

PROFILE – ORDINATION



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Beginning at the beginning is a good place to start; so, I guess this profile needs to start *w a-a- a* -y back in a Vacation Bible School led by a Summer Intern and his wife in the little village of Graysville, 7 miles from Carman Manitoba. My memory of this event is no clearer than the memory of my baptism, in that small village church in the fall of the year I was born. However, family lore has it that my enthusiasm for VBS led my parents to take an active part in the other activities at St. Paul's. During my growing up years, the church and the community I encountered there, was my second home. Sunday School, Junior choir, Explorers, and later CGIT in Carman, plus summer camp at Rock Lake United Church camp all played a role in my faith formation.

After a couple of years at the University of Winnipeg, marriage and family soon followed. We settled down to farm for 5 years in the community where my husband Murray was born and raised - Glenboro Mb. Here our two sons, Russell and Stephen were born, and Murray suffered a farm-related accident that could have been, but was not fatal. We had just begun to get involved with the church in Glenboro, when circumstances took us on an adventure to the community of Ethelbert, north of Dauphin. In May of 1978, we set out with a caravan of trucks pulling trailers loaded with machinery, cars full of household goods and children, and a transfer carrying our cattle to move to what would become, and still is our home south of Ethelbert.

While establishing ourselves in the new community we became involved in the Ethelbert United Church. After a couple of years, two daughters, Erin and Allison were born to complete our family. Involvement in the local church increased as Ethelbert became part of a Joint Pastoral charge with Gilbert

Plains. Life was as it was for farming communities of the late 1980's. God must have thought that our family needed an extra shake-up, for about that time there was a need, in what was then Northland Presbytery, for someone to do twice a month worship services at Pine River United Church. I volunteered to give it a try. I had taught Sunday School – how hard could leading worship and preaching be! I soon found out the difference. Thanks to the very patient people at Pine River, and with the support of the Presbytery and MNWO Conference, I became a Lay Supply Minister in 1989.

Things could have ended there, except that the University of Winnipeg had a distance education program for a Certificate in Theology available at the time. Rev. Dexter Van Dyke – minister at Dauphin First United, and Rev. Bill Richards, living part-time in the community of Dauphin, served as mentors for me as I embarked on this course. They also provided sacraments when required at Pine River. With their help, I was able to complete the required coursework, receiving my Certificate in Theology in 1993.

Thoughts of entering Lay Pastoral Ministry training became a reality when the Russell-Ingliston Pastoral Charge gave me the opportunity to train under the auspices of the then Assiniboine Presbytery. From January 1992 – June 1996, I travelled between home and Russell, sharing in a team ministry with Rev. Rick McCorrister, as well as engaging in direct supervision and study on a bi-weekly basis with Elgin Hall, minister in Minnedosa, at the time. It was also during these years that I attended the three-week intensive residential training periods each June as required by the then LPM program. My training was received in Saskatchewan, the first year at St. Andrews College, and the last two years at Calling Lakes in Fort Qu'Appelle.

After the tragic death of our son Stephen, in a 1995 New Year's Eve traffic accident, my interview for recognition was postponed, to be held later in the spring of 1996. I was recognized as a Lay Pastoral Minister at the June MNWO Conference meeting of 1996. Thus, began my journey in ministry, as I was appointed to the Gilbert-Plains-Ethelbert Pastoral Charge beginning July 1, 1996 - with a funeral.

The next ten years proved to be a time of testing, learning, and growing as I served these two communities where I was known and knew many of the congregation from earlier church involvement. During this period of time, I was also involved with the wider church serving on Presbytery and Conference Committees. As I look back on those days, they were too busy, with not enough time to recharge and refresh those parts of me that needed care. With some regret, I ended my relationship with the Gilbert Plains- Ethelbert pastoral charge in December of 1996.

However, it wasn't long before I was back preaching, this time as Sunday Supply at Winnipegosis United Church while working at a variety of part-time secular jobs during the week. Thanks to the community of faith in Winnipegosis, I was able to share five years with them before they closed. After

that, the Presbyterian Church in Winnipegosis invited me to lead worship as a preaching supply. With the support of these two congregations, I was able to nurture and renew my focus in ministry, while exploring new avenues of service in education and social services.

With a new name of Designated Lay Minister, created by the National Church, I ventured back into full-time ministry in 2016, when I applied for an appointment for a full-time position with Dauphin First United Church. It felt like “coming home” to be accepted for the position as many in the congregation had already played a big part in my life and ministry. I was familiar with the building and the history of the congregation. The first few years of this relationship saw a lot of changes. The congregations sold the building - choosing to put time and energy into ministry, not property management. Then Covid- 19 hit, and the way of doing ministry effectively took a whole new path. Learning on the way, a lot of energy and time was spent in self- reflection on my part as well as the congregational leaders.

When the question of phasing out or doing away with the Designated Lay Ministry stream came up, I began to realize just how deeply I had come to understand myself as a minister called to a vocation. It was a painful time to think that the church I loved and had served for so long appeared not to value the gifts and talents I had shared over the years. I struggled to feel affirmed, but with the help of some very astute people around me, I was eventually able to hope that the idea of ordination for DLMs might someday come a reality. That it would become a reality so quickly. and I would be able to be a part of it was the most gratifying of surprises.

Ordination has been a long time coming - a goal I never expected to achieve, yet accept with gratitude. Thank you to those who have walked with me along the way. Thank you to my immediate family for their patience and grace. Thank you to those who have been mentors, teachers, and supporters throughout the years. Thank you to the seven classes of nursery school students who showed me we can all get along if we try. Thank you to the various communities of faith who have taught me so much - have worshiped with me, and shared with me as we have learned of God’s love together.