



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.

August 2021

Fall Classis Report

Greetings Friends in Ministry!

Challenging. Unexpected. Interesting. Busy.

These were some of the top words shared at a recent gathering of our NewGround partners, board members and staff to sum up this past year of ministry. *Perhaps some of these resonate with you as well.* And yet through these past 18 months, Diaconal Ministries Canada has continued to work tirelessly to equip and support deacons and churches all across the country. Along with updated resources being added to our website regularly and hands-on training and support from our network of [Diaconal Coaches](#), our [NewGround](#) program continues to help churches love their community (we gave out [7 grants to partners](#) across Canada, including our second Youth Justice partner in Halifax, NS).

Deacons play an important role in bringing Christ's love to their churches and communities and for that, we are grateful. It has been our privilege to serve and equip them in this role. Here is some of the feedback we've received over the last year and a half:

"First-time deacons are usually a bit overwhelmed and Diaconal Ministries Canada has a lot of resources. I have been a deacon before so am pretty familiar with our Mandate but it was good to be reminded and read through it again. Doing workshops via Zoom has its limitations but at least we can still do these types of trainings during Covid!" - Deacon in Nova Scotia

"Diaconal Ministries Canada has been most helpful in providing leadership and resources especially in this Pandemic time. Thank you!" - Stewardship Bible Study participant

This is only possible because of this faithful community of supporters, who pray for us and contribute financially to our mission to equip and support deacons in their role. SO THANK YOU!

Some things we're working on for upcoming 2021-2022 ministry year are:

- Our **Stewardship Pilot Project** continues to be a program of learning, resources and action, intended to help CRCs in Canada increase their members' awareness of the Biblical principles of stewardship, and help them live those principles out in practical, measurable ways. Toolkits for the 4 areas of stewardship are being developed right now on top of what is already on our [website](#). If your church is ready to dive in, contact us today!

- We have worked closely with Ms. Anja Attema who can offer deacons significant help with their **Benevolence** ministry. As a certified Financial Life Coach, Anja can help deacons move from offering temporary and limited solutions to giving practical and sustainable assistance to their churches and communities. Interested churches can reach out to us to find out more.
- **Our NewGround Program** continues to be a significant part of our work at Diaconal Ministries. Mentioned earlier in this report, we had a great Ministry Networking Day with our NewGround partners, built around the theme of Spiritual First Aid during a Pandemic. Alida van Dijk of the Community Counselling Centre of London, a current NewGround partner, led our plenary session. Van Dijk's presentation, entitled "Post-traumatic Growth and the Role of Spiritual First Aid in a Pandemic", showed how Spiritual First Aid involves being present, providing support and being an empathetic witness – all things we can offer in times of crisis, like the ongoing pandemic. This annual event was held virtually for the first time ever due to the ongoing pandemic. One partner participant thanked van Dijk, saying the session was both 'amazing and soul nourishing!' (You can read the full story [here](#)). **Unfortunately, our spring NewGround Offering has decreased significantly over the past couple of years**, mostly due to the ongoing pandemic and several churches not meeting in their usual ways. This will have a direct impact on our partner churches and ministries in the coming year. We appreciate your ongoing support tremendously, as do our partners! We have sent a special request to churches to consider taking a Fall offering for [NewGround](#).

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.

In closing, we can't stress enough the vital role that deacons play at the Classis level as they live into this mandate. Classis is a place where everyone matters, everyone is heard, and everyone does their part SO THAT we can together bring the Good News of the Kingdom to this broken world and see lives and communities transformed!

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. May God bless each one of you in your ongoing ministry!

Respectfully submitted,



ron vandenbrink

National Director, Diaconal Ministries Canada