

January, 2024

Winter Classis Report

Greetings to our partners in ministry!

On November 14, 2023, Regional Ministry Developer for Eastern Canada, Mark Vanderwees, opened up his inbox and read the following email:

“Hey Mark; Just wanted to let you know that I had my first “cold call” from a person requesting assistance. The deacon training that you provided was very helpful. Based on the training, I compiled a list of questions, points, and resources to prepare for the call. Because of the training, the call went well and I was able to help. Thanks, Alan” (Classis Toronto Deacon)

The training that Alan is referring to is the **“Helping Without Harming in Church Benevolence”** workshop that was newly developed this past fall, based on the book with a similar name written by Steve Corbett & Brian Fikkert. Last year, Mark led this training in over 9 churches with approximately 139 attendees; mostly deacons, a few pastors, and even some congregation members!

Another workshop participant shared that she liked being able to identify if a situation was *relief* or *recovery* and she found comfort in being able to ask professionals for help during the initial crisis response. “While we looked at the section called ‘Building on Assets’, I loved looking at it from the ‘glass is half full’ perspective rather than our current habit of only focusing on the individual needs. The scenarios were very helpful and I liked collaborating with other deacons in the area to learn about the supports and resources available to us as churches. We would love to have Diaconal Ministries back to lead us in some other workshops, like the Deacon 101 and Developing Benevolence Guidelines.”



This is why we continue our work with deacons across Canada in the areas of [community engagement](#), service & [justice, benevolence](#), and [stewardship](#). We offer deacons practical and relevant training so they can love their churches and communities better. It is our sincere hope and desire that your church has been impacted by the work that we do.

If you are unfamiliar with who we are, you can read our [full history on our website](#). Believe it or not, our roots go back to the 1950s! In the early years, deacons formed local and regional “conferences” which met to share experiences and resources, develop workshops and training events, and find ways to assist each other and their congregations. In these early years, World Renew (CRWRC at this time) worked closely with diaconates on both sides of the border. Over the years, these conferences expanded and contracted. In 1998, some Canadian deacons along with representatives from Home Missions (now Resonate Global Mission) and CRWRC began dreaming about pooling their diaconal experiences, resources, and training materials into an “umbrella” organization which would oversee the training of deacons right across Canada. It was an exciting time and, after a few more years of discussions, the boards of the existing conferences jointly approved the formation of a new national in 2001: **Diaconal Ministries Canada was officially constituted!** Diaconal Ministries Canada is funded by a ministry share model that was agreed to by Canadian deacons in the 1960s and recommitted to in 2001. (Note: These are different from Denominational Ministry Shares and Classis Ministry Shares. Read more on our website about this [HERE](#).)

Another vital program of Diaconal Ministries Canada is our [NewGround program](#) (formerly called *Operation Manna*). **NewGround Sunday** is designated as the first Sunday in May each year: in 2024 it falls on **May 5th**. NewGround helps deacons and churches love their community through financial grants, coaching, and resourcing. ***We hope you'll reserve this date and support this ministry as it has impacted numerous communities across Canada over the past 35+ years.*** Check out our past and present Partner list [HERE](#).

If your church or deacons ever have any questions or concerns or need assistance in any way, they are encouraged to reach out to us - see our staff listing on the next page. Deacons are also encouraged to visit our [website](#) and start browsing our resources and tools there.

May God bless each one of you in your ongoing ministry!

Respectfully submitted,



ron vanden brink

National Director, Diaconal Ministries Canada

rvandenbrink@crcna.org

Encl (1)

Diaconal Ministries' current Staff, Board, and Diaconal Coaches

Staff:

Ron Vanden Brink, *National Director*; rvandenbrink@crcna.org

Chris Tollins, *Office Assistant*; ctollins@crcna.org

Bea Vlieg, *Financial Assistant*; bvlieg@crcna.org

Rachel Vroege*, *Regional Ministry Developer (Western Canada)*; rvroege@crcna.org

Mark Vanderwees, *Regional Ministry Developer (Eastern Canada)*; mvanderwees@crcna.org

Karla Winham, *NewGround Coordinator*; kwinham@crcna.org

Kathrin Veenstra, *Fundraising Coordinator*; kveenstra@crcna.org

Erin Knight, *Communications Coordinator*; eknight@crcna.org

*On sabbatical until April 1, 2024; please reach out to Ron Vandenbrink or your Classis Diaconal Coach

Board Members & Diaconal Coaches (by Classis):

Classis	Diaconal Coach(es)	Board Member
Alberta North	Erika Repka; erika_nyland@hotmail.com Marg Hoogland; marghoogland@gmail.com	Jesse Edgington
Alberta South/Sask.	Jean DeBeer; jeandb3@gmail.com	Grace Miedema
British Columbia NW	David Hornor; hornpipe2022@gmail.com	Cindy Verbeek
British Columbia SE	Gary Veeneman; gveeneman@shaw.ca	Liz Tolkamp
Eastern Canada	Chris Smid (ON churches); smiddy_c@yahoo.ca Rene Wall (Maritimes); wallrm@hotmail.ca	Peter Van Harmelen (Chair)
Hamilton	Alicia Hamming Navarette; alicia.hamming@gmail.com	Marcia Mantel
Huron	Fred Vander Sterre; fvandersterre@gmail.com Jane Vander Velden; janevandervelden5318@gmail.com	Mary Blydorp
Lake Superior	Teda Heerema; tedaheerema@gmail.com	Yvonne Schenk
Niagara	Mark Vanderwees; mvanderwees5@gmail.com	<i>vacant</i>
Ontario Southwest	John Klein-Geltink; john.kleingeltink@gmail.com Anita Plat Kuiken; aplatkuiken@crcna.org	Jeff Robinson
Quinte	Bill Groot-Nibbelink; bill.grootnibbelink@gmail.com	Rose Saller (Treasurer)
Toronto	Carol Sybenga; sybenga@rogers.com	Jeff Fernhout