



Profiles of Ordinand and Admissionands
(2022)



Prairie to Pine Regional Council
The United Church of Canada



PROFILE - ORDINAND

Susan Mae Girard



My Faith Journey

I was born in Kitchener, Ontario and grew up in Windsor and Tecumseh in Southern Ontario. I had a dramatic conversion experience when I was eighteen years old during an interdenominational charismatic prayer service (I was an inactive Anglican at the time). It changed my life forever. I developed a passion for prayer and meditation and spent many years active in the Roman Catholic and Anglican church before walking into a United Church. It felt like it fit like a glove. Where has this church been all my life? I was eventually accepted as a member in the United Church about fifteen years ago.

Throughout my life I considered becoming a minister, however for one reason or another it was never the right time (for example I was Roman Catholic for twenty years). Over seven years ago, when I had worked in the mental health and addiction and management field for over twenty-one years, I was woken in the early morning. I felt God's presence and I felt the Spirit speaking to my heart "it is time to make a change. Now is the time to enter ministry." This happened for three mornings and then it stopped. I was shaking when I gave six months notice to my boss and told him I was going to be a minister in the United Church of Canada.

I became an inquirer and then a candidate and last Saturday I graduated with a M.Div. from the Atlantic School of Theology, Summer Distance program. There have been a few hurdles: injured knees, cataract surgery, endometrial cancer and the death of my mother. Through it all I have been surrounded by the love and support of loved ones, namely my husband Garry and my adult biological and step-children. Riverview provided an excellent learning environment, and the congregants were receptive to trying out new things such as a permanent outdoor labyrinth, Taize worship, a folk group providing worship music, community song-fests, teleconference phone worship as well as in person (hybrid) and Christmas bags delivered by Riverview elves to people in need of cheer and comfort. With the Spirit, the whole is so much greater than just the sum of its parts. We all truly need one another.

I have been blessed in having a wise and understanding educational supervisor, Rev. Cheryl Kinney Matheson, who encouraged and guided me so many times and was always just an email away. Rev. Eric Matheson provided his wisdom and guidance in being Riverview's pastoral supervisor. My LST has been amazing. They did not sign up for six years at the beginning of this journey, but due to my illness last year, that is what happened. They have always been there for me, through struggle, laughter and tears,

and I know they will continue to do so in a different way once I am ordained. We are considering a new group tentatively named “the tea-drinkers” 😊.

Thank you to my professors and classmates at the Atlantic School of Theology who reflected Christ’s compassion and were instrumental in challenging and expanding my theological understanding. I have many precious memories of attending summer courses in Halifax after a 2 ½ day train trip from Sioux Lookout (we drove 2 ½ hours from Atikokan) to Toronto; from Toronto to Montreal; from Montreal to Halifax. Those were precious pilgrimages to seminary and back home again.

Thank you to all the people whose lives have touched mine and helped bring me to this point in my life. Thank you to Myrna and Rev. Bob Stark for the encouragement you gave me while you were ministering in Atikokan. Thank you to God: Creator, Son and Spirit. What you have done for me through my willing and at times doubting heart, in spite of my fears and weaknesses, is truly awesome.



PROFILE - ADMISSIONANDS



Carrie Martens

My journey of admission to ordered ministry in the United Church of Canada is one I never would have anticipated. I am a cradle Mennonite, born into a faith, culture, and tradition that I embraced and into which I was ordained as a minister in 2016. As a young adult I did not have plans to enter into ministry or to leave my denomination of origin, but as is so often the case, the Spirit of God leads us home by another way.

In young adulthood I was a hairstylist and enjoyed that calling, however my body began to break down, and I was becoming aware that folks in my chair were coming to me seeking wholeness through haircolour. I longed for tools to respond in ways that were deeply lifegiving, rather than temporarily uplifting. At the same time, I was passionate about faith formation in my congregation and so I began a journey of education that included a Bachelor of Arts at

Canadian Mennonite University with a major in biblical and theological studies and minor in psychology and a Master of Divinity degree at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

My ministry has included vocational work in four Mennonite denominations as well as writing and editing faith formation curriculum and children's story bibles for Mennonite Church Canada, Mennonite Church USA, and Church of the Brethren. Wherever and however I have been called the centre point has always been sharing God's story and loving God's people. My ordination was deeply rooted in that calling.

My relationship with my partner, Alicia, also an ordained minister in Mennonite Church Canada, is one of my deepest joys and greatest supports in life and ministry. The addition of our daughter Annalie to our family in 2020 has been an adventure and delight beyond what I could have imagined. Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, where I served for 6 years, was deeply supportive and has been a significant support in our family story. When I concluded my ministry there it became increasingly clear that finding another affirming Mennonite church in which I could fully live out my calling to ministry would be difficult. Through a variety of chance encounters and internet searches, I was drawn to the United Church of Canada.

Mennonite Church Canada is a small denomination with close relationships. Entering the much broader waters of the United Church was intimidating. However, there were ministers at every step along the way who made sure that I knew I was welcome and supported. First in Ontario, Andrea Allan, Jenn Hind Urquhart, Beth Kerr, and Sarah Bruer and in Manitoba, Melanie Kauppila and Lynne Sanderson. Without these colleagues, I would have sunk beneath the waters of the admissions process and early days in ministry many times.

Ministry with Pembina Parish in Morden and Darlingford has been a grace-filled adventure thus far. The generosity of spirit I have witnessed as we've navigated our new relationship, the pandemic, and a major church renovation has been inspiring. I look forward to continued ministry together and with the region and denomination.



Chewe Mulenga



Chewe Mulenga is a Zambian citizen born in the capital city of Zambia, Lusaka. Coming from a Christian family, I grew up with strong Christian values which were imbedded in him by my parents. My parents were very committed members of the Reformed Church in Zambia and tried to set such an example to their children. Being the first born in the family of four boys, my parents always took me along to church for Sunday school. During my secondary school years, I strongly felt God's call upon my life. After completing secondary school, I underwent pastoral formation by undertaking theological studies. I was enrolled at Justo Mwale Theological University run by the Reformed Church in Zambia.

On November 28, 2010, I got ordained into holy ministry and I served with the Reformed Church in Zambia for 10 years before joining United Church of Canada. I am currently serving at Rock Lake Pastoral Charge in Crystal City, Manitoba under the United Church of Canada. I am married to Jessy Ndhlovu and together we have two daughters, Mapalo Lilian Mulenga (10 years) and Natasha Alice Mulenga (7years).

My admission process in the United Church of Canada has been a journey of learning and re-learning. It has also been a journey of faith by trusting upon God. It has been a journey of learning to let go of some parts of my life as I try to learn new theological and cultural insights while at the same time finding my place within the context I serve. When God called Abraham to leave his country and his people, he trusted upon God never failed him. It is not easy to leave your country and your people and later experience harsh winters of Manitoba. Frankly speaking, the story resonates well with my coming to Canada because my family and I have seen the hand of God at work in our lives.

My journey of planning to join United Church of Canada started way back in 2017, six years ago. Then I was studying for my Master of Theology in the Netherlands, Europe. I just developed the desire to serve God in a multi-cultural context and United Church was the best destination. I forwarded my credentials in 2017 and in the 2018, my credentials to join UCC were approved and the process of being placed in the church hub started. I did the mandatory courses and the

search for community of faith started. Fortunately, I only did interviews with two congregations, and by God's providence, Rock Lake Pastoral Charge picked me and that where I am currently serving. Rock Lake Pastoral Charge is a new home and a place where we have felt welcomed and are part of the larger family.

My admission journey would be very incomplete without mentioning the people who have really been of help in this journey up to this far. I have received wonderful support from Rev Dr Japhet Ndhlovu currently serving as the Executive minister. He gave the space and time whenever I wanted to talk to him. I have received support from our Pastoral relations Minister, Judy Hare several times and she has been available. My Pastoral Charge supervisor Sandra Rex and Lesly Harrison as my have been there for me, my MP2MP Connector, Anne Duncan who wrote regularly to check on how I was doing and Britton Marlene who was always available whenever I had something to consult. To all these people and many others whom I have not mentioned, I say thank you very much for support you rendered to me.

Lastly but not the least, I would like to thank Rock Lake pastoral who have really supported me through this journey. The love and support the community of faith gave me made my admission journey stress free. Cheryl McKittrick, the council chairperson then has become our '**Canadian Mum**' and has played a critical role for my family to feel welcome in Canada. We really thank God for the love and support.

As an enthusiastic and outgoing person, I see my future in the United Church of Canada as bright. I have committed myself to be a lifelong learner and trust that I will be able to flourish in my leadership roles as I continues to live out my call in Canada.

Yours,

Chewe Mulenga



Schalk Willem Naudé



I was born on a Thursday and on Ascension Day on May, 22, 1952, in Klerksdorp in the North-West Province of South Africa. The day I was born my father very nervously came to wish my mother all of the best because he was under the impression that I had not yet been born. He picked a red rose in the garden to give to my mother. Great was his surprise when he saw my mother and discovered that I had already given my first few screams.

The act of giving a red rose became a very personal response in my relationship with my family. Whenever we celebrated a special day like a birthday or maybe mother's day or father's day I would give them a red rose and they in turn would give me a red rose. During graduation, legitimation and ordination I received a red rose. When my sister came to visit me here in Canada (2020) she also gave me a red rose at my covenanting service. Although the rose is all dried out I still have it, and treasure it very much.

I decided to become a minister in the Dutch Reformed Church at a very young age when I was in grade 7 in 1966. If I look back at those years I realize that it was the right decision I have made although I experienced some highs and lows during this very special journey.

I would describe myself as an outgoing person. I easily make friends and experience it to be a gift. I have benefitted from this many times through my journey here on mother earth. It helped me tremendously in my ministry and in the congregations where I served in the Dutch Reformed Church (South - Africa). I still have dear friends from all these congregations and I treasure them very much. (Facebook helps a lot). My first congregation was in Goedgegun in Swaziland (now *The Kingdom of Eswatini*). I later served at Pretoria North and also at Florauna in Pretoria (South – Africa). I served in these three congregations for 27 years (1980 – 2007).

When I ministered at the Dutch Reformed Church Florauna - a macro congregation with nearly 4000 members and 7 pastors – we were each assigned to very specific ministries according to our individual gifts. I for instance at one stage took responsibility for the whole youth ministry, starting pre-school, junior school, high school (with focus on Sunday school) and adult youth whilst in Pretoria North.

Later I was also assigned to do the hospital ministry and to pastor the ill and their families. This was very special to me since you connect with people at a very personal level. I will always treasure this. Something that goes hand in hand with the above is the fact that I was also enrolled in a part-time course in the field of spiritual accompaniment and contemplative spirituality under the leadership of Sr Mary Fisher, a Franciscan nun from the Pittsburg, Pennsylvania in the USA and Dr Willem Nicol from South Africa.

During my personal spiritual journey in my later years I found that contemplative spirituality really ministered to me. It is all about the inward journey. In my early 30's I was involved with YWAM (Youth with a Mission). I joined YWAM in Hawaii in 1984/85. I call this my charismatic years. In my later years I moved back to my original Reformed roots.

In order to reach out to the community (Pretoria, South Africa) I was involved in and organizing a partner ministry within the community and surrounding areas with a specific focus on HIV/AIDS.

I love travelling and is excited in meeting interesting people and to see foreign places. I started dreaming to one day be able to preach on all the continents. There are seven continents: Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Antarctica, Europe, and Australia. I preached on 4 continents. I also visited 13 countries (South Africa, Zimbabwe (Rhodesia), Namibia, Swaziland (*The Kingdom of Eswatini*), North America (USA and Canada), UK, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, Spain, Thailand and the Maldives and I preached in 8 of those countries. Part of my dream was to complete a TEFL course (*Teach English in a Foreign Language*) in Kamala, Phuket, Thailand (December 2008). I did some teaching there.

I am currently ministering at Knox United Church: Fort Frances (Ontario).

After I went on early pension in 2007 I worked at Tirisano Centre, UNISA (University of South Africa), focusing on mainstreaming of *Social Behaviour Change Interventions and Strategies* around HIV and AIDS into development and humanitarian work across South Africa, and Southern Africa. Tirisano Centre is a collaborative academic centre of the Departments of Health Studies, Social Work and Sociology within the College of Human Science. I focused on *Gender and Sexual Diversity and Social Justice within the Workplace and the Community*. I did workshops at all the different campuses of UNISA across South Africa, where he helped to equip Church Leaders, NGO's and members of various organisations in raising awareness and sensitizing the participants about LGBTI people. I believe that this will help me a lot in the United Church of Canada since I am a keen advocate for the rights of LGBTI people. This is one of the reasons why I came to United Church of Canada.

To conclude I want to quote the famous words of the "dream speech" of Martin Luther King Jr on 28 August 1963, where he said that he has a dream and that is, "that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

My dream for the United Church of Canada is that the denomination as such and all the individual congregations will truly live out what is written on the Crest: "*Ut omnes unum sint*" - "*That all may be one*" - (gay or straight) - John 17:21.

I greet you and if it was at all possible I would have liked to give to each and everyone of you a Red Rose!

Be blessed.

