

## DUCC CELEBRATES 25 YEARS

By Heather Robbins

Cake, ice cream, wine and cheese – a celebration for DUCC – 25 years old! April 14 – 17, 2009 was the Biannual National Gathering of DUCC. Twenty-five years ago, this gathering of Diaconal Ministers and those who find themselves on a diaconal path began its organization at Five Oaks and so it was appropriate to be again at Five Oaks to celebrate our special anniversary.

The meeting room was full – we met in layers of a circle around a centre table of candles and colour. The theme and worship focused on the history of Diaconia from Jesus' time to the present. We formed small groups to discuss different eras of our history.

The business to be discussed was broken up over the 3 days, with reports from the various clusters creatively shared, as was a report from DOTAC reps Linda Ervin and Sharilynn Upsdell. We had guests among us: Lay Pastoral Minister Carlton Senior from Jamaica, Presbyterian Margaret Robertson, and the students and staff of Francis Sandy Theological Centre joined us for most of the meeting.



DUCC members who were at the inaugural event gather to cut the cake.

Photo: Linda Clark

A panel that included our guests and diaconal ministers led us in discussion on the Issue of One Rite. There were many comments reminding us of our diversity, our community, our world-wide connections, our struggles and challenges with identity and worth. But we are diaconal ministers, called to serve on the margins, called to minister to all. We are distinct and unique as a minority among ministers, not only in the UCC, but also in other denominations. The discussion was rich and full of care, but also tinged with stories of hurt and rejection and pain.

There was tension and conflict in the room at times and through the wisdom and insight of our sisters and brothers from Francis Sandy and also our guests, we were brought back to the centre through prayer and meditation. There is always much to learn when meeting in community.

We had a presentation on the Draft Statement of Vision for DUCC. As a group, we made some suggestions and a final edited version was accepted. Gratitude was expressed to those who worked so hard on the draft statement and presented us with a passionate and clear creed.

Evolving, Transforming, Empowering... a bright, colourful and informative pamphlet was presented to the gathering that would help others understand Diaconal Ministry and encourage inquirers to include diaconal ministry as an option.

Spring had not quite arrived but it was still pleasant enough to walk around the grounds. We had free time on Thursday afternoon and special outings were arranged for those who wanted.

Thanks are expressed to the Local Arrangements folk and to all who helped make this a successful and invigorating time together.

*Heather serves Birtle-Miniota Pastoral Church in Manitoba.*



IT'S DUCC  
TIME!!

2009 and 2010  
memberships  
are for sale!

Changes were made at the National Gathering regarding membership fees starting in 2010. The benchmark for membership is \$150. but pay what you can. Any amount over \$150. will be considered a donation.

DUCC membership fees pay for World Federation and DOTAC Membership, support DUCC Clusters and Committees and make this newsletter possible. DUCC fees are tax deductible.

Download a form:  
[ducc.ca/membership](http://ducc.ca/membership) or  
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