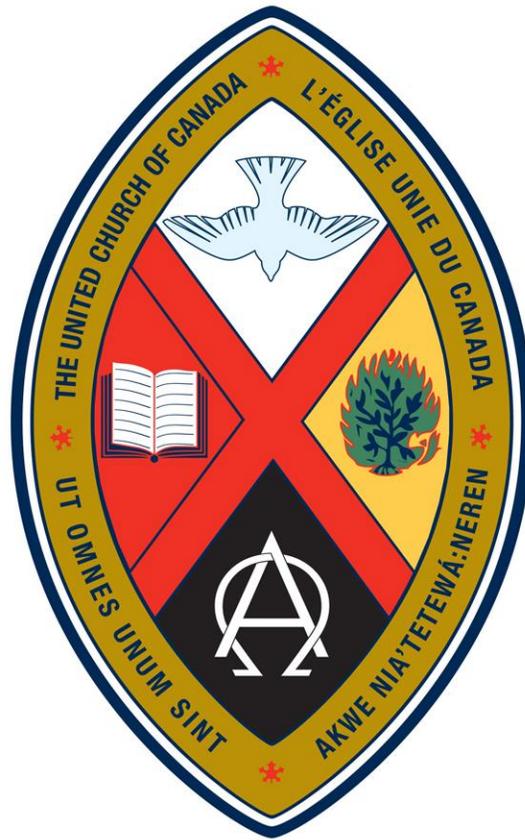


# *Milestones in Ministry Celebration*



*The United Church of Canada  
First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council*

## *Annual Meeting 2022*

*Virtual Celebration on Zoom  
Friday, May 13, 2022*



## *Thank you for your Ministry*

### *Retirement*

*The Rev. Christopher M. Mazhandu*

### *Anniversaries*

<i>The Rev. Dr. Morley F. Hodder</i>	<i>70 Years</i>
<i>The Rev. Bruce Eaton</i>	<i>60 Years</i>
<i>The Rev. Silas G. Rodgers</i>	<i>50 Years</i>
<i>The Rev. Arthur W. Elliott</i>	<i>45 Years</i>
<i>The Rev. Dr. Tony S. Newell</i>	<i>40 Years</i>
<i>The Rev. Walter M. Biles</i>	<i>35 Years</i>
<i>The Rev. George R. Kean</i>	<i>35 Years</i>
<i>The Rev. Graham Cook</i>	<i>25 Years</i>
<i>Mr. Harry W. Oake</i>	<i>25 Years</i>
<i>The Rev. J. Paul Vardy</i>	<i>25 Years</i>

**Admissionand**

*Rev. Edison Wiltshire*

**Designated Lay Ministry Recognition**

*James L. Martin-Carter*

**Candidates for Ordered Ministry**

*Ms. Jennifer Billard*

*Ms. Stephanie Rose*

*Ms. Katelyn Vardy*

**Candidates for Designated Lay Ministry**

*Ms. Heather Cronhelm*

*Mr. Keith Wiseman*

**Leaving**

*Rev. Christopher Mazhandu*

**Regional Council Staff Anniversaries**

*Ms. Alison Cofield Piercey, Office Administrator*

*25 Years*

*Rev. Heather Sandford, Regional Minister*

*10 Years*

*Ms. Jennifer Taylor, Executive Assistant  
to Regional Executive Minister*

*10 Years*

## *Retirement*

### **The Reverend Christopher Mandhlaenkosi Mazhandu, B.A., M.B.A., M.Div.**



“I was born in 1949 in an African Christian family, with my father being a Minister of The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe. As such, I grew up in the church as a Sunday School boy who also was educated at Methodist Mission schools. After my secondary school at Tekwane High School, I went in 1973 to Fourah Bay College of the University of Sierra Leone where I completed my B.A. degree with Honours in Geography. 1977 saw me teaching high school at Tekwane Mission in Zimbabwe.

The war of liberation in Zimbabwe forced me to leave the education field and join the Zimbabwe Civil Service. In which I serviced for 17 years and at the same time took the opportunity to study for an MBA qualification at the University of Zimbabwe. I worked as a self-employed entrepreneur from 1997 to 2000 and, in the intervening period, did not lose sight of my Christian heritage. Due to politics, I left my country Zimbabwe with my entire family for Canada as a refugee in 2001.

I am married to Margaret who also has a strong Christian background and has been a pillar of support for me and the family in our stay both in Zimbabwe and Canada. My Canadian home Church became Stoney Creek United Church in Hamilton, Ontario. At this church, my gifts in teaching and preaching the word of God were recognized and was nursed by this church into ministry.

My call into the ministry of word, sacrament and pastoral care came gradually and through discernment found myself thrilled going to Emmanuel College of the University of Toronto for Divinity studies. My call was so strong that I actually did not find it difficult to leave my private sector job where my remuneration was nearly six figures per year.

I have five children, three girls and two boys all now adults who have blessed Margaret and I with 11 grandchildren. All of us have dual citizenship, Canadian and Zimbabwean.

Having completed my Divinity studies in 2012, I went for internship for eight months at Emmanuel United Church in Hamilton, Ontario. On Ordination in 2013, I was settled at St. Paul's United Church in Newleaskard, Ontario where I spent two years before moving to La Scie Pastoral Charge

in Newfoundland and Labrador. The ministry at La Scie and the work in First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council grounded me into such a deep faith that my trust in Jesus became complete.

Like my parents, I never worried about earthly needs and wants. I trusted God the Creator to provide for my needs. My call at St. Paul's and at La Scie were for the dissemination of the Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care. However, with my retirement from itinerant ministry, this has changed by adding the adage, "Loving thy neighbour as self" triggered by a burning desire to work with disadvantaged communities in rural Africa. I am preparing through volunteering to work for five or so months per year in rural Zimbabwe, helping in the construction of modern church facilities. I have a few numbers of potential donors who have requested me to lead in that area on their behalf and am able and willing to help spread the love of God to remote areas of the world though making Him visible.

I shall continue to knock on your doors asking you for help on this and that as it concerns our mission to others. My retirement will officially be in Ontario once I have settled. At the moment, I am enjoying fooling around with my grandchildren.

May the Lord continue to bless First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council during this time of momentous changes on how to do church following the world-wide COVID-19 pandemic."

## *70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*

### **The Reverend Dr. Morley Francis Hodder, B.A., B.D., S.T.M., Th.D., D.D.**



Morley was born in St. John's on February 13, 1929, the elder son of Frank and Rose Hodder. He received his early education at St. George's School, then attended Prince of Wales College, graduating in 1945. He was a student at Memorial University College from 1945-47 and then entered McGill University, Montreal, graduating with a B.A. degree. He studied at The United Theological College, Montreal from 1949-52, graduating in 1952.

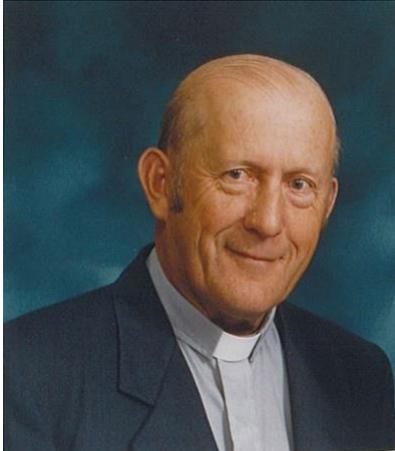
On June 10, 1952, he was ordained by the Newfoundland Conference in George Street United Church and was appointed to the Springdale Pastoral Charge, where he served until 1955. Then he was given leave of absence to pursue graduate studies at Boston University, receiving the S.T.M. degree in 1956 and the Th.D. degree in 1963. From 1958-61, he served as minister of the First Congregational Church of Milford, Massachusetts. On February 27, 1960 he was married to Vera V. Mercer of Cambridge, Massachusetts.

In 1963, Morley was appointed the first United Church Chaplain to the University of Toronto, serving until 1967. Then he was appointed the first Head of the Religious Studies Department of Memorial University, serving as Head ten years and then as a member of the Department until his retirement in 1994. He also served as an Adjunct Professor at Queen's College, St. John's.

He received the honorary degree of D.D. from the Atlantic School of Theology, Halifax in 2001 and from Queen's College, St. John's in 2012. In 2010, Morley was honored by the Board of the Agnes Pratt Home for having conducted worship services there for 35 years.

## *50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*

### **The Reverend Silas G. Rodgers, B.Th.**



Silas was born at St. Jones Within, to the late Adam and Minnie (Wells) Rodgers. He entered ministry in 1962 and was appointed to the Change Islands Pastoral Charge as a lay supply minister. After serving for six years as a lay minister, he went on to Memorial University and then to Pine Hill Divinity Hall where he graduated in 1972 and was ordained that same year at Cochrane Street United Church, St. John's.

Since ordination, Silas served several Pastoral Charges within Newfoundland and Labrador Conference. His last before retirement was Bay Roberts. Silas always felt it to be a great privilege to serve as an ordained minister, even to the point where he couldn't give it up; even after his official retirement, serving at Carmanville, Garnish, Campbellton, Summerville, and Whitbourne Pastoral Charges.

Silas and his wife Blanche have made their home in Chapel Arm. They have five adult children, seventeen grandchildren and seventeen great grandchildren. Outside of church work, Silas and Blanche both enjoy outdoor activities such as fishing and hunting, cutting wood, berry picking, etc., and they realize they have been richly blessed, with so much to thank God for.

## *40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*

### **The Reverend Dr. Tony S. Newell, B.A., M.Div., D.Min.**



Tony Newell started his ministry at a student charge at Northern Arm and a summer at Loon Bay Camp. He had a summer field congregation in Winnipeg and took two units of Clinical Pastoral Education.

Tony was ordained at Gower Street United Church, May 1982. His Pastoral Charges include: Eastern Labrador Parish; First United, Mount Pearl; Humber United, Corner Brook; Cornwallis Pastoral Charge, Nova Scotia; St. Paul's United, Deer Lake; and Pasadena-Howley.

"Thank you for recognizing 40 years of ordination. The TYRO motto turned out to be a good one.

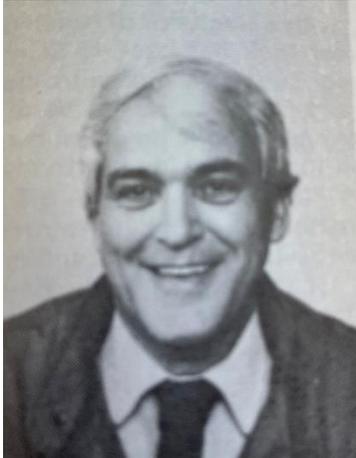
*"O God, make me a learner and keep me eager to follow Jesus."*

I tried to approach each person and each visit with one question in mind. *"This person has something to teach me ... now, what is it?"*

If you approach ministry, or indeed life, with that question in mind, you will find great reward. Blessings."

## *35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*

### **The Reverend Walter M. Biles, B.Th.**



Walter Biles was born in 1934, the youngest of four children to Harrison and Emily Jane Biles at St. Anthony. He was married to Ethel Patey of St. Anthony and they had six children.

Walter received his education at St. Mary's Anglican and Grenfell Memorial High School at St. Anthony. In 1955, he went to work as a marine engineer on the hospital ship *Maravel*, continuing the next year to work in the power plant for the International Grenfell Association. Through correspondence and experience, he became the Chief Power Engineer, where he remained until 1983.

Walter was very active in his home church before receiving the call to ordained ministry. In September of 1983, he was accepted at Memorial University where he completed one year of the Arts Program. In September of 1984, he was accepted in the Bachelor of Theology program at Atlantic School of Theology in Halifax, where he graduated on May 1, 1987. Walter served Pastoral Charges of Springdale, Channel, Grand Bank and Old Perlican and retired in 1999.

## *35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*

### **The Reverend George R. Kean, B.Th.**



George Kean was born in Badger's Quay, Bonavista Bay on September 11, 1945, where he received his early education. In 1981, Jesus Christ found George, resulting in a total transformation of his life. In 1983, George enrolled at Memorial University of Newfoundland and from there to the Atlantic School of Theology, Halifax.

He was ordained by The United Church of Canada in 1987 and ministered on the Pastoral Charges of Fortune (four years), Victoria-Freshwater (nine years) and La Scie (five years).

George is married to Anne Kean of Badger's Quay. They have one daughter, Kim (Tony); one son, Tom (Stephanie) and four grandchildren; Ashli, Heidi, Maxim and Azalea.

Upon retiring in 2005, George and Anne returned to Badger's Quay spending time with their family. George would like to give all the praise to his Saviour, Jesus Christ for using him for His glory. Also, George thanks his family and friends for their prayers and support during his ministry.

## *25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*

### **The Reverend Graham Cook, B.Th.**



Graham Cook was born and raised in St. John's. He is the son of Eric S. Cook and Elsie (Hobbs) Cook. He attended Wesley United Church and is a graduate of Prince of Wales College. Prior to pursuing a Bachelor Degree in Theology from McGill University and a Diploma in Ministry from the United Theological College of Montreal, Graham was an employee of Newfoundland Power.

Graham was ordained at Grand Falls, NL in May of 1997. He was first settled at Brigus-Cupids-Georgetown Pastoral Charge. Graham recalls his naiveté for ordered ministry at that time and after the congregations provided five years of nurturing, guidance, great understanding and support to him, he was well prepared to receive a "call" from Catalina-Little Catalina Pastoral Charge. During the five years he "lived among them", he made such great friends and acquaintances that he and his wife Jocelyn purchased a retirement home there.

Graham served Fortune-Garnish-Frenchmen's Cove Pastoral Charge for a period of three years. By this time in his ministry, Graham quickly learned that one can also have a "social life" with members of a congregation. (Just be their minister and they will love you for it!) Graham and Jocelyn return often to this area for fellowship and fun.

Finally, prior to his retirement June 30, 2014, Graham served the good folk of Port Blandford Pastoral Charge. That is - the communities of Terra Nova, Charlottetown, Port Blandford and Bunyan's Cove. Graham served multi-point charges because of that proverbial saying: "If one point on the charge don't like you, there is a good chance the others may." Well to Graham's delight (not that he was the best minister or they were a perfect charge), the ministry at Port Blandford was a great match-up: minister and all congregations.

So, it follows then, the only thing that Graham could do after all that was to retire. In his retirement, you will find Graham still giving his attention to what is important and living and loving in a way that is intentional and lifegiving as his retirement translates itself to him.

## *25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*

### **Mr. Harry W. Oake, DLM**



Harry Oake was born February 15, 1942, on Change Islands to the late Ivy and Claude Oake. After graduating from high school, he moved to Tilt Cove where he was employed in the underground mine. He continued a career in the mining industry at Gullbridge and Rambler Mines until 1981. Harry then took a position as supervisor at the fish processing plant at La Scie until the closure of the fishery.

Harry became very involved in church life after a conversion experience in 1972. For 22 years he was actively involved in most aspects of church life with the La Scie congregation - as a Sunday School teacher and superintendent, youth group leader, Clerk of Session, Board of Trustees, Men's Fellowship Club, and lay reader.

During his time in La Scie, Harry felt the call to full-time ministry but was content to remain with the local congregation. In 1993 the call became stronger and he offered himself as a District Appointment to Red Bay, Labrador. His ministry there lasted for four years and he was very blessed by the people on that Pastoral Charge and on the coast of southern Labrador. Harry then enrolled in the Lay Pastoral Ministry in Training Program and was recognized as a Lay Pastoral Minister in 1997. In 1997 he requested a change in pastoral relations and was Settled on the Summerford-Moreton's Harbour Pastoral Charge. Again, he was blessed with the privilege to serve with very loving caring people.

Harry served the wider church on various committees: West District Pastoral Relation, West District Education and Students, West District Division of Ministry Personnel and Education, and the National Church as a member of LMC for four years.

Harry moved to his home in La Scie to retire in 2005. Since that time, he has filled in at La Scie on three different occasions and, in 2014, was appointed to the Burgeo Pastoral Charge for one year, however, he continued to provide worship there on a part-time basis until 2019. He is presently filling in at La Scie while the search continues for a minister.

Harry married Yvette in 2014 and they travelled extensively around Canada to visit family as well as trips down south and to Europe and a cruise to Alaska before COVID interrupted future plans.

## *25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*

### **The Reverend J. Paul Vardy, B.A., M.Div.**



“Every now and then something happens that causes you to step back as you realize you are getting older. One example of this is when babies you baptized come back asking if you will preside at their wedding. March 10, I received an email from the Regional Office congratulating me on 25 years of Ordination. Wow, where has the time gone?”

Growing up in Hickman’s Harbour, my faith was first nurtured by the Britannia Pastoral Charge. Upon completion of high school, I discerned a call to ministry within The United Church of Canada. After obtaining a Bachelor of Arts from Memorial University, I served the Gambo Pastoral Charge as a Lay Supply Minister and then one year on the Buchan’s Pastoral Charge. The summer prior to my attending the Atlantic School of Theology, I served the Bonavista Pastoral Charge.

In September 1994, I began my studies at AST. My time at AST not only deepened my faith but also strengthened it. I owe a depth of gratitude to the Theology School in preparing me for ministry. I also owe gratitude to a certain minister, Rev. Ian March-MacCuish, who believed in me and gave me the push I needed in obtaining my M.Div. (I didn’t say it then, but I say it now, “Thanks Ian.”)

While studying at AST, I was blessed to have had two internships: one in Belleville, Ontario and the other on the Bloomfield-Musgravetown Pastoral Charge. Their input in shaping my future ministry would have a lasting effect.

Upon Ordination, I was settled on the Herring Neck Pastoral Charge where I began my ministry as an Ordained Minister. I have many wonderful memories and established many wonderful friends while serving there.

In 2000, I accepted a call to the Glovertown Pastoral Charge where I currently serve. After serving here for 22 years, Glovertown/Happy Adventure has become home. While serving the Glovertown Pastoral Charge, I also enlisted in the Canadian Armed Forces as a “Class A” Reservist serving as the chaplain for 9 Wing Gander from 2009-2016.

I have been truly blessed throughout my 25 years of Ordination. I have been blessed with two children: Adam and Sarah, and after meeting my partner Bonnie, I have been blessed with an

even bigger family: three step-children and nine grandchildren.

Also, throughout my ministry, I have been privileged to serve on numerous committees within our District, and now in our Region. Serving the church in this way enabled me to meet many wonderful people across our Region who give so much of themselves for the benefit of the church and for the sake of God's call in our lives. I have learned over and over again that this United Church of ours is a wonderful church, being about God's work in the world.

As I look back over the past 25 years of Ordination, I can say, "God is good, all the time."

## *Regional Council Staff Anniversaries*

### *25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*

*February 17, 1997*



**Ms. Alison Cofield Piercey**  
**Office Administrator**

### *10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*

*July 1, 2012*



**Rev. Heather Sandford**  
**Regional Minister**

### *10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*

*October 9, 2012*



**Ms. Jennifer Taylor**  
**Executive Assistant to Regional Executive Minister**