

Heather Sandilands



Year Commissioned

2004, Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario

Program of Formation

Diploma in Diaconal Ministries: Studies in Transformation and Action through the Centre for Christian Studies. 4 year program.

What called you to Diaconal Ministry?

Working in social work I realized that I needed to be able to incorporate a spiritual and faith element into the work I was doing with women. And within a very short period of time (a couple of days, actually) somebody dropped a brochure on my desk and I looked at it and went

“That’s it. That’s it! That is what I want to do.”

Describe some of your experiences of ministry

I’ve worked in congregational ministry doing worship, some adult education, lots of pastoral care. My particular “specialty” is spiritual and pastoral care with people who are not associated with church. Often in pastoral situations such as working with a grieving family or someone who has had a significant knock to a traditional faith understanding, they are looking for other words and images. During the Social Ministry year at CCS, I learned some of those non-traditional words and images that are deeply spiritual, and other ways of reworking some traditional images and vocabulary.

How I explain Diaconal Ministry to others ...

In a way, it’s like the difference between a doctor and a nurse. They each have specific training and specific ways of caring for people and diaconal ministry is like nursing. It is more holistic. I have also described it in this way: Ordained ministry tends to look into the congregation whereas Diaconal ministry looks outward. When they work well together we can build bridges between the two places.

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

Being a companion to people who are questioning their faith or asking “Life’s Big Questions.”

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