

Paula Ashby



Year Commissioned

BC Conference, May, 2006

Program of Formation

Centre for Christian Studies with courses from VST, VST Native Ministries, St. Stephen's. Ongoing course work in progress with St. Stephens.

What called you to Diaconal Ministry?

This is a second career choice for me, and as an adult student, I was acutely aware of my own learning needs, styles and passions. CCS answered those needs in ways both known and unknown to me at the time of my choosing. The integration of learning and living; the strong call to social justice; and the focus on empowerment and facilitation in a non-hierarchical way amongst those we serve. These combine to enable me to bring my understanding of Jesus' teachings applied to a current context.

Describe some of your experiences of ministry

Field placements at the Open Door Inner City Ministry, Oak Bay United Church (education); and within a First Nations context with the people of Gitsegukla. Four years appointed full time sole minister for the 2-point Hazelton Pastoral Charge in NW BC, plus serving the United Church hospital in Hazelton as chair of Pastoral Care (roughly similar to a chaplaincy position). Much of my work was around engaging the First Nations community of Gitsegukla in the governance of their church, establishing teams of people to bring the church to the wider community, an active board structure, and full participation in the decisions of the pastoral charge and presbytery. At the hospital I worked with others to create and provide an ecumenical chapel, and to provide worship opportunities within the care facility drawing on lay and ordered human resources from amongst 5 Christian denominations. Currently I am serving a 3-point pastoral charge in Alberta where I hope to expand fellowship opportunities through small group studies, and to explore with the congregations ways of raising the profile of the church within the wider community.

How I explain Diaconal Ministry to others ...

I explain Diaconal Ministry as an equal but differently focussed order of ministry within the United Church of Canada. I explain the focus as being one of empowerment of others, where we work together to raise our own awareness of the social gospel of Jesus, and work together to bring in others to share a ministry of social justice, education and pastoral care.

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

When the hard work of empowerment of others is seen in action. When those who have been passive or without voice stand up, and raise their voices. When those who have been without power are empowered to lead and teach others. When the spirit moves us to new and exciting places together.