

## PROFILE – COMMISSIONING



**Maureen McCartney**

Liverpool England was where I grew up, in a home with my Nana, Mum, and two brothers. My oldest brother Brian was crippled; this I believe is where my advocacy started. Although four years younger than him, I was very much his protector! Our lives literally revolved around County Road Methodist Church. 'County,' as it was affectionately called, was a hub of activity. Sunday School at 3 pm, Children's Evening Service at 6.30 pm, and Church Parade once a month on Sunday morning, with Girl Guides, Brownies, Boys Brigade, and Life Boys packing the pews.



Almost every night of the week was spent at this bustling, active church. From the time I was 8 years old, my brother Colin, (3 years older than me) and many church kids took the 'Scripture Exam.' We had classes after Sunday School and once or twice during the week for months before the exam. When the day arrived, we had learned by memory: a psalm, a passage from both a gospel and an epistle, and had studied a theme from both Old and New Testaments. We wrote a 'long hand'

examination and our papers were sent to Methodist House in London for grading. We anxiously waited for our results to arrive in the mail. On the Sunday School Anniversary, we were presented with a certificate (see insert) and a book. It was this yearly activity that engendered in me the love of the scriptures and reading (reading was also encouraged in my home by my Nana). I can still recite some of the passages I memorized in my youth (perhaps not as perfectly as I once could!). I have attached a photo of 2 of my certificates from 1953 & 4 when I was 10 and 11!

It was also at 'County,' I was introduced to 'Diaconal Ministry.' Most Methodist churches had an 'Ordained Minister' and a 'Deaconess.' The Deaconess' title was 'Sister;' her role was 'Education, Pastoral Care and Social Justice' (sound familiar?). These women were allowed to preach occasionally; they were celibates; (had to leave the order if they married); they wore a navy-blue

uniform and mostly rode bicycles to deliver pastoral care around town. During my childhood and teen years, along with my much-loved S.S. teachers, Deaconesses were my role models: Sister Phyllis Shafto, Sister Kathleen Share, and 3 favourite S.S. teachers: Mr. Milne, Miss Barbara Swain, and Miss Ivy Champion. Ivy Champion's faith shone from deep within her and I can still hear her delightful laugh ringing in my ears; she was known as 'Auntie Ivy' to the entire, very large, youth group! I am so grateful for these wonderful pillars of the church who led me to Christ by their rich example. It is little wonder that I still love church, even though sometimes it confounds me!

I came to Canada as a young, spirited Registered Nurse with the goal of having a two-year adventure! Apparently, the adventure continues to happen and Canada is my home and I am a proud Canadian. Once in Canada, I joined and was involved in committees, choirs, S.S., and youth work in the Baptist Church. Then early 1990s, I left the church completely for a while before trying out John Black Mem. U.C. Entering JBUC felt like I had somehow returned to my roots. The line in T.S. Elliot's poem, 'Little Gidding' speaks to me. *"We shall not cease from exploration and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time."* The Church felt 'new' again and the fact I could ask difficult questions and not be judged for asking them was very appealing to me.

Introduced to Diaconal Ministry by Anne Duncan I had NO intention of becoming a minister! However, I believe God had a different idea. After speaking at the funeral of a dear friend, I was challenged by one of my daughters: 'Mum when will you stop messing around and go into ministry.' Like Sarah laughing at the visitor in scripture, I retorted, "I am too old!"

In 1999, Heather Robbins was introduced at John Black as a ministry student doing a year-long pastoral care placement (she had white hair, my curiosity was peaked!). I became part of her Lay Facilitation Team and the spark became a flame and low and behold I entered CCS in June 2000.

I took the 3-week LDM, Social Ministry year, Pastoral Care year, 2 reflection years and decided to leave to pursue my degree, eventually becoming a recognized DLM. Although I have served the church as a congregational minister, I have always regretted not becoming Diaconal. Diaconia is my calling, always was, and always will be. I am grateful to the G.C. for the opportunity to be granted Testamur.

I loved serving both Rosser and Grosse Isle Pastoral Charge, Oak Bank, and Dugald congregations, and thank them for the wonderful support I have received over the years.

Many people have encouraged me on my journey, too many to name, and in fear of leaving someone out, I will not name individuals. Thank you all for the love, encouragement, faith, and belief in me since I began this journey in 2000. I must mention the Rev Paul Campbell who became an important mentor, confidante, and encourager who truly believed in me. I miss him and will remember him always with gratitude.

Many blessings.

*Maureen A. McCartney*