

2016 DEACON'S REPORT TO THE ANNUAL VESTRY ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS

My life has been filled with memorable events. However, 2016 was a very special year for me because it marked the end of formal theological studies and in-ministry preparation as a student, and the beginning of a new life-chapter of discipleship as an ordained transitional deacon. From early January to the end of April, 2016, I completed the second and final semester of field placement in preparation for graduation and ordination. Overall assessment within the parish focused on the following areas:

- **Learning Goals and Objectives**
- **Worship and Preaching**
- **Mission and Church in Context**
- **Pastoral Leadership and Pastoral Relationships**
- **Pastoral Identity**
- **Spiritual and Personal Formation**
- **Theological Reflection on the Practice of Ministry**

I am thankful for the six spiritually mature and gifted members of my Lay Committee, namely, Joan, Debra, Cheryl, Theresa, Berty and Grant, who welcomed me, and then meet monthly with me, providing guidance, support and constructive feedback to my preaching, pastoral and leadership skills in particular.

Equally significant to my formation during this period were the weekly field supervisory meetings in the quiet, uninterrupted prayerful space of Rev. Michelle's office. There, suggestions, feedback, critique, and the sharing of mutual concerns and difficulties were expressed. These meetings also provided opportunities for me to engage in theological reflection. Consequently, foundational theological principles come into vital dialogue and application with my involvement in contemporary ministry. In fact, theological reflection became an invaluable spiritual discipline, contributing greatly to the enhancement of my self-awareness and increased competence in the exercise of my ministry.

The overall positive and constructive assessments of my field supervisor Rev. Michelle and my Lay Committee enabled me to complete successfully my in-ministry preparation for graduation at the convocation ceremony which took place at the Church of St. John the Divine on 4 May, 2016. On Sunday, May 15th, Feast of Pentecost, at 4 pm at the Cathedral, I was ordained Transitional Deacon by The Right Rev. Mary Irwin-Gibson, Bishop, Anglican Diocese of Montréal.

Exactly one month later on June 15, I underwent spinal surgery which was followed by a lengthy period of healing and recovery. Unfortunately, it was not until Sunday 4 September that I was fit enough to resume my ministry at St. Mikes, to which community Bishop Mary graciously appointed me as Honorary Assistant until September 2017.

Bearing in mind the feedback during my in-ministry year that was meant to help me to grow, develop and mature, from the day I resumed my ministry in September through December,

2016, I have endeavoured to progress in relation to meeting the expectations regarding a professional minister which the Lay Committee, Rev. Michelle and the congregation have of me. Accordingly, attaining the following goals were important to me, and I have worked faithfully since September in my ministry at St. Mikes to accomplish them:

- Sharpen my listening skills and my ability to respond appropriately;
- With practice, improve my confidence, comfort and ability to lead worship services;
- Employ my teaching skills in the ministry of Bible study and other facets of Christian education;
- Improving my preaching style by finding effective ways to balance my ability to teach with providing enough information to move and transform listeners in their relationship with Jesus;
- Participate actively in the pastoral life of the church to seniors in nursing-care residences and shut-ins.

These goals are important to me because I consider the ministry to which I have been called as service to God and to other people in his name. My solemn belief is that Jesus' life provides the pattern and ultimate example for Christian ministry: Jesus came, not to receive service, but to give it. Therefore, I view the ministry to which I am called as one of several other modes by which God comes to his people and through them to his world in service. My aim as I serve, learn and mature at St. Mikes is to meet people's needs with love and humility on Christ's behalf.

I have used every opportunity given me to preach to improve myself. Preaching on Easter Sunday and at 4:00 pm. the eve of Christmas was very satisfying. I was comfortable and confident fully leading the service of Morning Prayer twice during Advent in Rev. Michelle's absence. Participation in the Advent Quiet Day was uplifting. I continue to enjoy leading the Wednesday midday Bible study. So far, I have been introduced to two of our shut-in parishioners, and look forward to meeting another five on a list prepared by Rev. Michelle. My wish for 2017 is to round out my training by being somewhat involved in organizational meetings and other types of church services.

I am happy to have been posted at St. Michael and All Angels as Honorary Assistant. This community is genuine, loving, compassionate, nurturing and caring. The more I give, the more I have received. I look forward to an even more fruitful 2017, growing and maturing as I assist and learn from Rev. Michelle, organizational leaders and the community in general.

In Christ,

Stanley.