

ANNUAL REPORT

2021-2022



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Front Cover Photo: A [community meal at Sanctuary London](#) (a former NewGround partner), pre-Covid style!

Pictured Above: The [Community Garden at Gateway CRC, Abbotsford, BC](#), is one of many ways this church is engaging with their local neighbourhood and making a difference.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE



MEMORIES OVER METRICS.

This line jumped off the page when I was scrolling through my Facebook feed the other day.

When putting together any type of report or accounting of the work you've done, whether you are a Fortune 500 company, a church, or a hot dog stand, it can be tempting for any organization to focus on the facts and figures; what is the "product" we provided and *how* did we provide it to the best of our abilities over the past fiscal year. Who liked us on Facebook? Which videos went viral? What revenue came in and did we spend it wisely and strategically? How do we plan to keep growing in the future?

Don't get me wrong; there are good things about these reports. We, after all, are a non-profit agency who has been tasked with an important mandate to equip and encourage deacons as they animate their churches to show and share Christ's love in their communities and in the world. We, most certainly, need to be transparent about our finances and how we spend our time and resources and provide evidence that we are leaning into the mission we've been charged with - with integrity and clarity.

Yet it is our hope that as you read through the pages of this report, you will look beyond the data and details and see

the people *behind* the programs and ministries and activities. That you will see, above all...

Deacons were equipped.

Congregations were mobilized.

Communities were blessed.

This year (and every year moving forward) we want to measure our 'success' through the lens of **love...** a love deeply rooted in God's love story to us. It has been our privilege over the past year to walk alongside deacons and churches who are living into God's story *as they* love and serve Him and their neighbours, both near and far.

FRUIT OVER FACTS & FIGURES.

Once again, thank you for your support this past year. The work we do would not be possible without the prayers and financial support of people like you.

ron vanden brink

National Director
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WHO WE ARE



OUR MISSION

RELYING ON THE HOLY SPIRIT, DIACONAL MINISTRIES CANADA EXISTS...

to inspire, empower, and equip deacons as they animate their churches to join in God's transforming work in communities across Canada.

OUR VALUES

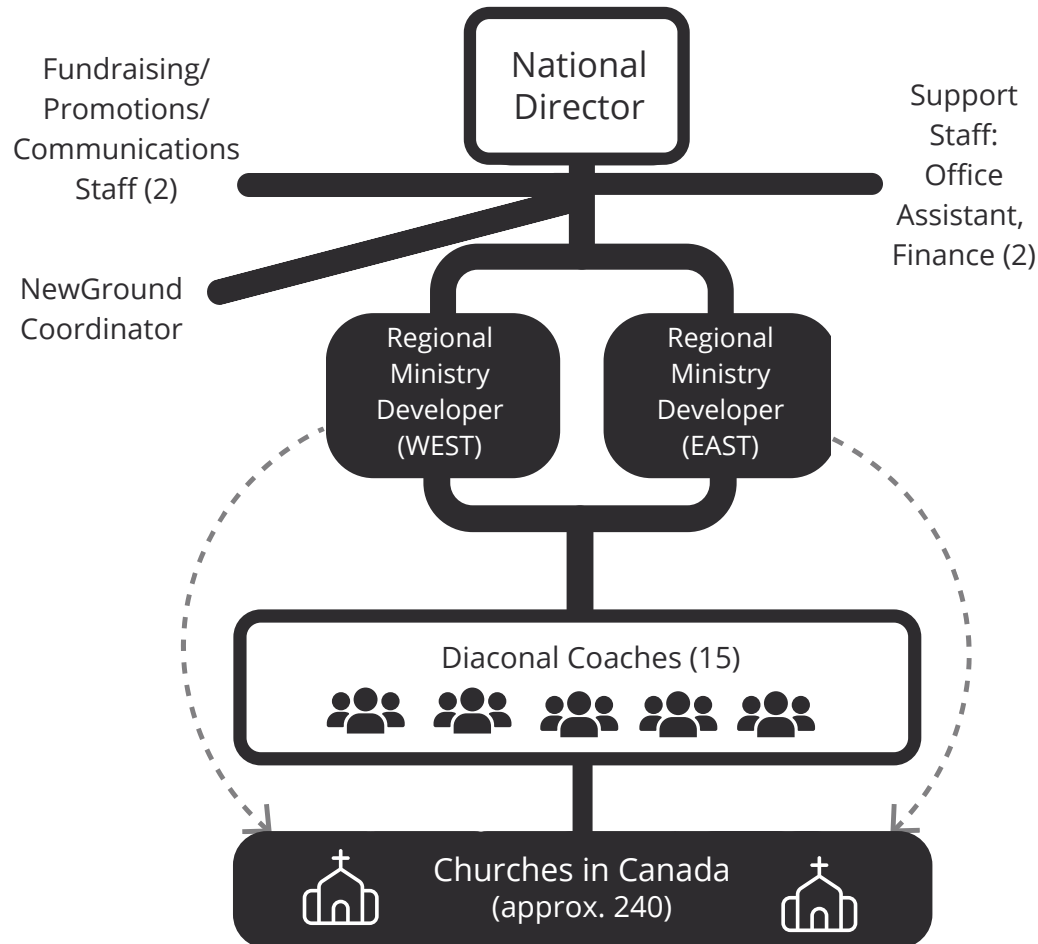
TO CARRY OUT THIS MISSION, WE VALUE...

prayer, celebration, collaboration, servant leadership, gift-based ministry, holistic ministry and justice.



Our roots go back to the 1950s when some of the first “diaconal conferences” were organized *by* deacons, *for* deacons, in various parts of the country. In those early years, World Renew (CRWRC at the time) worked very closely with deacons on both sides of the border and helped guide their work. In each region, these conferences were funded by a “ministry share” model. As the years went on, people from these diaconal conferences began dreaming about pooling their resources and training materials and forming an “umbrella” organization which would oversee the training of deacons right across Canada. On May 25, 2001, Diaconal Ministries Canada was born! At the same time, the funding model which had served each regional conference so well for so many years was approved to be adopted by the national organization. To read our full history, visit our website: diaconalministries.com/history/.

OUR TEAM



Diaconal Ministries Canada is staffed by individuals who are committed to promoting the work of deacons within the church and the community.

Our Regional Ministry Developers (RMDs) work closely with our team of Diaconal Coaches who are spread across the country. When appropriate, our RMDs will also work with individual churches, particularly in the areas of community engagement and justice.

Every single church in Canada has access to our staff and resources, which are funded through the ministry shares they remit each year.

WHAT WE DO

Deacons serve by leading and equipping the church to minister to its members and the world in a rich diversity of ministries — awakening compassion, demonstrating mercy, seeking justice, and collaborating with God's Spirit for the transformation of persons and communities.

Diaconal Ministries Canada partners with deacons, churches, and ministries to demonstrate God's love in the community in the following areas:



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Deacons lead and equip the church to get involved in the life of their church's local neighbourhood and discover where God is already at work.



STEWARDSHIP

Deacons train and empower their congregations to faithfully use and care for all that God has entrusted to them, including time, treasures, talents and trees (creation care).



SERVICE & JUSTICE

Deacons encourage the church to be advocates for and with marginalized and vulnerable people in their community and globally.



MERCY & BENEVOLENCE

Deacons model compassion and concern regarding someone else's distress and misfortune, often leading to showing mercy in practical ways.

Relying on the Holy Spirit, we have continued to seek where God is already at work as well as listen to what deacons are saying so that we can equip churches in their ministry efforts. Here are a few things Diaconal Ministries is celebrating from the past year...

HIGHLIGHTS

NOVEMBER 2021

Churches were longing to become more community-focused. Diaconal Ministries' staff brought together a group of churches from across Canada to learn and share their experiences together through an **online learning cohort!**

[Read about Sonlight CRC on page 11 of this report and in the [May 2022 Banner](#)]



APRIL 2022

With the increase in **natural disasters** here in Canada and the growing understanding that response work in our local contexts is unique, a Research Consultant was hired to put together a "best practices report" to guide the work of Diaconal Ministries Canada and World Renew Disaster Response Services moving forward.

AUGUST 2021

Diaconal Coaches and Regional Staff launched a **Listening Exercise**, calling churches to ask 3 questions:
-What excites you most about being a deacon?
-What current ministries/activities are you celebrating?
-How can we help you?

JANUARY 2022

A **National Deacon Survey** was launched and sent to past and present deacons, elders, pastors and other ministry leaders in the church to solicit feedback, gauge our impact, and help guide our work over the next few years.

[Read more about it on the next page]



MAY 2022

Rachel Vroege partnered with Dena Nicolai (Classis BC Refugee Support Mobilizer) to offer a brand **new workshop** called *Refugee Support: Month 13 & Beyond.*



SURVEY SAYS!

This past January, Diaconal Ministries launched a National Survey which was sent to Canadian deacons (past & present) as well as other ministry leaders. By sharing their experiences and feedback, Diaconal Ministries would be able to measure its effectiveness and better support the work of Deacons.

220

responses were received, with around 74% being current or former deacons. The other 26% were comprised of elders, pastors, and other ministry leaders.

120

past/present deacons said they were encouraging their members in the area of financial **stewardship** ("treasures"). Around 61% were providing opportunities for members to volunteer ("time") and 45% stated they helped members discover their gifts ("talents"). At the same time, several shared this was a growth area for them.

“

"This was a thorough survey and well thought out. I appreciate Diaconal Ministries Canada wanting to reach out to leadership to enhance the work that is being done."

[Survey Respondent]

91%

of currently serving deacons stated they were responding to requests for financial assistance while only 42% of them said they were utilizing a **Benevolence** Policy to help guide their work.
(In response to this, our staff revamped our Benevolence Workshop and led 18 workshops over the past year!)

117

respondents said they had used our website to access resources & support.

60%

of congregations are involved in refugee ministry on some level. Others listed a variety of ways they are doing **justice** and working with the vulnerable in their communities. Examples included: community fridges or pantries, community gardens, advocating for affordable housing, and prison ministry.

WHAT DEACONS ARE SAYING

“

I attended the [“Developing Benevolence Guidelines” workshop](#) recently via Zoom. One big takeaway was I realized our benevolence policy is strong on procedure but weak on guidelines. It reminded me that as a deacon, I don't have to jump in and say yes to every request for help. I discovered that our church/diaconate needs to be connected to community services and use them where appropriate. I so appreciate our Diaconal Coach and Regional Ministry Developer and it was great to meet with other deacons!

[Eastern Ontario Deacon, April 2022]

As I complete the survey, I realize how much I have to learn about how Diaconal Ministries could help us with our ministry. I am a new Deacon who volunteered to be chair because everyone else really didn't want to do it. I probably could use the most help regarding how to vision/set appropriate goals so as not to bite off more than we can chew. We have a former Diaconal Coach on our team of deacons and he is coaching me a bit as well. We are hoping to hire a service/outreach person later this year so we will be reorganizing as well. It would be a good time to get some input. Thank you! I wasn't going to fill in the survey because I am so new but I'm glad I did.

[National Survey Respondent, Jan. 2022]

”

“

I think that it is important to have a close relationship with your local [Diaconal Coach](#). The interactions that I have had with ours have been inspiring and helps to maintain motivation to continue to make progress, in spite of some indifference or apathy that we may encounter in our congregation.

[Former Classis Alberta South/Sask. Deacon]

I really enjoyed the [\[Deacon 101\] training](#) and the opportunity to discuss and reflect what our church is doing and envision ways that our church can move forward. Our Diaconal Coaches encouraged us to take a broader look at our church and determine what we were doing well. They also gave us some new ideas for encouraging congregational giving. I would love to see this as a yearly training that the deacons at our church participate in. Thank you!

[Classis Hamilton Deacon, April 2022]

”

DEACONS @ WORK

Deacons have continued to make an impact in their churches and communities over the past year, despite a variety of challenges!

BETHEL CRC (Saskatoon, SK)

For the deacons at Bethel CRC, their annual World Renew Giving Tree at Christmas has been a meaningful way to equip and empower their congregation to love God and their "global neighbours". Using World Renew's Gift Catalogue, members were encouraged to purchase much-needed items for people living in under-developed countries. Yet Jean DeBeer – a member, former deacon, and current Diaconal Coach for Diaconal Ministries – wondered if they could also do something closer to home.

The church was supporting three (3) local organizations financially; one dealing with addictions and mental health (Lighthouse), a downtown Christian ministry (The Bridge), and a Women's Shelter (Interval). Yet the deacons desired to go beyond just 'writing cheques'; to deepen the church's partnership with them.

"We wanted to encourage our congregation to be generous both locally and globally as well as use their gifts and passions in ways that would contribute to the partnerships we were trying to establish with a few local organizations," shared Jean. One thing all three of these organizations needed was winter clothing and accessories (hats, scarves, mittens, etc.) so adding a "local" Giving Tree would be the perfect way for the church to accomplish all of these things, Jean added.

The deacons were eager to give their blessing to the additional "Out of the Cold" Giving Tree. "Despite the difficulties many in our church were going through, with the pandemic affecting people in various ways and the farming community struggling, I wanted to create an opportunity for our church to still bless others in our community," Jean shared. "No matter what is going on, people always want to help and this affirmed that!"

Both trees received several donations, partly due to the church's active knitting club! The local giving tree was kept up until after Christmas as most organizations can see a dip in donations but the needs continue throughout the cold winter. The items were packaged up and included a hand-written card from the church. The organizations were extremely grateful as none of them were aware that the church was doing this for them. Moving forward, the deacons hope to work more closely with these local organizations. "Sometimes we assume what people need. In order to build deeper and long-lasting relationships, our hope is that we can ask them what is needed before next year's campaign and also that our deacons can find ways to bless these agencies other times of year and in different ways!"



SONLIGHT CRC (REGINA, SK)



Over this past year, Diaconal Ministries Canada heard from several churches looking for creative ways to become more integrated into their communities despite the ongoing pandemic. Sonlight joined six other Canadian CRC's for a [national learning cohort which was formed in the fall of 2021](#). Each session featured a teaching component, inspirational stories from churches, small group break-outs, and some homework. After the cohort ended, churches were encouraged to then identify ways they could engage with their local community. For Sonlight, the idea for a Community BBQ came from a meeting the church had with some local politicians. Their shared hope was for leaders in the community to meet with neighbours and discover how they could all make their community a better place. "It was great to participate in a gathering in which people are interested and excited to

live out their faith in (their) neighbourhoods," shared Mike Booy, a member of Sonlight's Community team and a former deacon, about the learning cohort. "The support, encouragement, and coaching of Diaconal Ministries' staff along the way has been very important. I think that we are just beginning; I am looking forward to where God will lead our congregation."

EVERGREEN CRC (FORT MACMURRAY, AB)

From forest fires in 2016 to record flooding in 2020, it would seem as though things were working against this northern Alberta community. Yet Evergreen Church saw opportunity. While COVID-19 had changed the church and its 'way of life', members were yearning for a chance to be connected again; a chance to help and show love to their neighbours. With the help of a COVID-19 Grant from Diaconal Ministries and World Renew Canada, Evergreen turned their hardships into hope-filled ministries. On top of their flood relief efforts, they set up a Community Garden and a musical instrument lending library! Through these initiatives, they have been able to develop relationships with people in their city as well as with other non-profits and organizations - all because they continued to trust God and follow His lead. (You can read the [full story on our blog!](#))

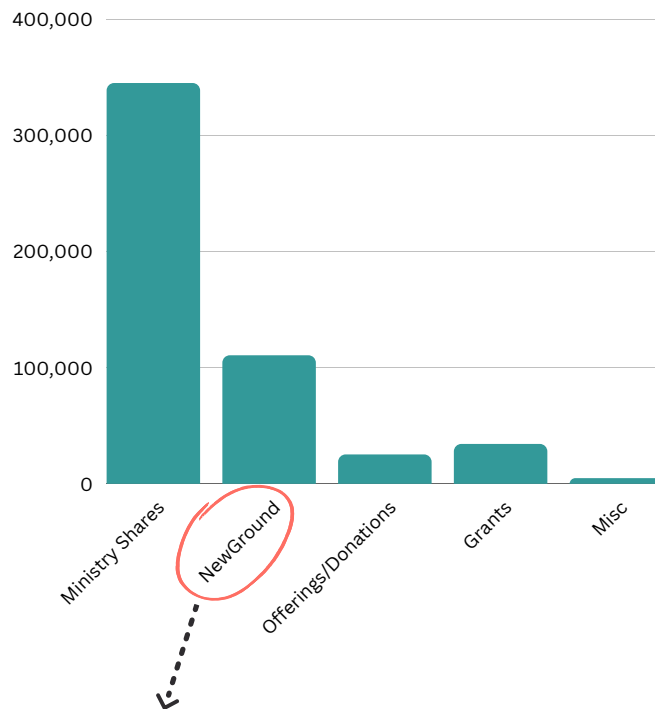


What excites you most about being a deacon?

"I love to bring people hope and get the congregation involved in places where they can serve tangibly. There is a heart for assisting refugees and a heart for the marginalized at our church. I enjoy leading our diaconate, yet relying on the strengths and collaboration of the entire team to be effective leaders."
[Southern Ontario Deacon]

FINANCIALS

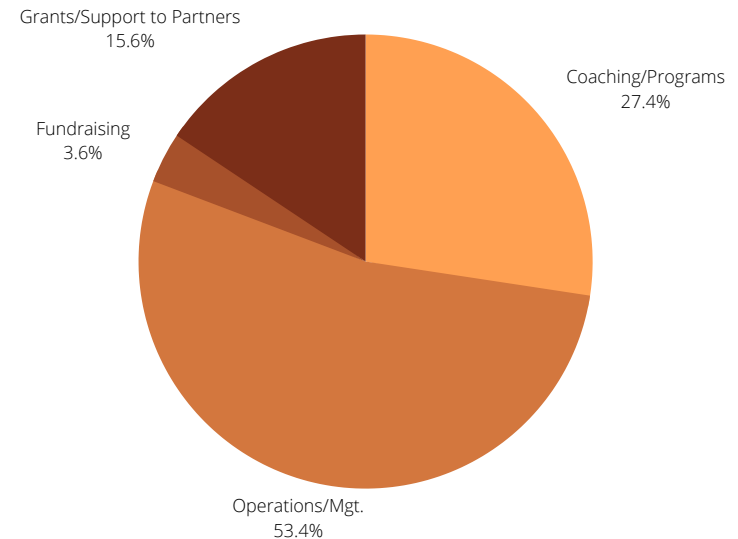
REVENUE - \$518,712



The [NewGround program](#) (formerly Operation Manna) is funded by a yearly offering, scheduled the first Sunday in May.

Diaconal Ministries relies heavily on the commitment and generosity of Christian Reformed churches across Canada who contribute to annual [Diaconal Ministry Shares \('dues'\)](#). These shares are invoiced on a per member basis and are not the same as, or included in, classical or denominational ministry shares. Other diaconal-hearted folks from across Canada who believe in our mission have also supported us with one-time and monthly donations!

EXPENSES - \$450,282



➤➤➤ The full, Audited Financial Statements are available upon request and will be reviewed at our AGM.

STORY BEHIND THE \$\$

92%

of Canadian Christian Reformed churches contributed to diaconal ministry shares ("dues")

27

individuals made donations and five (5) of them are monthly donors!

175

workshops, meetings, and one-on-one chats held by staff and Diaconal Coaches

This included our Deacon 101 and benevolence workshops, help with workplans/setting goals, general leadership development and more! Nine (9) of these meetings were with churches interested in doing a Community Opportunity Scan to get to know their surrounding neighbourhood better!

630+

deacons across Canada were trained & equipped

714

hours were submitted by our team of Diaconal Coaches!

Our Coaches spend time leading workshops (online and in-person), answering questions and finding resources for deacons and churches, occasionally attending Classis meetings, and receiving their own training from our Regional Ministry Developers. (And this is only the hours they submitted!)

NEWGROUND

The [NewGround program](#) includes Community Ministry Grants & Support (formerly called Operation Manna), Deacon Scholarships, Community Opportunity Scans, and a Youth Justice component.

5

Community Ministry Partners

- **MYHouse** (Mission, BC)
- **Community Counseling Centre of London** (London, ON)
- **The Vault** (Edmonton, AB)
- **Open Homes** (Hamilton, ON)
- **Norfolk Pregnancy & Family Resource Centre** (Simcoe, ON)

50

Hours of Coaching & Support

Along with the grants, the support and coaching our partners receive is vital! This is done with **one-on-one coaching** (approx. 5 hours/partner this past year) and at our annual **Ministry Networking Day** in June which gathers past & present partners! Partners have sought help with staffing/human resources, strategic planning, increasing diversity in ministry teams, youth leadership & engagement, networking with local community partners, and, of course, FUNDRAISING and sustainability.

NewGround (formerly Operation Manna) helps churches love their community! Offering grants, as well as coaching and support to our partners, ensures they will continue to bless their cities for years to come!

A Story from The Vault Youth Centre

"Last year Jen was able to open up about her struggles with mental health and self-harm. She was able to share because she was given a community that cared about her and a place among her peers to make friends. Jen is just one among so many who need this community where they can be seen for who they are and share life with others. Thank you so much for all you've done to care for these youth. **The youth know that The Vault can only operate because of partners like you who want them to understand their value and potential with the opportunity to encounter God's love.** They often can't even comprehend the idea that people who don't even know them would care for them. Thank you for letting us share your care for them."

-Courtney, Program Director





of our past NewGround partners and their ministries are still going strong today! Check out Rose City Kids' story



People attended our (virtual) [Ministry Networking Day](#) (MND) in June.

Our annual MND is just one more way we support and equip our partners. Every year we hear again how participants are re-energized for their ministries and how much they appreciate the cross-pollination that occurs at these networking events. This year's theme was focused on fundraising and financial sustainability. We welcomed three (3) experienced fundraisers and grant managers, two of which were past NewGround partners!



NewGround
Churches loving communities

Where Are They Now?

A NewGround Partner Update

When we felt like it was time to step out in faith and start Rose City Kids, we were just doing it with our own “pocket change”.

We were blessed to have a NewGround grant (then called Operation Manna) for three (3) years which was really

encouraging for us because when you start a Christian ministry in a community, there's not a lot of people that buy into it initially.

Most donors or grant organizations want to see you have been around for a few years; they want to see success stories and you don't always have those, especially right at the beginning! When Rose City Kids received the NewGround funding - that was a big boost for us. That was really encouraging and affirmed that we were supposed to be doing this ministry in our community.

NewGround gives ministries like ours a chance and equips and supports them so that we can be around for years to come! We had no idea that our ministry was going to grow so rapidly! From starting with a Saturday morning kids program 14 years ago to now offering a variety of free and accessible programs to kids and families in our community *all week long*, we are grateful for the role NewGround played all those years ago. Never did we think that we would eventually have a budget of a half a million dollars!

—Sonya Wierenga, Executive Director
Rose City Kids (Welland, ON)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ONGOING SUPPORT!

DIACONAL MINISTRIES' STAFF

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**funded in partnership with CRC Canada, World Renew Canada, CRC Centre for Public Dialogue



Pictured: Pastor Josh Friend holds a portion of the harvest from the Eden Community Gardens at Evergreen CRC, a teaching and healing garden project. See part of their story on page 11 and on our [e-Quip Diaconal Blog](#).

DIACONAL MINISTRIES' BOARD OF DIRECTORS (2021-22)

Jesse Edgington, Classis Alberta North

Don Miedema, Classis Alberta South/Sask.

Cindy Verbeek, Classis British Columbia North West

Liz Tolkamp, Classis British Columbia South East

Jeff Robinson, Classis Ontario South West (formerly Chatham)

Peter Van Harmelen, Classis Eastern Canada (**Chair**)

Steve Dykstra, Classis Hamilton

Mary Blydorp, Classis Huron

Yvonne Schenk, Classis Lake Superior

Vacant, Classis Niagara

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