

The Rt. Rev. Chilton R. Knudsen, DD
Eighth Bishop of Maine (Retired)

Short Biography

Bishop Knudsen was born into a Navy family and grew up overseas (Guam/Marianas Islands, the Philippines, Japan), personal experiences which have shaped her commitment to world-wide mission. She studied biology/ecology at Chatham College in Pittsburgh, PA, earning a BA in 1968. During graduate study at the University of Pittsburgh (1969-1972), she taught at her *alma mater*, developing interdisciplinary courses in Behavioral Biology and Ecosystem Analysis. She later taught interdisciplinary courses at the community college level, and served as a counselor in women's health clinics in Pittsburgh PA and in Wheaton, IL.

Called to the priesthood long before the Episcopal Church accepted the ordination of women, she finally enrolled at Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, receiving the M. Div. in 1980. She was ordained deacon in 1980 and priest in 1981, first serving a new mission in Bolingbrook, IL and later in other congregations, rural and inner-city. She was called as Pastoral Care Officer in 1987 (eventually, as Canon for Pastoral Care) in the Diocese of Chicago. As Canon for Pastoral Care in the Diocese of Chicago, she developed a nation-wide ministry of consulting and training about Sexual Misconduct in church settings. The material she developed (including a chapter in the book RESTORING THE SOUL OF THE CHURCH, published by the Alban Institute in 1995), continues to be widely used. Elected Bishop of Maine in 1997, she served until retirement in September 2008.

Bishop Knudsen has a long and personal interest in issues of addiction/recovery, especially regarding systems (congregations, dioceses, organizations) which have experienced the subtle yet powerful effects of addiction – in all its forms -- in clergy or lay leaders. Her audiotape (1985) **Christianity and the Twelve Steps** was produced by Cowley Publications.

As bishop, she planted three new Maine congregations (including Maine's only Latino congregation) and led in the revitalization of several others, including congregations which suffered in the aftermath of addiction in clergy or lay leaders . She has received a number of awards, including:

Outstanding Woman Leader, Chicago area YWCA	1970
Doctor of Divinity, <i>honoris causa</i> , Seabury-Western	1999
Maine Council of Churches honoree for Religious Leadership	2000
Maine Women's Hall of Fame Inductee	2006

Since retirement, Bishop Knudsen has been a missionary in Haiti and a retreat leader, consultant and spiritual director in the Episcopal Church and ecumenical settings. She lives in Bath, Maine with her husband, Dr. Michael Knudsen, a retired computer scientist.