

2007 DUCC Communications Cluster Report

The Communications Cluster continues to be comprised of diaconal community folks from Manitoba Northwestern Ontario Conference. At the Annual meeting of Conference in 2003, we named a core group of people who would take on this responsibility and have been meeting quarterly in person and via conference call since January of 2004. The membership is named at the end of this report.

At the DUCC gathering at Creiff Hills, in 2003, there were a number of areas listed that would be the responsibility of this group. Here's what we said we would do:

- Set up and maintain a database
- Find someone to send cards to membership when requested
- Identify occasions/people for whom cards might be appropriate
- Network with diaconal folks in regions/areas
- Explore possibilities for a website
- Support the current **Diaconal News** newsletter/communications piece and editor

Here's what we've been able to do:

The **data base** has been running well since 2005 and current responsibility for maintaining the database has been taken on by Dave Hewitt, member of the Co-Ordinating Cluster. As a result of this shift any changes to personal information need to be forwarded to Dave at uccdhewitt@hotmail.com. It is our hope that during our gathering time in April we will continue the conversation regarding how we share the data within the community and which group will be responsible for this work. The 2007 membership form is asking for some additional information around phone numbers. The Communications Cluster is also recommending that we consider asking for birth dates. The purpose of this would be to have a date for marking special birthdays, like 80 or 90 and so on. We aren't currently marking these dates but we might want to in the future. We would like input from others at the national gathering.

DUCC now has its own **website** which is www.ducc.ca. Thanks to Richard Manley-Tannis, our current webminder for the creative design and maintenance of the site! Thanks also to Heather Robbins and Beth Kerr as the volunteer Website Team. If you haven't already done so, please take the time to complete a profile that will be added to those already on the site. How about filling in your profile sometime during our gathering in Edmonton? In April we will be providing bookmarks to promote the website for those present and some to take back to diaconal folk not able to attend the meeting.

The Communications Cluster recommends:

- 1) That all the minutes of the Co-Ordinating Committee, Clusters and Working Groups would be public, recognizing that there may be occasions when in camera minutes might be needed, which would be exempt.
- 2) That the minutes would be posted on the website.
- 3) That the Communications Cluster be responsible for circulating the minutes through the network and ensuring that they are on the website.

At the last DUCC National gathering job descriptions for an editor, editorial team and for a layout person for the **newsletter** were approved. These job descriptions have proven to be useful in guiding the work of the group. We cannot express enough thanks to Karen Thorne (editor), Carolyn Wilson Wynne, Patricia Baker and Roland Legge for the great work on the *Diaconal News*. Following in the footsteps of Linda Clark, they continue to gather and share the news about our diaconal community semi annually. There is still some experimenting with the look and length of the newsletter and the editor and

team are evolving a comfortable, affordable and effective way to work collegially. The newsletter is a joint project of the United Church and DUCC. DUCC is responsible for content and layout, and the United Church handles copying and print copy mailing. The electronic distribution will be done by DUCC, through the database of email addresses DUCC is maintaining. For your information please note that beginning Fall 2007, newsletters will be shared electronically to those with email access, unless otherwise requested. Anyone not receiving a hard copy who wishes one, should let the DUCC Communications Cluster know this (go to the ducc.ca, Contact Us, Communications Cluster). The editorial team is happy to continue for another term and welcomes anyone to join the team. Articles or ideas for articles or newsletter themes are always celebrated. Please forward them through the website, as noted above.

Rolly McLean and Bea Arnill continue as our DUCC **card secretaries**. Please feel free to contact Bea and Rolly if you know of someone who could use a kind word or a note of congratulations. To do this, go to **ducc.ca** and under **Contact Us** choose **Card Secretaries**. Thanks to both of these women for their continued good work!

The Communications Cluster concurs with the assessment of London Conference that the United Church literature on Diaconal Ministry needs updating. We feel that the redesign should keep in mind that much of the distribution will be electronic but that there will still be a need for some hard copies to be available. We also feel that it is important that the United Church be involved, in close consultation with DUCC, in preparing these materials. Specifically we would recommend that the Church should bear the costs of production. We would like to see a discussion about this at the National Gathering so a plan could be formulated for approaching the United Church to producing new materials. We are also concerned that print copies of the current booklet on Diaconal Ministry are not available for free from the Church. While the cost is nominal, we feel that there should be no impediment to people receiving information on Diaconal Ministry.

The membership of the Communications Cluster consists of: Anne Duncan, Irene Rainey, Deborah Vitt, Cathie Clement, Caryn Douglas, Ted Dodd and Aileen Urquhart. We have agreed to communicate to the Coordinating Group that the MNWO Communications cluster would be willing to continue this work for one final two year term and will be pleased to turn this over to another group in 2009.

Submitted by,
Deborah Vitt and Cathie Clement