



Salt & Light

Newsletter for Anglican Deacons Canada: Eastertide 2023

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ADC'S VISION AND STRATEGY PROJECT: WORKING TO SUPPORT DEACONS AND STRENGTHEN THE DIACONATE *Submitted by Ian Alexander, consultant to ADC*

A lot has happened since last fall, when we first told you about our vision and strategy process. It's definitely time for an update! Here are some of the highlights so far.

- The first comprehensive survey of all permanent deacons in the Anglican Church of Canada was completed by almost 170 participants, and has provided a wealth of information about deacons' hopes and concerns. Here are just a few of the key findings:
 - Most deacons feel quite satisfied and fulfilled in their ministry. However, many do not think that all clergy and laity understand and value the diaconate as a "separate and equal" order, or that they themselves have a "direct and supportive" relationship with their bishop.
 - There is a strong desire for greater clarity and consistency in standards and practices for the recruitment, discernment, formation and deployment of deacons across the Canadian church.
 - One of the highest priorities for the future of the diaconate is the recruitment of a younger, more diverse cohort of postulants.
 - The deacon's lot is often quite a lonely one. There is a great appetite for more networking and professional development opportunities, as well as coaching, mentoring and peer support.
 - Those who are aware of ADC tend to value it highly. However, our profile is lower than it should be. Survey respondents would like to see a stronger, more active, better resourced Association that can provide connection and support for individual deacons, as well as building awareness and advocacy around issues of importance to the diaconate as a whole.
- Follow-up focus groups were held with interested survey participants to explore issues in greater depth. Focus groups are also being organized with groups with particular interests, e.g. younger deacons, Indigenous deacons, deacons working as chaplains, etc.

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ADC'S VISION AND STRATEGY PROJECT: WORKING TO SUPPORT DEACONS AND STRENGTHEN THE DIACONATE *...continued from page 1*

- Following a very supportive conversation with the Primate, we have been able to arrange to meet with each of the four provincial Houses of Bishops (two done and two to come). They, too, have expressed broad support for strengthening the permanent diaconate as a distinctive order, and for finding ways to compare policies and practices and achieve greater clarity and consistency.
- To that end, a small working group has been created to work on crafting a shared statement on the diaconate, which it is hoped could eventually receive broad endorsement and wide distribution across the Canadian church. This initiative is a joint undertaking of Anglican Deacons Canada and the Faith, Worship and Ministry department of the Office of General Synod. It will liaise closely with other work currently underway towards the revision of the Ordinal. The working group will be led by The Very Rev'd M. Ansley Tucker, Dean Emerita of Christ Church Cathedral Victoria, Director of Deacons for the Diocese of Islands and Inlets, and one of the key contributors to the Iona Report.
- An initial conversation has been held with the Executive Director of the Pension Office Corporation of the Anglican Church of Canada (which administers the Continuing Education Plan) with a view to finding ways that

non-stipendiary deacons might be better able to access funds for continuing education, at both the national and diocesan levels. We hope to be able to report on our findings about this later in the year.

All in all, there's considerable excitement and energy in the air, and a sense of increased interest and impact on the part of your Association. One thing we've heard repeatedly is that the simple act of being in touch and making connections is, in and of itself, a most welcome and valuable contribution.

At a very practical level, the process of compiling lists to circulate the online survey, and comments received in response, helped reveal and repair some inaccuracies in our data base, and we hope will help us to be in more regular, reliable contact in future with both current and prospective members of ADC. We've already received a number of new memberships as a result of all this activity.

The vision and strategy work will continue throughout 2023. We anticipate further tangible outcomes as we go forward, as well as a final report that will pave the way for major new initiatives and improvements in the future.

If you have any questions or comments about this process, please drop us a line at:
info@anglicandeaconsCanada.ca



Save the Date! Every three years Anglican Deacons Canada organizes a national in-person conference for deacons. It is a wonderful opportunity to connect with and learn from deacon colleagues, aspirants to the diaconate and supporters of the diaconate from across Canada and beyond.

Our next conference will take place **June 13-16, 2024**, at the Sorrento Centre, a retreat and conference facility in beautiful British Columbia.

The conference is held in conjunction with an ADC member meeting which we anticipate will be held in a hybrid format so that members who are not present at the conference will be able to join us via Zoom. Plan now to attend and start investigating possibilities for bursaries from your diocese or church!

Night Vision

Submitted by the Reverend Canon Deacon Nancy Ford

It had been a grey winter's day. As dusk descended on the remaining hint of sunlight, the landscape slowly transformed into the sepia tones of an old photograph. Nighttime shadows began changing the landscape. It was almost dinner time and we had let out our 2 Labrador dogs for a brief run. When we called them to come back the younger one, Brigid, did not respond. This was unusual and worrying. Dusk is not an ideal time to look for a black dog.

We searched her usual haunts and still no Brigid. As the car left the driveway for a sweep of the neighborhood, we thought we heard a distant bark but could see no movement. By this time dusk had slipped into night. There was no moonlight to give us hints of the landscape. As the car returned and moved slowly down the driveway, we thought we heard some noise and a bark of desperation.

Flashlights in hand following where we thought the noise had originated, we discovered a now relieved Brigid behind the gate to our vegetable garden. It seems she had found a snow weakened part of the deer resistant fence. We now know it is not hungry Labrador resistant. The treasure trove of winter carrots was long forgotten by Brigid when she couldn't find her way out. She expected her humans to know she was in the garden and would be waiting at the gate. Our night vision did not match her expectations.

As with Brigid there are any number of things which find us seeking to satisfy our desires. It can be found in the search for a good bargain, coveted hockey game tickets, or even fenced in carrots. Finding holes in the usual barriers to acquiring such things can be rather seductive. Unofficial accommodation or slightly unethical programs or money that purport to stave off the worst of the needs we encounter is enticing. It is paradoxical. Our call to ethically serve and help can be at odds with the immediate demands of the crisis at hand.

Even the most ethical of Deacons can on occasion be tempted to look for a slightly suspect alternative. We hold stories, situations, people and their desperation and pain in our hearts. It could be a young mother with a health challenged toddler who is about to lose her home, a cognitively challenged adult who has been unable to find food, or a senior who is forgoing necessary medications to pay rent, or a young man on the brink of sobriety who needs a

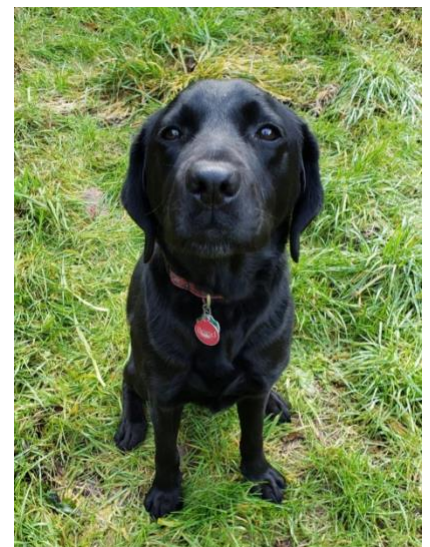
supportive community. We often find there is no system, no person or agency willing to help or work with us toward the changes which could more effectively serve those in crisis. These feelings of helplessness can take us into the mire of impotent desperation.

Yet our vocation is to live in and with these stories of injustice and inequity. We are called to help make a difference and to "serve all people particularly the poor, the weak, the sick and the lonely". But we are stymied by fences and barriers which seem to grow up overnight. Our endeavours to serve, to make a difference in the lives of those who are continually "othered" and dismissed by society, can feel futile. This is where we need to find our night vision.

Barbara Brown Taylor in her book "Learning to Walk in the Dark", writes of people's discoveries when they became dependent on other senses than vision. One chapter, "The Eyes of the Blind", begins with a quote from Wendel Berry: "To know the dark, go dark. Go without sight and find that the dark, too, blooms and sings."

The dark described by Brown Taylor encompasses human suffering. Human beings will do almost anything to avoid physical and emotional discomfort. Being with those who are in the darkness of pain is a diaconal calling. But it does mean we too need to learn to "see" in the dark, not in desperation but with attentiveness. What could we not "see" before? What is it we hear or touch? Is there a background rhythm leading into a music which speaks of the Divine presence? Richard Rohr says that this too can be a place where "we come to be "seized" by love, God's love". This love is generous and unlimited. This holy love will spread into the lives of those we serve and those we challenge. The dark is truly transformative.

May Holy Night Vision heal and transform our work and passion as Deacons.



Reflections on

Interpreting to the Church the Needs, Concerns and Hopes of the World

Submitted by Deacon Suzanne McMillan

Without rootedness in the world, life and ministry are meaningless. From the very beginning of the Biblical narrative the story is of God who comes among us. It is this incarnational self-giving of God that sets our agenda as people of God.

We cannot claim to worship Jesus in the tabernacle if we do not have compassion for Jesus in the alleys and on the train tracks! We must go out into the world and look for Jesus in the ragged and the naked, in the oppressed and in those who exist in the shadows; in those who have lost hope and those who are struggling to make good. Look for Jesus in them and when you find him, wash his feet in the presence of all his brethren. Just when is our church vibrantwhen the congregation is alive to the world! Engagement with our world gives enthusiasm for and purpose to our ministries every day as we live out the incarnation.

Our friend Jesus was no recluse, he engaged with people easily at weddings, dinner parties, he debated with leaders of the day, spent time with outcasts, engaged with Roman Rulers and Jewish Freedom Fighters! The Old Testament Prophets modeled an engagement that was objective and discerning and were not afraid to speak out when the time came. Diaconal ministry takes its lead from this. Building relationships with everyone we encounter is what our ministry is about! The incarnation is central to diaconal ministry so consequently deacons find themselves in the most unlikely places because God is there!

Deacons have a prophetic ministry in the world where injustice exists and pastoral ministry to people is needed. Because we do this as representative people there is a two-way movement: Deacons lead the church into the world in mission and guide the world back into the church for prayer and action.

Diaconal ministry has the world as its context and Deacons are privileged to walk alongside Christ amid life. It's reasonable for the church to expect deacons to be engaged with the local community and have an awareness of what is happening in the wider world. In other words deacons need to be genuinely world-oriented and have a world affirming perspective.

One final query: How do we hold together the wonder and worry of the world? We are challenged every day to hold everything in creative tension, to live with paradox and conviction as we engage in God's world. We are people who live with the perspective of a long timescale, yet we are very aware of the urgency of the "present".

I have been pondering the "challenge" Joan Chittister (see below for more information) throws out to us as deacons. Joan is a well-known Benedictine Sister and author. She suggests that we take our smallness "lightly" but our presence "seriously". She speaks from her community's close involvement with peace issues and their outreach to the poor.

Yes, I believe with our ministry in both the world and the church we can help the church to live with a "light" yet "serious" touch in God's world. If we are disciple-formed, gospel-centered and mission-driven then we are full of the spirit! If we passionately find Christ in the hungry, the stranger, the sick and imprisoned, lead people in loving care of the poor and the lonely and defend those who have no helper we are full of wisdom and have the heart of a Deacon. Believe in yourselves fellow Deacons! We are here for the long haul! Our ministry will continue to lead the Church by example in Christ-like engagement in the world for a long, long time

Sister Joan Chittister is one of the most influential religious and social leaders of our time. For over 50 years she has passionately advocated on behalf of peace, human rights, women's issues, and monastic and church renewal. A much sought-after international speaker, she is also a best-selling author of more than 60 books, hundreds of articles, and an online column for the National Catholic Reporter.

For more information on sister Joan, please visit her website:
<https://joanchittister.org/>



Reflections on Interpreting to the Church the Needs, Concerns and Hopes of the World *Submitted by Deacon Martha Waind*

My reflection is to show how I make Christ and his redemptive love known by word and example to those among whom one lives, works and worships.

My main ministry for the past ten years has been our Thrift Shop. The thrift shop started in a small room above the Parish Hall, and we were open only Saturdays. We soon realized that there was a much greater need than we thought, and by 2014, we purchased and refurbished a school portable with the generous help of a parishioner and opened 6 days a week from 10- 4.

The volunteers now number more than 30 and I schedule 24 people weekly having 2 three hour shifts daily. All proceeds other than our meager expenses are shared with both our local community, the diocese, and one very special school in Africa that we have pledged to give \$5000.00 a year as long as we are open and we can.

Bishop McCalister School has used the monies we have been blessed to share with them, to build a library, buy computers for their students, and build indoor washrooms. All the students are sponsored, and the cost per year per child for room and board and education is \$450.00 Canadian.

Many of the students who have graduated come back as teachers to give back what they were given as students. We heard about this school as one of our parishioner's daughters, is a teacher in New Brunswick and gives up her summer holidays by donating her time to teach each year.

This past year we were blessed to share more than \$30,000.00 in outreach in our community. The thrift shop is well established and, I am now able to focus more on a new project started in September of 2022.

The Gathering Place is in the centre of the village and is a place where people can come to read a book, do a puzzle, play a game of cards or chess, or just come in from the rain or the cold and sit in a warm place. Anyone is welcome, we always have a pot of coffee on, or can offer tea, hot chocolate, a cup of soup. (We do have a donation jar, but no one is required to pay.)

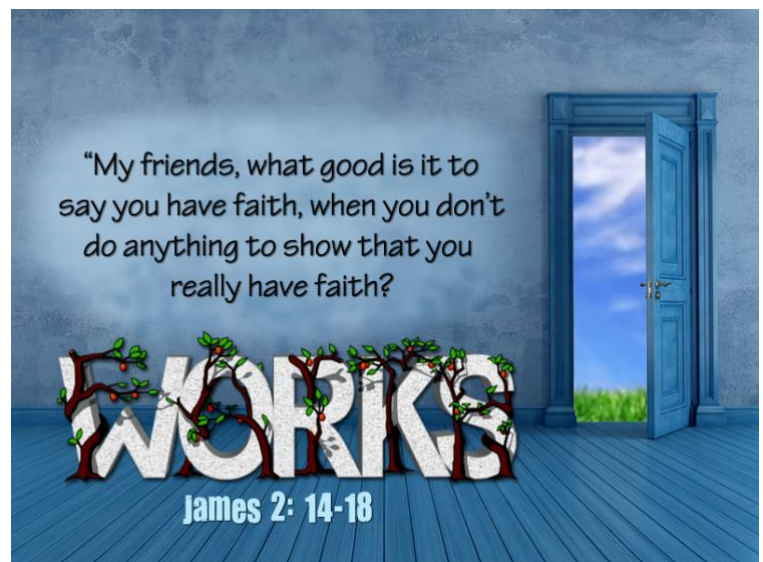
In Minden there was no place for seniors or others to go unless they went to a restaurant (and of course that costs money.)

The Gathering Place has been open just over six months, and we are becoming a place where friends can meet, and not feel judged or wonder how long they can stay. Our doors are open to anyone, as I said, and we are showing God's love by making all who enter welcome.

We do offer some art classes and other crafts, computer classes. If someone has to fill out a government form, they may not know where to start, and we can guide them through it. All of the volunteers at the Gathering Place have taken instruction to ensure we do not belittle anyone coming in by saying the wrong thing.

We offered a course from "Bridges of Poverty" and then had in house training at the Church as well. All staff must have taken this instruction.

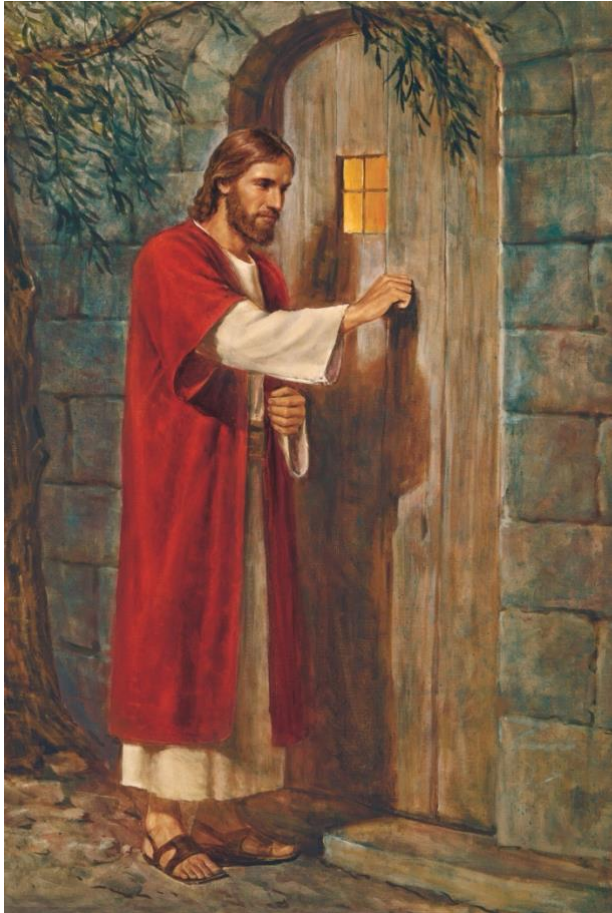
Our Thrift shop motto is taken from James 2: 14-18. In short, **Faith without action, is having no faith at all.**



An integral part of St. Paul's vision is to bring Christ's love and hope to the community by reaching out through service, worship and ministry. I feel in both these ministries we are doing what Jesus did, by reaching out to all in need, and by being the hands the feet and the voice of Christ. We are opening not only our doors but our hearts as well, to all we meet.

I Didn't Want to Go
~A Poem~
Submitted by Deacon Francis Stewart

Visiting and pastoral care are part of my ministry as a deacon. Usually, I go willingly and prayerfully. Sometimes I encounter folk in dire situations, and it is harder when there are children involved. One day recently I needed to revisit a family in crisis but felt overwhelmed. I literally didn't want to go. Putting my feelings into verse reminded me that my role is to be present when possible, and to accompany my sisters and brothers in Christ. Christ walks alongside us and shows us the way.



I Didn't Want to Go

Their driveway isn't shovelled,
just a track through drifted snow.
Often the doorbell is unanswered,
I didn't want to go.

I thought, "But I'm the deacon,"
left the comfort of home behind.
Aware of affluent privilege,
frustration on my mind.

With supper for the children
trudged unsteadily to the door.
I knocked and waited quietly
For two minutes or more.

At last the door was opened -
A young adult let me in.
A cursory conversation,
Oh, where do I begin?

Begin with prayer and caring,
realistic boundaries too.
Willingness to walk along side,
that's just what deacons do.



We invite you to "**Gather at the River**" for the 2023 DOTAC Conference to be held at the Embassy Suites Hotel in downtown Minneapolis, Minnesota, United States. The Conference begins on Monday, August 14 at 3:15pm with a welcome and community building session, followed by a reception from 5:30-7pm, then opening worship. The closing worship will be held the morning of Friday, August 18. The registration table will open at 2pm on August 14.

For more details, please visit <https://dotac.diakonia-world.org/>

A Litany for Easter
Written by Ted Dodd
Diakonia of The United Church of Canada
President, Diakonia of the Americas and the Caribbean

~ This Prayer was submitted by Canon Deacon Jacquie Bouthéon ~

In this sacred time of the year, we acknowledge the many current crucifixions in our broken world and find resurrection hope in the those who take faithful action for justice, the beauty of creation, and the blessedness of relationships.

Litany for Easter

In John's Gospel account,
The first Easter happened while it was still night,
In our pandemic world, it can feel like we are in perpetual night.
People are dying in violent shootings.
Banks are failing and economies reeling.
Tensions are escalating amongst nations.
The environmental gloom weighs us down.
God of Easter,
Grant us hope and a sense of daylight.

In John's Gospel,
The Easter morning the disciples seem to run in circles and do not understand.
In the face of the heartbreak, hurt and hunger of our world so much is
confusing, upsetting and stressful.
God of Resurrection,
grant us peace and a spirit of prayerfulness.

In John's Gospel
Account of the first Easter,
Mary Magdalene stood at the tomb weeping,
A lot of us are weeping, and face personal, political, and planetary circumstances
in grief, in fear, in anxiety.
God of the Empty Tomb,
Grant us reassurance and a willingness to see the world without despair.

In the Gospel,
Despite death and misunderstanding and tears,
Easter happened. A stone was rolled away. Angels appeared.
Jesus spoke Mary's name.
God of the Gospel good news,
speak each of our names, that we might know assurance and faith.

God of Easter,
roll away the stone of sadness, that we might be people of hope.
God of Resurrection,
race with us to the site of new life, that we might live in courage.
God of the Empty Tomb,
help us to see angels, that we might experience strength.



Anglican Deacons Canada is seeking four volunteers to serve as members of its Nominations Committee. One Canadian Anglican deacon is needed from each ecclesiastical province in the Anglican Church of Canada.

Criteria: potential members must be Canadian Anglican deacons in good standing who do not intend to let their name stand for any ADC board positions.

Term of Office: The new members will serve until June 2024 when ADC will hold a members meeting to elect a new board. However, ADC is considering moving to staggered terms for its board so if new members of the committee are willing to serve a two or three year term that would be helpful.

Not sure which ecclesiastical province your diocese is in? Please visit:
<https://www.anglican.ca/about/organization/dioceses/map/>

If you or someone you know is interested in serving in this way or you would like more information about what is involved,

please contact ADC President Lisa Chisholm-Smith at revdeaconlisa@gmail.com