

To the National DUCC gathering at Tatamagouche, N.S.

Our conference is wide – 15 hours from top to bottom and about 7 hours east to west. It is not easy to gather with great regularity but we do find some ways. A number of diaconal ministers in ABNW conference have provided leadership as the coordinating cluster of DUCC, which provides a few of us to meet with great regularity and do catch up with each other. As well some DMs meet within their presbyteries and during church meetings. At each annual conference we began gathering over supper. We used to have a major meeting at the end of a day at the annual conference but this has continually met with some complaint so supper seems to offer the same opportunity. This is our chance to recognize the passages of our colleagues such as retirement, commissioning, marriage, births, deaths, etc. But besides gathering at each conference and a few regional gatherings there have not been too many times we have been graced with the presence of one another. Except for Oct of 2004.

Last October (2004) many of us gathered at the home of Barb Myers, just south of Edmonton. We were feeling rather scattered and needed to connect with one another after what seemed like too a long time. Letters went out to all diaconal ministers in our conference. We are retired, students, volunteers, employed, and some awaiting calls. Twenty-six were able to be there for 2 ½ days. These few days provided us with a wonderful occasion to get reacquainted and tell stories. As we began we sat in order of our commissioning or designation. Generations of graduates from the 1960s to the present were there. We sang, ate, slept, and talked – a lot. We listened to Betty Marlin's stories from Zambia, which provided good opportunity for Betty to begin getting integrated back into life in Alberta. We are glad she is back here to stay.

We continue to find creative ways to meet and support one another. Bruce Jackson began a web site a couple of years ago for DMs in this conference and this method of communication continues to be developed and updated.