Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

ELCA Deacon Cross

In 2018 the Entrance Rite Discernment Group recommended several actions to the Church Council to establish ordination as the entrance rite for deacons entering the roster of Ministers of Word and Service. In doing so, it defined the appropriate symbols for the ministry of Word and Service in the ELCA as:

- The deacon's stole, especially when leading worship.
- The ELCA deacon cross pin, identifying the deacon as a presence for the servant Christ in the world.

Meeting in spring 2022, the Church Council affirmed a design concept and the remaining process for adopting a unified cross design for ELCA deacons. This follows two years of conversation among deacons, review of existing and comparable symbols used in diaconal ministry around the world, and engagement with potential manufacturers and designers. Early design concepts were reviewed by deacons, who helped narrow them to a final proposal. Old Lutheran will handle the pin's manufacturing and distribution in partnership with the churchwide organization.

The idea behind the design is that deacons act as a bridge between the church and the world. Pieces were created that are brought together (as a bridge would do) by a cross. The cross is represented as "negative space" to convey that it lies in the gap where God meets us. The imperfect oval conveys that our journey is unpredictable.

The deacon's stole is always presented at ordination. Other symbols, including the deacon cross pin, may be presented at ordination or another appropriate time. Language for presenting the cross pin is already included in the rite of Ordination to the Ministry of Word and Service, as authorized by the Church Council in 2019: "Receive and wear this cross as a sign of your calling to serve Christ and his people. Confess your faith in the risen Christ, and bear in your heart the love of Christ who died on the cross for you."

The cross pin is now available for purchase from Old Lutheran by ELCA deacons and candidates preparing for ordination.