

Fall 2026 Classis Report

25 years of Love in Action



John Wildeboer - National Director of DMC

When I first considered applying for the role of National Director with Diaconal Ministries Canada, I knew I would be following in the footsteps of remarkable leaders—people like Peter Zwart, Ben Vandezande, Hans Kater, and Ron Vanden Brink. Each of them shared a deep passion for helping churches make a tangible difference in their communities and across Canada by putting the love of Jesus into action. Now, as we celebrate **25 years of Diaconal Ministries Canada**, we celebrate more than a milestone—we celebrate **God's faithfulness**.

For 25 years, churches, deacons, and faithful servants all across Canada have been loving their neighbours in practical, tangible ways. Thousands of stories have unfolded: neighbours welcomed, people restored, communities strengthened, and lives changed. Much of this ministry happened quietly, without recognition or fanfare. But God was there—and He continues to work through His people. If you're not already following us on social media, join us! Each week we're sharing throwback stories and celebrating the people and moments that have helped shape DMC over the past 25 years. **Every story matters. Every act of love matters. And every story points us back to God's faithfulness.**

And now, we want to celebrate together!

On **October 17 in Hamilton**, we'll gather for an in-person evening of **connection, celebration, and thanksgiving**. We'll share stories of the past 25 years, celebrate the incredible impact of churches and deacons across Canada, and look ahead with hope and excitement to what God is calling us to in the next 25 years.

Come celebrate where we've been. Give thanks for what God has done. And dream with us about what comes next. We would be honoured to have you join us!



JOIN US TO CELEBRATE

25 YEARS OF LOVE IN ACTION

It will be an evening of gratitude for the
past and excitement for the future

OCTOBER 17, 2026 | 7:00 PM
PERKINS CENTRE, 1429 MAIN ST E, HAMILTON, ON.

DIACONAL
MINISTRIES
CANADA



NewGround Endowment Fund

Two other ways to participate if you can't make the 25th in person!

Our anniversary is not only about looking back—it's about **preparing the soil for the next 25 years**. There are two additional ways you can be part of that future.

1. ANNOUNCING - The NewGround Endowment Fund

We are excited to share that we have established **The NewGround Endowment Fund** in partnership with **Christian Stewardship Services (CSS)**.

The purpose is simple: to create a lasting source of funding that will help support local churches as they develop new and creative ways to serve their communities.

Our goal is to raise **\$100,000** this year and grow the fund to **\$1 million within 10 years**.

You can contribute through a cash donation or a gift of securities. Every gift helps build a foundation for the future and ensures that churches will continue to have opportunities to join God in His renewing work in their communities.

2. NewGround offerings within your church

Every year we use the offerings collected across Canada to set the grant amount for our NewGround Grants. In 2025 we gave out \$90,000 in grants. In 2026 we were hoping to give out \$100,000 in partnership grants. Unfortunately we saw a decrease in funds received through the offerings collected this past September - August.

Please help us to continue to **grow our impact by being sure to have an offering for NewGround in your offering calendar**. A good Sunday for this has been the first Sunday in May. Every year in February we mail out new NewGround Flyers and send a video highlighting a NewGround Partner Grant and impact story that can be played during the offering.

Please be sure to plan for that!

Twenty-five years ago, God planted a seed.

Through the generosity and faithfulness of churches and individuals across Canada, that seed has grown into thousands of stories of love in action.

Now we have the opportunity to prepare the soil for the next 25 years.

Thank you for being part of the story.





Recent Changes of people at Diaconal Ministries Canada



FAREWELL

June

This past June, we were saddened to say goodbye to Rachel Vroege, who served as DMC's Regional Director for Western Canada for 13 years. We asked Ron Vanden Brink (Retired National Director of DMC) to write an equip blog entry as a [Tribute to Rachel](#). He said "sometimes the most powerful ministry begins by asking a different question: **What is God already doing here?**" Rachel spent years helping churches discover the answer to that question.

Through asset-based community development, Indigenous justice and reconciliation, and countless relationships with churches and communities, **she challenged assumptions, opened doors, and invited people into deeper relationship with God and with one another.** Her ministry was marked by curiosity, compassion, and a deep belief that God is already at work—often in places and through people we might otherwise overlook. **We are grateful for Rachel's faithful service and the lasting impact** she has had on Diaconal Ministries Canada, the churches she served, and the communities she walked alongside.



WELCOME

End of June

At the end of June, Ayo Orebiyi joined our team as our **Communications Coordinator**, and he has already made a tremendous impact! In his short time with Diaconal Ministries Canada, **our social media engagement has exploded.** Ayo is a valued addition to our team, bringing creativity, energy, and a passion for telling the stories of what God is doing through churches and communities across Canada. We're excited to see how God will use Ayo's gifts to grow our online presence and **help more people discover the incredible stories of love in action happening across our country.**

SCAN HERE
TO FOLLOW
DMC ON
FACEBOOK



Be sure to follow us on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) to see and hear all the great things God is doing across Canada!



One of the original six Diaconal Coaches, John Klein-Geltink, recently retired from Diaconal Ministries Canada. **After 45 years** of involvement in diaconal ministry across Ontario and Canada, John has a wealth of wisdom, stories, and experience to share. Mark Vanderwees recently sat down with John over a farewell lunch and asked him a few questions—including what wisdom he would pass on to us as we continue the work of helping churches and communities discover and share God's gifts. Read more about John's answers and wisdom [here](#). We're grateful that retirement from coaching doesn't mean saying goodbye completely! John has signed on to continue serving DMC as our Ontario Southwest Board Member. **Thank you, John, for 45 years of faithful service, wisdom, and commitment to the ministry of the deacon.** We're excited that there's still more to come!





DMC / IMPACT REPORT

What IMPACT is DMC having?

This past spring, we developed a tool called **"The Change Map"** to help us better understand the impact DMC is having in churches across Canada.

As we listened to deacons and reflected on their experiences, five key areas of impact emerged. Here are those five areas, along with a quote from a deacon that brings each one to life.

1 A Shift from Charity to Empowerment

*"We are less likely to jump to conclusions about other people's needs and more aware of the importance of including the recipients of care in the planning and offering of services."
"Judge less. Listen more."*

2 Greater Confidence & Better Leadership

"We were doing things wrong... thankful for your workshops. Big help to me!"

3 Training is Producing Real Change

"We had the congregation fill out an asset-mapping survey... It has made us aware of assets that we have in our congregation and needs that are there."

4 Stronger Community Engagement

"We've begun exploring ways that we can join God where He's already at work in our community."

5 A Transformation in Culture

"We need to be more understanding and compassionate when listening to or responding to people's requests for assistance."

WORKSHOP SERIES

3 of our Workshops

DEACON 101

- This workshop will help new deacons learn about their role and refresh returning deacons, allowing them to share their experiences and insights
- We will take a closer look at the "Deacons Mandate" and look at practical examples of how that is worked out in your church, local community and beyond
- Don't forget to invite pastors, Elders and Church

Helping without Harming

- **Gain** a biblical framework for benevolence
- **Learn** to distinguish relief from restoration
- **Strengthen** food bank and deacon fund practices
- **Explore** ways to reduce dependency and promote dignity
- **Develop** a wiser, more impactful approach to care

Developing Benevolence Guidelines

- Throughout this workshop your church/team of deacons will know when to spend a significant amount of time with a request or when to refer an individual/family to other agencies
- Sharing these guidelines with the pastor, staff and elders will also help your entire leadership know how to respond to requests you encounter



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