

Fall Classis Report



Greetings Deacons & Churches!

For our report this fall, we thought we would answer some of the **Frequently Asked Questions** we get!

Perhaps you've even asked one (or three) of these!

#1 - How did Diaconal Ministries Canada get started?

We get this question a lot! Believe it or not, [our roots](#) go back to the 1950s! Across Canada, deacons were longing to gather to learn together and share ideas and best practices. They knew that ministry was always better when done together! This resulted in local and regional "conferences" being formed. In these early years, World Renew (CRWRC at this time) worked closely with diaconates on both sides of the border as they pursued ministries of justice and mercy, both locally and globally.

Over the years, these diaconal conferences expanded and contracted. It was during this time that Canadian deacons began to wonder what it would look like to have a national organization oversee the training and equipping of deacons. Finally, in 1998, at a Classis Renewal Gathering in Chicago, various deacons, along with reps from Home Missions (now Resonate Global Mission) and CRWRC, met over lunch and began sketching out their ideas on napkins (the only paper they had available!!).

Our Mission

Relying on the Holy Spirit, we exist to Inspire, Empower and Equip Deacons as they animate congregations to join in God's transforming work in communities across Canada.

It was an exciting time and, after a few more years of discussions (and maybe some more napkin drawings), the boards of the existing diaconal conferences jointly approved the formation of a new organization. In 2001, Diaconal Ministries Canada was officially constituted!



#2 - How is Diaconal Ministries funded?

When Diaconal Ministries Canada was born, it adopted the ministry share model that was part of an agreement that Canadian deacons made with each other in the 1960s and recommitted to in 2001.

It's important to note that these are different from *Denominational* and *Classis* Ministry Shares. **We do not receive any funding from the CRCNA, like our friends at Resonate or Reframe.**

Each August we send Ministry Share invoices to churches based on a per member rate. We ask churches to give as they have been blessed so that ALL churches in Canada can receive our resources and support. We also rely on extra offerings and donations. Find out more here: <https://diaconalministries.com/how-were-funded/>.



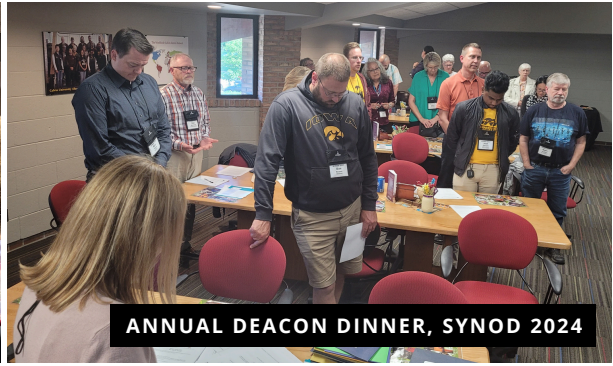
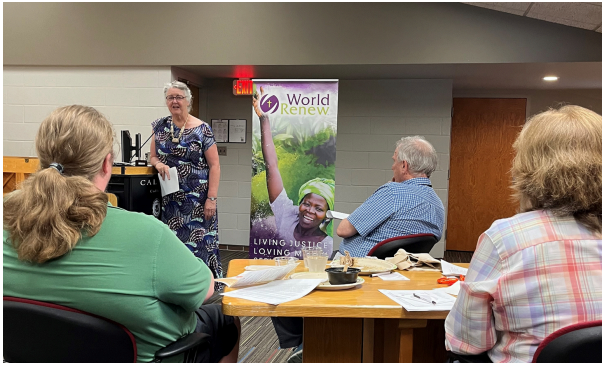
#3 - How does Diaconal Ministries support deacons?

Our ultimate aim is to equip and encourage deacons in the areas of *community engagement, service & justice, benevolence, and stewardship*. These focus areas come straight out of the [Deacon's Mandate](#) (the charge read to deacons when they are installed). On top of this, we help with leadership development.

We do this through our [field staff](#) (two Regional Ministry Developers - one in Western Canada, one in Eastern) and our amazing team of [Diaconal Coaches](#), approximately one per classis.

We offer relevant workshops and trainings where deacons walk away with practical tools and resources they can use to live out their calling, both in their church and in their local community.





#4 - Does Diaconal Ministries Canada work in the USA as well?

We are a unique and distinct Canadian agency, created *by* deacons, *for* deacons. To date, we have no counterpart in the USA. Most diaconates there rely on a regional diaconal conference or will often turn to World Renew US for help and guidance. *Don't you feel spoiled?*

Having said that, we look for opportunities to partner with other CRCNA ministries any chance we get! One way we collaborate with World Renew US is for the annual Deacon's Dinner held at Synod. Also, this past year, Thrive began beta testing a "Deacon Essentials" course - primarily for US deacons who don't have access to an agency like ours. We were happy to contribute input on this course and hope it is a blessing to those who take it!

#5 - What happened to Operation Manna?

When the Operation Manna Program became an official program of Diaconal Ministries Canada in 2001, its primary purpose was to *"engage Christian Reformed Churches in community ministries that seek to bring about sustainable change in individuals and communities experiencing significant needs."* Because of this, many of our early [Operation Manna partners](#) are still growing and thriving today!

While we celebrated the meaningful impact Operation Manna had on churches and communities across Canada for several years, the conversation surrounding changing the name and updating the program's activities started over ten years ago!

On March 1st, 2019, the Operation Manna Program became NewGround.

NewGround continues to empower deacons and churches - offering coaching and resources to help them break new missional ground, nurturing Spirit-led ideas that bear everlasting fruit! Find out more [HERE](#).





NewGround - Impact Story

How one man's life was changed by an after-school program in Brockville

[Cross Town Impact](#) (CTi) is an after-school program for vulnerable youth in Brockville, ON. They provide a safe and inclusive space that provides a positive, encouraging environment for youth and lets them know they are loved, especially by God. This NewGround partner is supported by Athens CRC (Athens, ON).

Greg Houldcroft is the founder and director of CTi. Recently, Greg was at Kemptville CRC to share about this ministry. Everyone there was encouraged by CTi's work in the local public schools in Brockville and how it is impacting that community.

While Greg was in Kemptville for the day, he went to McDonald's. There, he spotted a familiar face—one of the youths from his group from over 20 years ago, named Peter*. Peter was there with his three boys - ages 2, 5, and 7. Greg and Peter shared a meal together, and then he invited Greg back to his home for coffee.

During their conversation, Greg discovered that this former youth was now a pastor in Kemptville!

Greg shared that their visit was nothing short of marvelous. "As we reminisced, Peter became emotional and shared how much my investment in him through mission trips, both local and national, and youth trips still impacts him today. He told me that the genuine love I showed him continues to encourage him to this day. It felt like hearing a beautiful eulogy, but instead of being delivered at a funeral, it was a heartfelt, face-to-face conversation. Needless to say, it was a very good day."

This is the impact NewGround and its partners are having in communities across Canada!



*Names have been changed to ensure privacy





#6 - My team of deacons is looking for support; what do we do next?

[Reach out to us!](#) Our regional staff and diaconal coaches are ready and willing to assist your diaconate in any way we can. Deacons are also encouraged to [visit our website](#) and start browsing our resources and tools there. (Psst! We are launching a brand new website this fall so stay tuned for that!)

Our Team

Regional Ministry Developers

- Rachel Vroege, West - rvroege@crcna.org
- Mark Vanderwees, East - mvanderwees@crcna.org

NewGround

- Karla Winham, Coordinator - kwinham@crcna.org

Support Staff

- Kim Zantingh, Admin - kzantingh@crcna.org
- Bea Vlieg, Finances - bvlieg@crcna.org
- Erin Knight, Communications - eknight@crcna.org

See the full list of [Diaconal Coaches](#) on our website!

It is our honour and privilege to continue to walk alongside deacons and churches like yours. May God bless each one of you in your ongoing ministry!

Respectfully submitted,

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National Director, Diaconal Ministries Canada
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Reach out to us for encouragement & support!

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