

# **Celebration of the Blessing of 50 Years of Diaconal Ministry**

## **Diane Trollope**

### **Welcome and Statement of Purpose**

Welcome to this celebration of a significant milestone, today we feel a sense of wonder and gratitude with Diane Trollope, reflecting on her 50 years of Diaconal Ministry. What a pleasure it is, to celebrate a truly joyous moment, even as there enormous tumult in our world. Many times in the midst of change and struggle, Diane has served in ministry, to this very day continues to serving in ministry locally and for the larger church. Diane, we found a poem you penned a number of years ago, and we thought a little bit of mirth might be appropriate here:

Being 50 can be nifty, if you play it right.

Some doors may now shut,

Others may open wide.

You'll be able to choose

And then bravely step inside.

For all of us, whether here or there,

Walk nearby, as friends and kin.

God abides within us. Love to share.

Diane, as your friends and kin, we celebrate this special milestone with you.

### **Acknowledgment of Traditional Territory**

Today we recognize that thousands of years before settlers came to this land First Peoples were living on, and caring for, this land. St. Andrew's worships on the traditional territories of the Atikemekshing Anishnawbek and the Wahnapiatae First Nation. Our Christian faith calls us to help make right the wrongs done. To work for more just sharing of the land, for healing of the hurts caused by our colonial past, and to work earnestly towards reconciliation.

### **Lighting of Christ Candle**

We take a moment now to centre ourselves In Peace... Jesus breathed peace upon his friends when he appeared to them after his crucifixion. Christ-presence surrounds us today. I invite you to take a deep breath, notice how that breath feeds your vital organs with oxygen. As we breathe in that Peace of Christ, we light a candle to signify Holy Presence with us. **[light candle]**

### **Opening Prayer**

Diane - Happy 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of your commissioning into ministry within The United Church of Canada. Back in December, 2014, you penned a poem and I think the words are perfect as an opening into this worship and celebration.

One day, someone whispered in my heart.

I knew the voice. I had heard it before.

But it came in so many patterns, and colours, across pages and in photos, and as words spoken from one to another.

It came in tears from another's broken heart, and from a bright cheery hello.

The Spirit that whispers works silently, calmly, away from our eyes, ears and knowing.

It whispers inside, and it will enter into another,

Bringing healing, just as warmth brings peace.

Heed the Whisperer in you, for She also attends your heart....

May this be our prayer. Amen.

### **Rev. Peter Hartmans, Executive Minister for Canadian Shield Regional Council**

Reads the Record of Diane's ministry service, brings greetings from the Canadian Shield Region.

Biography: Susan Diane Trollope, CCS '70



I was born and raised in Toronto, working first in Early Childhood Education and eventually as the Christian Education Director at my home church, Humbercrest United Church. Soon after I was accepted to Covenant College, where the Anglicans joined us and the two Colleges agreed on a new name: The Centre for Christian Studies (CCS). I worked one summer for London Presbytery before entering CCS. And in 1969, for my summer Internship I went East to Nova Scotia. I was there for the moon landing. I graduated and was commissioned in 1970, one of The CCS's first graduates.

I went to London, then off to British Columbia to the Program Staff at Naramata Centre in The Okanagan Valley. A few years later I was back in Ontario to discover Settlement was necessary since we were now Ordered Ministry in Diaconal Ministry.

I was settled south of North Bay, in the Port Loring Pastoral Charge and when I left there I came to Sudbury. I am 'actively' Retired now.



In the 50 years so much has gone on, so much learning, much done, some strange & sad, meeting opposition such as we all do at times in whatever we do. So many things learned down East as I had to have someone drive with me till I got my license. I thought she was really brave, she had to drive with me, and come to hear me preach 3 times every Sunday, but she said she felt blessed. She was a good driving teacher and soon I passed the driving tests and was off on my own.



As an Intern down East I had three churches that stayed open only for students in the summer months. Together they offered many gifts for my future ministry. I climbed a water tower in the Annapolis Valley and helped lead at a girls' camp near the coast for a week, heading back for services Sunday. I found Nova Scotia had this lush green background to everything. I also went to the second funeral in my life and thought if I didn't say anything I could just be there, and learn about them, but somehow I introduced myself as the student minister and it all changed. So it ended up being a good learning curve for me to experience being part of the leadership of the service, not just prayerfully attend. He was one of my parishioners, so it was difficult to keep my emotions settled.

I believe that as adults, and especially as Christians we have signed up for life-long learning, adapting and spiritual growth. My first recollection of God was when I was five years old. So I began the journey before I knew I had. Now 5 decades have flown by...and now...

**Bible Reading**

Romans 12:1

So then, my friends, because of God's great mercy to us I appeal to you: Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer.

**Reflection by Diane:**

**One Premise to Live By**  
*50 Years - Designated Deaconess  
and Ordered Commissioned Minister  
1970 - 2020*

*So then, my friends, because of God's great mercy to us I appeal to you: Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer. (Romans 12:1)*

*The Romans passage carries a lot of meaning for me as it is how I tried to be...still trying to be actually... it is about learning about life your whole life.*

In my life I found I worship and serve God, and his Son Jesus points to and worships this same God. It seems that Paul made Jesus more than he'd likely want and what is written after the fact has changed it somehow. Like Jung, who was alive when many people took him on as the guru to follow...apparently said he was glad he 'wasn't a Jungian'. As we know stories gather around anyone we look to follow. Some of those things are not what was intended at all, and we hear the gossip surrounding any such leader, even today. Neither Jesus, or Jung were self proclaimed, nor could they control the stories.

So it is out of God's mercy we are grateful and look to follow and serve God. Today we follow closely the same manner in our Reaching Out work and Mission & Service. And in our own practices of mediation and prayer as we want inner growth for today and tomorrow's energy. Especially as we still keep distancing and staying home.

And following Jesus today is the pattern of following God's call to peace and non-violence which would bring real and lasting inclusiveness. 'The kingdom won't be brought in by the sword'. Which to me means we work to end reasons for fear, violence, discrimination, racism, hate, and exclusion. It also means protecting the environment that serves to give us life in food, water, air, and beauty. *Only love can bring in God's kingdom.*

God's love is perfect and complete, it has no limits and that is where we falter, as it seems so hard to get it into our own hearts, heads and actions & speak. So, God Loves everybody! And we don't get a say in that.

My Call came in doing, from a sense of what was needed. My fitting in was through the church which was, first, at Humbercrest United in Toronto. Now I have to say I was brought up Anglican, baptized and confirmed Anglican. Low Anglican as my grandfather, Archie McKinnon, would say. Not the one I knew here in Sudbury ages ago, but a very young man who came from Scotland and was Roman Catholic but had grown tired of some of their ways, joined a 'low' Anglican church. Add to that I went to a Gospel Hall summer camp for 7 years as well as going to the United Church, where I became a member at 21. My mom said I promised to wait till then, though I but don't recall that, but kept the peace and waited.

I recall when I was five I was scared to go to Kindergarten... too many adults. At five we are open to many things that life can eventually clutter and make harder to accept. But I apparently was open enough to have an amazing experience of what I call God. Jesus was more about Christmas so was not high on my radar. I did know about God. The experience was an Energy I would say now, that scared me but quickly I knew it meant no harm. It circled me then drifted inside to my core.

*I felt it permeate every cell. Then it sat there inside me... with me.*

By then I was relaxed and enjoying this new, weird feeling of Energy. It was playful, accepting, my best word for it: Love. At five the message is that I am loved.

*Loved by God, who else can do this? God could - I was very sure of that.*

Then it left as all thin places where the holy is so very real do, they close. But it left slowly, letting me get used to that it was going, and slow enough I figured in my young head, and maybe heart, that surely some would have to be left behind.... in me. I truly believe it was left inside every bit of me to remind me that no matter what God loved me... even before anyone else.

Now, of course I did forget, likely far too often as life took me on its ride of ups and downs. Some were dangerous, but healing was also actively engaging my soul. Others took me higher again and reminded me who I am.

*I learned to remember who I was, all the time. And what I am about even today.*

My premise of ministry is that God's love is real and perfect. It does not have human aspects of hate, violence, or having to test us, or dismissing anyone, or discrimination, or racism. No double standards. No deceit, or trickery.

God has no reward systems either, they are a human construct. God simply loves us. So fear is not involved in God's love, or work, that is also a human working. Perfect love casts out fear. If God's love is perfect and Jesus worked toward teaching that love, then my life is to try to be living that same love.

Being a living work of God in ministry to God's people. God's people means every human being. I cannot divide the whole people of God, God is the Creator, is the Spirit of Love working in you and I, by the Spirit.

I need to say here that the Spirit walks on my journey and still amazes me, but I am also grateful for all the support over the years of study and ministry and all the many prayers and joyful times that added so much to my life. I cannot, nor will try, to name all those people. Some are gone now, but for each and every one, I am truly thankful.

A very honest joke in the paper years ago looked in on this scene: St. Peter and God watching from outer space looking at planets, stars and moons and see the Earth with puffs of smoke and arrows darting from it. St. Peter asks God what he's going to do about it. God shakes his head and says that he told them to go forth and multiply. Division & subtraction was their idea.

That too often sums up exactly what we are doing wrong even today. Dividing and subtracting people and the use of fear, is quite offensive to God, and the amazing Love we all own. It impedes our call to love our neighbour as ourselves.

So, if nothing else, remember God is Love. God loves you, and you, and you and you.... pass it on in all the ways you can find. Our loving is the true worship of God and that is how we are to live with each other. And if you need help doing that call our Reaching Out Team, and there are gifts to Mission & Service to help those far away.

So, God is not finished with me yet after 50 years, or you. And in 50 years you young folks out there: God loves you now, and will be loving you then. It will be so, for LOVE is God's forever promise. *Alleluia!*

Thanks be to God. Amen!

**Hymn: *Oh When the Hills*** (written by Diane)

Oh when the hills ring out with gladness,  
joy fills my heart beyond the imagined  
and the God of all creation walks with me along the way.  
And when I see the colours of creation  
and when I hear the rhythm of life  
the birds sing out and my soaring spirit dances.  
God of my life, you fill my soul with love.

## **Prayer of Thanksgiving for Diane's ministry**

*(written by Sylvia Carscadden, delivered by Roger Pile)*

Creator God, you surround us with beauty. All around us we drink in the loveliness of creation,

- the air which refreshes minds and spirit,
- the water which constitutes our bodies and sustains our living,
- the earth which is our grounding

We have everything around us to nourish our wholeness. We praise you for this abundance.

We gather in community in this disconnected time. We are held together with bonds of faith and love. We are thankful that you bless us with gifts of music, poetry, story, memory and imagination which we can share. We are blessed with enthusiasm for your mission of Love.

Today we give thanks for the diversity in our community of faith. We ask for your Love to penetrate the darkness of violence, misunderstanding, racism, arrogance and self-interest. We hold before us your promise of full and abundant life for all people.

Our tradition is rich with stories of people who have answered your call. We are grateful that our church discerns, educates and guides particular persons to ordered ministry in the United Church of Canada.

We give thanks today for the journey of faith and ministry of Diane,

- for her witness in this community,
- for her advocacy for children,
- her creative gifts of writing shared with others.

We are thankful for those in this community who support Diane as she continues to answer her call and serve others in the name of Love.

We ask for your blessing on this day of celebration. Surround Diane with joy, hope, purpose and the love of her community. Keep us all in your loving care, and may Peace wrap its arms around the earth.

These things we pray in the name of Jesus, the Christ, Amen.

## **Blessing**

*(Sharon Long)*

Mother Theresa said, "Some people come into your life as a blessing. Some come into your life as a lesson."

Diane, you've been a blessing to many people because you truly model your belief that "Love is the only way to change the world."

Now we ask God to bless *you*,

and we thank you

- for your kindness, your thoughtfulness, and your sweet spirit
- for your modelling of Christianity
- for the many things you've done to make our lives better.

God bless you, Diane.

## **Postlude**