

DUCC 2013 Regional Report – Hamilton and Toronto Conference

It has become the practice of our region to hold retreats two or three times a year at Crieff Hills Community (the location of our national gatherings ten years ago). Our gatherings hold time for conversation, good food and laughter. Much time is given to checking in and offering support and challenge to each other as we encourage each other in the various ministries we offer. Our winter retreat is a two-day gathering. We are fortunate that one of our members, Kathy Toivanen, loves to cook. She prepares our menu and does the shopping. Each of us pitches in on the preparation of our sumptuous meals. Our spring/summer and fall gatherings are one-day events with a pot luck lunch. We always take time to walk the trails of Crieff Hills, alone or with others. We try to stay in touch with CCS students, encouraging them to become part of our diaconal gatherings. Smaller local gatherings have taken place in Kitchener, especially when CCS staff have been in the area. Christina Paradela has met with some Anglican deaconesses and deacons in the Niagara area.

In May 2012, Christina became the President of Hamilton Conference. During her visits with each Presbytery, Christina has been intentional in teaching about the history as well as the present of Diaconal Ministry. She has faced some challenging questions: Do you have to be a feminist to be a diaconal minister? Why do you diaconals have to get together all the time? She handled these questions with grace and ease – as well as the challenge and wisdom that is Christina. During the meeting of Hamilton Conference this May, Christina has invited delegates to participate in Courageous Conversations. Two of these conversations will be led by diaconals: “Justice, Mercy, Kindness: The Many Ways of Diakonia” led by Marilyn Shaw, Ellen Baynton Walker and Deborah Deavu and “Healthy Masculinity” led by Joan Tuchlinsky and a colleague from her work at the Sexual Assault Support Centre of Waterloo Region. Also, the preacher for the service of New Ministries is our own Kathy Toivanen. We are indeed well represented at this year’s meeting of Hamilton Conference.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Deavu