

First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council 16

E- Connect

SHARING OUR FAITH THROUGH OUR
STORIES

Volume No.2

2022 Summer Issue

Welcome to our second publication of E-Connect, an electronic and printable publication where we may share stories of faith to connect us as a region. This publication will be shared quarterly.

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From shifting social rules, and cultural expectations to new, pervasive technologies needed to “share the good news” add to

that dealing with a pandemic, the call to ministry in this 21st century is challenging and vastly different than that of our predecessors. Although the stirring that calls ministers remains unchanged, a much greater “tool kit of skills” and approaches are necessary to address the large “mission field” that exists in our society, today.

Though spiritual leaders come solidly prepared in biblical interpretation, exegetical skills, mission and evangelism, there’s a “skill set of certain realities” that must be addressed -skills necessary to meet the changing needs within our dramatically shifting Canadian culture ;; a culture that resembles an international mission field

Our communities of faith have also changed in this post-Christendom society.. Worshipers are often comprised of a mix of committed followers as well as the “culturally affiliated Christians. Add to that the growing number of spiritual-but-not-religious, and we .

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quickly realize, this is not your grandparents or your parents’ church The changing demographics of a multicultural society, and possessing a respect for a variety of other religious traditions, ministers are called “more and more” to have a “Christ-like, open open and welcoming”. mindset amid the cries of avid church goes to “ *keep the church the way church has always been.*

Some interesting findings in a 2019 survey undertaken by **The Pew Research Center** *. found that while more than half of Canadians claim Christianity as their tradition, **30%** remain unaffiliated, and rarely attend worship. The realities facing ministry within our communities of faith are challenging. Church , as in God’s people need to be more connected to community-at-large.

To achieve bringing the church into the wider community in our time, we must embrace different skills and communication modes to connect folks with the good news. Research has shown if the church ignores social media and does not try to connect or “speak within such circles” it is neglecting one of its primary means of contact, outreach and getting the “good news out’. More than ever the gospel message needs to be heard to help society find meaning in life. Within Our United Church of Canada, ministers are called to three different streams of ministry (*Ordained, Diaconal & Designated Lay Ministry*) as they strive to address the many spiritual needs within our communities of faith, and beyond

So, this edition of our newsletter interviewed a minister within each of the three streams and asked them to speak of their call to ministry in this 21st century, Here’s what they had to share....

- **Pew Research Centre**, June 2019
<https://www.pewresearch.org>

Rev. Limon Daka, Answers the Call of Ordination to Social Justice.

My journey into ministry started by serving in the Reformed Church in Zambia (RCZ) and then into the United Church of Canada. Born and brought up in a Christian family, by the age of 8, I committed myself in Sunday school and choir. In my late teens, I became uncommitted but I quickly realized the value of submitting my life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ who is my Friend, Shepherd, Teacher and Guide. During my Primary and Secondary school in the Eastern Province of Zambia., I learned of other countries and that brought interest of either working in India, Canada and/or South Africa.



Little did I know that I could come to Canada as a clergy.

After school, I was quickly employed as an Untrained Teacher. During teaching, I sensed the call but it was not so vivid. I started a course in carpentry, I had to quit and pursued a course in Gospel Outreach and Discipleship Training. During this time, I was involved with *Teen Missions International, Discipleship and Gospel Outreach*. Their programs opened up my heart to develop a passion of serving globally. In 2000, I enrolled at Justo Mwale Theological College. In 2002 I was ordained in the Reformed Church in Zambia (RCZ). The passion of serving globally with churches having strong social justice agenda grew more and more. I started seeking opportunities in affiliate churches to World Council of Churches . One night while sleeping, I heard a voice mentioning my name saying “*Limon, go to Rev Dr D.T Banda and explain your desires for life and ministry to serve globally.* I shared my dream to my wife who encouraged me to see this minister who lectures at Justo Mwale University. I inquired from him if he knew any church or Christian organization that accepts people from our church to serve with them. I didn’t mention anything about my dream. He said he was ready to help. Right there he contacted Rev Dr Japhet Ndhlovu here in Canada inquiring if the United Church was still accepting ministers from the Reformed Church in Zambia.

I Immediately Rev Dr Ndhlovu inquired from Rev Dr Khalema, in the admission department of the United Church. I was asked to send my qualifications and other supporting documents for him to evaluate. That’s how it started and I am currently serving at Wesleyville/Valleyfield Pastoral Charge in Newfoundland. I came with my family. Malitina Mwale (my wife) and our children Ronica Daka, Ebenezer Daka and Lonjezo Promise Daka.



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Rev. Rebecca Pike , Diaconal Ministry and My Call Journey.

Diaconal ministry is not well known in our region, so before I move into my call to Diaconal ministry, I want to share a little about what Diaconal Ministry is. Diaconal ministry, is a recognized ordered stream of Ministry in the United Church of Canada, rooted within our faith tradition and history, It is continued and embodied in an ecumenical, worldwide community.

The gospel of Jesus invites all to this ministry: to offer compassion and accompaniment, work for liberation and justice, and act as advocates of creative transformation. Diaconal Ministry involves Spirit-directed enrichment and learning, offering of oneself, prayerful discernment, and courageous risking. The use of communal leadership, daring to imagine God’s abundance in a world of love, justice, and respect. Those commissioned into this ministry are called to education, social justice, and pastoral care within the United Church of Canada..





Diaconal Ministry encourages a growing faith, speaks truth to power, seeks mutual empowerment, proclaims prophetic hope, nurtures life-giving community, fosters peaceful, right relationship within the church and the whole of creation wherever the Spirit may lead.

When I was young, I never saw myself entering the ministry. Even when I began to experience call and faithful living with justice worked, I was still unsure how my faith, my passions lined up with The United Church of Canada’s ministers. Through my discernment committee and friends, I learned of Diaconal Ministry and during Rendezvous in Winnipeg, I visited the Centre for Christian Studies. During a half-day tour of the center, my life changed. I found the place in ministry where I fit, a type of ministry about doing, action and going out that I had not witnessed in the same way before.

Don’t get me wrong, all streams of ministry are vital to our church, but my call was one for action with reflection. It is a call to work with the larger community to bring people together, both inside and outside faith communities. To education, seek justice, and care. I enjoy preaching but know that is not where my gifts are best used. It is my calling to be a leader, educator, guide, and companion as we move our church towards the work of justice, to stepping out and stepping up. To meet people where they are and let them feel the compassion and love of a relationship with no motive other than mutual respect.

I am called to diaconal ministry because I am always called to see our church and our faith grow, learn, seek more, seek justice, and walk with each other. We are guided by a spirit of action, love and justice.



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Georgina Parsons : Why I Chose Designated Lay Ministry.



Designated lay ministry is the third stream of ministry within our Church.

Designated Lay Ministers (DLMs) are lay ministers, recognized and appointed by a regional council. who accept a leadership role for defined periods of time. These leadership roles may include the work of preaching, worship, sacrament, pastoral care, education, or other forms of service. Why did I choose the Designated Stream of Ministry? After ignoring my call to ministry for several years until one day it was as if God knocked me upside my head and said, “*Wake up, woman, I need you*” I began my discernment by looking at the three streams of ministry. I had never heard of diaconal ministry until then and the fact that it was held at the Centre for Christian Studies in Winnipeg, only a two-hour drive from my daughter and grandkids caught my attention. However, in exploring diaconal ministry further I didn’t think it was the right fit for rural ministry in NL.

As for Ordained Ministry I had no prior university credits, I would have to move to Halifax for a number of years, which I knew my husband would not be in agreement with, and I didn’t fancy sitting in a classroom or lecture hall (I wasn’t made aware of any other way of doing the ordination studies at the time).

Three things jumped out at me with the Designated Lay Ministry stream: I would only have to be away from home for two weeks twice a year and I would be able to begin ministry right away and learn on-the-job (little did I know that those two weeks away at Learning Circles would lead to studying and assignment after assignment for practically 365 days for 3 ½ years!).

I have always been a proponent of on-the-job-training as this was my standard way in every job I had taken over the years and when owning my own business I always enjoyed having students do their work terms with me. Also it seemed to be the most popular stream for those seeking second, third or even more careers and at the age of 63.

I thought I would be more comfortable with those at a more “mature” age. Being somewhat of an introvert I entered my first DLM Learning Circle at St. Andrew’s College in Saskatoon with some fear and trepidation as I wondered how I would manage in such an intimate setting. However, my fears were soon relieved when I was greeted by each and every one of the students and leaders with smiles, handshakes, and hugs. I couldn’t wait to get back to my second Learning Circle and was sad when all six circles were completed. The Designated Lay Ministry program lit a fire in me. There are not enough words for me to say how much I gained from it .Being in community, learning together with fellow students, having the support of others were things beyond compare.

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Highlights of The 2022 Fourth Regional Council Annual Meeting.



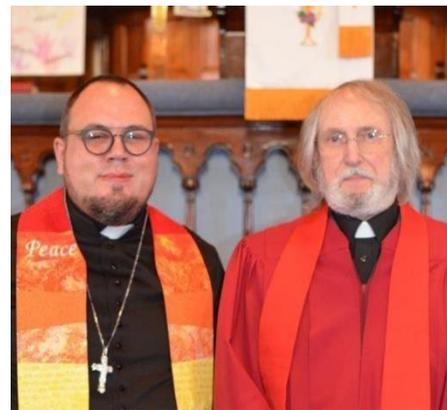
On May 13-15, once again, over 100 delegates gathered virtually for our 4th FDEE Annual Regional Meeting around our theme *Presence & Hope: Health & Wellness*. Just seeing each other’s smiles and laughter, hearing “hellos” and connecting our voices in song and worship as people of faith, reassured us how God’s Presence and Hope will always sustain us.

It was a busy session as we moved through the business of each day while we shared energizing Zumba and Yoga moments with online instructors. Adam Hanley, Program Coordinator, Ministry Personnel Vitality, General Council Office., our theme presenter challenged us to consider our wellbeing, through four lenses – through our everyday happiness; resilience; self-integrity, and thriving through the values that give meaning in our lives. A welcome topic as we journey through challenging times. **Page 4**

We were inspired by our Moderator, Right Rev. Dr. Richard Bott, who shared opening remarks and blessings with us.

The General Secretary, Michael Blair, also brought greetings to our region, acknowledging the difficult journey we have been on and highlighted some of the challenges that have been before us, as a church.

Rev Sherperd Munikwa, Minister for Justice , Mission and Outreach for the eastern regionals also addressed the gathering and was welcomed into our virtual space



L-R James Martin Carter & Rev Edison Wiltshire

One of the highlights of our weekend is always the Celebration of Ministries. This year we were excited to recognize two ministers who have answered the call to ministry--James Martin-Carter as a Designated Lay Minister and Rev. Edison Wiltshire who was admitted into the United Church of Canada. Many blessings were offered on their future ministries. FDEE Region also gave thanks to Rev, Grant Stuckless for the gifts of leadership that he shared during his presidency . Rev, Nancy Mojica-Fisher was welcomed and installed as the next President of FDEE. Council.



A wonderful weekend of connecting, learning and growing to equip us to answer the call of ministry today.

Your Communications Team

- Editor -in- Chief -- Rev. Marilyn Rees
- Co- Editors - Rev. Limon Daka
- Bill Matchem DLM
- Rev. Alex Constable

Those wishing to submit items for our next Fall publication, items may be submitted to the following e-mail address.. merrees@eastlink.ca.