

PROFILE- RETIREES



Lynda Trono

My twice daily ministry of cleaning the port-a-potty outside West Broadway at the beginning of the pandemic. A variation on foot washing.

“Love in practice is a harsh and dreadful thing compared to love in dreams.”

This is what Father Zosima says to the youngest Karamazov brother, Alyosha, in Dostoyevsky’s classic, The Brothers Karamazov. Not that I have read the book. I just read the quote. I feel like I’ve been living that quote for the past 10 years at West Broadway Community Ministry. (Now 1JustCity)

I often joke with people who ask what I do and say, “I get paid to love people.” And I guess I do. Love in practice is not easy when you are face to face with the consequences of the political decision to sanction poverty. Those consequences are broken human beings and sometimes they are hard to love. How do love the guy who kicks over the tables at the back of the drop-in because someone stole his boots? Or the one who throws a cup of tea at you? Or the many who seek constant attention because no one ever sees them?

The work of love means finding a way through a sea of demands - for help, for attention, for bus tickets, for a letter, for a loaf of bread, for just a little favour, to just use the washroom. I empathize with the Levite who passed by the wounded man on the road to Jericho. Maybe he had already helped 9 others and just wanted to get home for supper. Maybe it was dreadful to have to walk by.

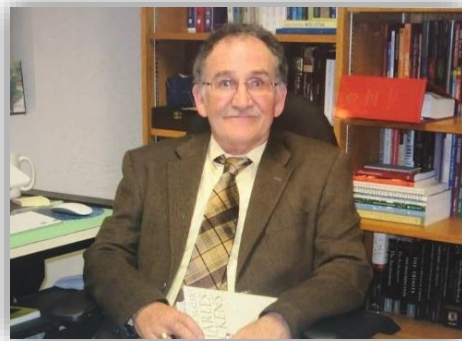
All that said, there were many many who were easy to love, who inspired me with their resilience, their generosity, their desire to give back to the community. Love can be harsh and dreadful but also very beautiful. And always meaningful. This work of love was the ongoing project of a whole community of volunteers, staff and partner churches. Without them there would be no ministry. I am so grateful to have been a part of that.

I give thanks for 15 amazing years working with this Conference, travelling from Flin Flon to Marathon and meeting all kinds of hardworking faith-filled people. The Communication, Education and Justice Committee and the YAAY committee were great to work with and we pulled off some exciting initiatives together. It was a delight to serve St. Mary's Road UC for 2 1/2 years - a chance to be in a community of imaginative and dedicated people. For a warm loving space to come home to over the years, I am thankful to Alan Doerksen to whom I was once married but who will never be an "x". And to my son Joel who continues to amaze me with his words on behalf of the marginalized.

I am grateful for the diaconal community, my wonderful friends, colleagues and allies in the work of love and justice. And I celebrate the multi-faith community that I got to know and appreciate over the years, who deepened my understanding of the Holy.

I am filled with gratitude for this United Church of ours. I have never felt alone in this work of love. You were always there. When I had to walk by the 10th person on the road to Jericho, I knew there would be some good person coming behind me to help out. You were always there, holding signs on the steps of the Leg, writing letters, sending donations, teaching children that Jesus cared especially for those in poverty. We are not alone. Thanks be to God.

*Respectfully submitted,
Lynda Trono*



Laird Russell-Yearwood

The church is not a community gathered around a minister, but a community of many ministries where that part of God's family, known as the Body of Christ, come together for the worthy work that is worship. At worship the community enters intentionally into the presence of the living God (we are all of us called upon to check our egos at the door) so as to enable us to truly glorify God and enjoy God forever. For myself I would sum up my understanding of ministry with two words: faithfulness and presence, everything else flows from these.

*Shalom
Laird Russell-Yearwood*