in training leaders like Hostler for service in the church. For Hostler, seminary “provided a solid foundation for future growth and learning.”

Moreover, Hostler counts the experience as one of the best decisions of his life. “[It] allowed me to grow immensely in my theological depth and understanding,” he said.

After seminary, Hostler began working in the ELCA under the title associate in ministry and became a deacon when the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly brought together the roles of associate in ministry, diaconal minister and deaconess under the umbrella of deacon. “I’m thrilled [the church] put us all on equal footing,” he said.

Hostler said being a deacon means opportunities to bring his unique talents to the church. “It’s wonderful because I’m able to focus on worship and what that means to our congregation.” Every deacon brings something different to the table based on their skills. “You have deacons that deal with finances and deacons that deal with worship and deacons that deal with social justice,” he explained.

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“We’re able to let those gifts that we bring grow and broaden the church.”

God's call to become a deacon took hold within Hostler when he “fell in love with the idea of serving with the gifts that God gave to me.”

As he uses his gifts to lead music and worship at Our Savior, Hostler keeps this mission statement close to his heart: “My simple but profound calling is nurturing the song of the church.”

