

## *Profile- Designated Lay Minister*



*Tanis Podobni*

Our creator has a way of knowing what we need to do and where we need to be.

As a woman of the prairies, rural living has always been my home and my comfort. I was born in Baldur, Manitoba and spent the first 19 years of my life living there. It was here that I learned the value of community; both my parents were mentors of the importance of ensuring that you did your part to help out others. This desire to help people brought me to my first career in EMS, and it was during the next 20 years, that I would learn and be reminded that every person has a story.

I am forever thankful for my time in the EMS world because it taught me that no matter what was happening in someone's life, they might not remember who I was, but they would always remember how I made them feel.

My life in the United Church started when I was probably around nine years old; as the caretaker's kid, I spent many evenings in the United Church in Baldur. I remember standing at the pulpit and looking out; in my mind, there were people there. I can't say that I was doing much cleaning and I'm sure that my parents were frustrated, but I was comfortable there... I just didn't realize it. As a teenager, I was confirmed in that same church, and I was also lucky enough to have been a part of the choir. I was surrounded by like-minded people sharing in worship and community.

Time went by, and life rolled along, and before I knew it was married, had two small children and had moved. The United Church in Oak Lake became my Sunday morning routine. I was able to come and enjoy hearing the message of the scriptures, and before I knew it, I was on committees.

What began as helping out the minister with the youth program blossomed into filling in the pulpit while the ministry staff was away. It was here, in this very church, that I was finally brave enough to recognize that our creator had bigger plans for me. With a gentle push from two ministers who seemed to know more than I did at the time, my education journey began. I enrolled in the licensed lay worship leader (completed in June 2018). This course provided the reassurance that I was in the right place and that I was pursuing the right path. The path to my completion of the Designated Lay Ministry program has been filled with many ups and downs, from changes in the regional structure, and my own medical setbacks, to a pandemic, and to be honest, I don't know that I would change a thing. Each bump on the road, assignment, and Zoom taught me something; the biggest lesson through it all was patience.

I am so blessed to have had the support of not only my family but of the pastoral change and with wider communities that I am a part of. I have been honoured to be a part of people's lives, sharing in happy times, times of loss, and times of excitement. I thank you all for letting me journey with you.

Maya Angelou says, "Each Journey starts with one step" So, as my faith journey continues, I will continue to step each day and be ready to see what the creator has around the next curve for me.