

Sue Taylor



Year Commissioned

I graduated from the Centre for Christian Studies in Toronto in 1985 and was commissioned shortly afterwards at Trinity St. Paul's in Toronto. This event ended my first career as an R.N and 11 years as a VON nurse in Toronto. This VON experience and years of working with the physically disabled had a great influence on my "calling" to diaconal ministry. I felt called to work in, what I named, the gaps. It was really a call to, what we term street-related ministry. Educational preparation for diaconal ministry was the natural fit.

Describe some of your experiences of ministry

I was settled at First St Andrew's United Church in London Ontario as the Director of Christian Education. In July of 1987 I was called to be the first Chaplain in the new Carlington Community Chaplaincy in Ottawa. This was in the area of the highest density of social housing in Ottawa. It was serving with those struggling with poverty. I was there for an exciting 15 years and retired the end of June 2002. After 3 months I accepted a contract with First United Church, the only Affirming Congregation in Ottawa, as part-time retired supply minister for Outreach and Pastoral Care. I am still there doing pastoral care. In preparation for retirement I took a Multidiscipline Palliative Care Diploma Course and volunteer weekly with the Hospice at the Mission in Ottawa. I continue my involvement with the Presbytery Church in Society Committee and on-call Chaplain at the Ottawa General Hospital.

How I explain Diaconal Ministry to others ...

I explain diaconal ministry as part of the Order of Ministry of the United Church. We have chosen to be commissioned (and not ordained) to the diaconal ministry of education, service and pastoral care as a recognition of our ministry as one of non-hierarchical service, education and pastoral care, in justice making and empowerment of the whole people of God. My preparation for ministry at CCS was invaluable and key to being able to carry out my ministry, particularly in the Carlington Community Chaplaincy.

What gives you the most satisfaction, reward, sense of fulfilment from the ministry you do?

Pastoral Care still remains, for me, the area of greatest passion. The sharing and learning from so many people has been, and continues to be, such an awesome gift. To "hold the pain and not look away" as I journey with another towards wholeness is a great and humbling experience and privilege. I remain actively involved with issues of social justice, particularly in areas of poverty and affordable housing, and the urgent concerns around the protection and preservation of the sacred gift of water.