



*Relying on the Holy Spirit, Diaconal Ministries Canada exists to Inspire, Empower and Equip Deacons, as they animate congregations to join in God's transforming work in communities across Canada.*

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January 2022

## **Winter/Spring Classis Report**

Greetings Friends in Ministry!

♪ "Another year over... and a new one's just begun!" ♪

We can't believe we just celebrated another New Year's Eve! Where does the time go? As we reflected back on 2021 and all that happened (and didn't happen, due to the ongoing pandemic) Diaconal Ministries' staff, Board and Diaconal Coaches realized one important thing: **God was still at work in 2021 - in us and through us.** Here is what we are celebrating from 2021 and what we're looking forward to for 2022.

### **What We're Celebrating...**

- Over this past year, our 15 [Diaconal Coaches](#) were able to train over 350 deacons across Canada at approximately 40 different training events and gatherings!;
- Our online presence has grown on our [Facebook page](#) (over 500 followers) and approximately 80% of our website visitors were new and mostly in Canada;
- With the departure of long-time staff member Tammy Heidbuurt, we were able to hire Mr. Mark Vanderwees as our new Regional Ministry Developer for Eastern Canada and he certainly hit the ground running this past spring. Read more about him [HERE](#);
- While we continue to offer [benevolence](#) workshops and other resources for deacons, another new partnership was struck with Ms. Anja Attema, a Financial Life Coach in Southern Ontario. While there is a time and place for immediate and short-term 'help', Deacons can now offer a more sustainable solution to their church members AND broader community through Anja's coaching program;
- Seven (7) churches (located in BC, Sask., Ont., & Nova Scotia) are exploring [Community Opportunity Scans](#) in their local communities through an online cohort, being led by Ms. Rachel Vroege (our Regional Ministry Developer in Western Canada), Mark Vanderwees and Jodi Koeman of World Renew US. While Covid has made these initiatives a bit more challenging, churches are longing to get to know their neighbours and discover where God is already at work and how they can join Him;
- In December, we wrapped up our brand new devotion series, "[Detours: Overcoming Spiritual Roadblocks in Ministry](#)". Monthly emails were sent to every Chair of Deacons in Canada with the newest devotion. A booklet of this new set will be available soon on our website (and hopefully in print for churches to order!);

- In partnership with the Canadian Indigenous Ministry Committee and with the desire to work towards reconciliation, Diaconal Ministries' staff and coaches were pleased to promote and participate in the [Hearts Exchanged](#) cohorts that began in the fall.

### What We're Looking Forward To...

- [Check out our NewGround Partner Updates on Vimeo!](#) These ministries are changing lives in communities all across Canada and we are privileged to walk alongside them, offering grant money and coaching conversations. **NewGround Sunday is May 1st this year!**;
- Our [Stewardship](#) Pilot Project has continued to help churches learn and live out the Biblical principles of stewardship. Five (5) more resources were added to our website last year and Toolkits on the 4 T's of Stewardship will be ready this spring;
- We will be holding an online learning event for our Diaconal Coaches on February 12th with the topic: "Refugee Support: Month 13 and Beyond". We are pleased to partner with Dena Nicolai (CRC Refugee Support Mobilizer) to discuss a balanced approach to resourcing both urban and rural churches longing to do refugee ministry.
- Mark Vanderwees is working with the Ontario South West Diaconal Conference to resurrect their mandate. We, along with Safe Church and Disability Concerns, are planning an event for March 26.

Despite the ongoing pandemic and the many challenges that have come with it, Diaconal Ministries has had the privilege of seeing the hearts of deacons in action across the country this past year; and this is what drives *our* work! (You can read their stories on our [e-Quip Diaconal Blog](#).) It is our sincere hope and desire that your church has been impacted by the work that we do to equip and encourage deacons in the areas of community engagement, justice & mercy, and stewardship. All of this work is possible because of the Ministry Shares that Canadian churches contribute as well as our growing list of individual donors who have joined our mission!

For your information, our Board Executive for 2021-22 is:

- Chair – Peter VanHarmelen (Halifax, NS).....petervanharmelen@gmail.com
- Vice-Chair – Martin Slofstra (Toronto, ON).....martinslofstra9@gmail.com
- Secretary – Cindy Verbeek (Houston, BC).....cindy.verbeek@arocha.ca
- Treasurer – Rose Saller (Pontypool, ON).....rosesaller@gmail.com

If you have any questions or concerns or need assistance in any way, please reach out to us at [dmc@crcna.org](mailto:dmc@crcna.org). May God bless each one of you in your ongoing ministry!

Respectfully submitted,



**ron vandenbrink**

National Director, Diaconal Ministries Canada