

Diaconal ministry has its roots in the Christian scriptures. “I am among you as one that serves” (Luke 22:27). With these words to the disciples, Jesus offered a vision of ministry. In the early church all members were expected to offer their gifts in communal service. Throughout Christian history servant leadership has enabled the Church to respond to the call of the gospel.

Diaconal and deaconess comes from the Greek word *diakonia* meaning service. From the ministry of the deacon in the early centuries, to this day, women and men continue a ministry of diakonia thus keeping alive Jesus’ expression of ministry.

Diaconal Ministers are commissioned to a ministry of education, service and pastoral care. They are part of the one Order of Ministry in the United Church, sharing fully in the order with those who are ordained to a ministry of word, sacrament and pastoral care.

Diaconal Ministry is a part of a world-wide expression of this call to ministry. Diaconal Ministers are members of the Diakonia of the Americas and the Caribbean (DOTAC) and the World Federation of Diaconal Associations and Sisterhoods.



**Debra Vitt** does congregational ministry within Stony Mountain Pastoral charge in Manitoba

Diaconal Ministers serve in various capacities: in community



**Ken DeLisle** is in International Interim Ministry at Wesley United Church in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan

sacrament as well as education, service and pastoral care; some serve in multiple staff ministries with an emphasis on christian development, outreach and pastoral care; others serve in interim ministry. While Diaconal Ministers serve in various capacities their commitment to diakonia is the basis of their work.

### Preparation for Diaconal Ministry

Candidates for diaconal ministry experience themselves as called by God to this particular ministry. Fitness-for-ministry however, is an on-going interchange between the Candidate and the church. This interchange begins with discernment—a series of conversations about ministry within one's home congregation. Formal candidacy interviews with Presbytery and Conference follow discernment.

The brochure "Steps Toward Ministry" outlines this process.

development, chaplaincy, at lay education centres, theological schools, as overseas personnel or in Presbytery, Conference or General Council staff positions. In congregational ministry, Diaconal Ministers serve in positions that often include the ministries of word and



**Eric Tusz-King** serves in Diaconal Ministry as a Maritime Conference staff person in Outreach, Stewardship and Mission Support

educational program in the native context.

All of these educational programs include studies in Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, theology, ethics, church history, education, social analysis, worship and preaching, pastoral care, doctrine and church polity. All programs include practical experience in congregational and community ministry settings and reflection on this experience. Diaconal identity formation is also a significant component of each of these programs.



**Melodie McKellar** is in a teaching ministry at the Dr. Jessie Saulteaux Centre near Beausejour, Manitoba

Educational requirements for diaconal ministry can be fulfilled at The Centre for Christian Studies in Winnipeg in its five year regionally-based national program. The Francis Sandy Theological Centre near Paris, Ontario and the Dr. Jessie Saulteaux Resource Centre near Beausejour, Manitoba both offer a five year community-based

“We are called with all God’s people to be responsible agents of creative transformation, support and caring, liberation and reconciliation, justice and mercy, inviting all into a pilgrimage of dignity and well-being....

**Yvonne Naismith**

serves in Diaconal Ministry in and through the Community Outreach at St. Matthew’s in downtown Winnipeg



The primary task of diaconal ministry is mutual empowerment through education, service and pastoral care. This includes working together to maintain relationships that are life-giving and sustaining of community to meet immediate needs and to work to create a just and loving world....”

*From "Statement of Belief" adopted in 1992 by Diakonia of The United Church of Canada*



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