NADC Consultant Classis Report: October 12&13, 2018

Northern Alberta Diaconal Conference (NADC): A Classis ministry of which all CAN churches are members. The full board consists of a representative of each church. This representative is usually, though not always, a deacon. We exist to encourage and inspire congregations and communities to grow in living lives of stewardship, justice, mercy, and compassion. This is accomplished by regularly meeting, collaborating, communicating and sharing of expertise and experience between members and ministry partners.

1. The Day of Encouragement (DOE) is scheduled for November 3, 2018 and the Keynote speaker will be Dr. Bill McAlpine from Ambrose University. The theme is Sacred Spaces and we will hear a variety of applications of that theme from Pastors, Chaplains, denominational leaders, counselors and more. We will start by considering how and why the built environment is much more than an inert container in which worship and ministry occurs. Sacred space, whether intended or not, is part of who we are (our identity) and what we do (our ministry) and thus is integral to fulfillment of our mission. From there we will explore ideas of Sacred Space from many different angles and contexts. There will also be music by special guest Clinton Richardson. Register at [www.regonline.ca/doe2018edmonton](http://www.regonline.ca/doe2018edmonton) and find full details at [www.classisalbertanorth.ca/nadc](http://www.classisalbertanorth.ca/nadc). Remember November!!

2. We gathered together in June and early October, as NADC board representatives, to listen to each other and learn. This is a time to network, share and update things happening in our diaconates. We were blessed to have presentations from John Taekema on behalf of the CLAC Foundation, Russ Graff updating us on the Little White Church of Glory Hills, and Randy Haluza-Delay sharing about his experience in the Middle East this summer as a volunteer member of the Christian Peacemaker Teams. We also had time for reporting on different ministries that our diaconates are involved with.

3. NADC Consultant. I have had a social justice and human rights focused season with much of my own learning including research on the detriments of arms trafficking and war, the importance of peacemaking and a personal trip to Winnipeg where I was able to take in a day at the National Human Rights Museum. Wow, if you are inspired by anything in this report, be inspired to go to Winnipeg! No really, the museum was overwhelming, moving and cried out with so many stories of the attributes that we know about our God who loves and cares for all people and wants this world to be healed.

I continue to administratively help the Classis with circulating the Cree paintings called “The Creators Sacrifice.” Three churches had the paintings at their church since our last meeting and we were also excited to be able to loan them to a RCA sister church in Edmonton (see more details on a post on the website).

In conjunction with the paintings we have also done a study called “Living the 8th Fire.” I worked with the Edmonton Native Healing Centre to modify it, as a concentrated one-day event, and was able to pilot it this summer with a group of people from Bethel and Stony Plain. It was well received and I would be happy to discuss this option with you.

With the advantage of summer weather, I was also blessed to be able to be a part of Indigenous ministry happening outdoors in God’s beautiful creation. NADC partnered with the Edmonton Native Healing Centre and Poundmaker’s Lodge Treatment Centres to organize two walks of reconciliation. People representing many of our CRC churches and communities were able to join us and walk along side our Indigenous brothers and sisters as we continue to move towards healing and right relationships. More details on these stories were covered on the CRC’s Network (https://www.crcna.org/news-and-views/edmonton-community-members-gather-walk-reconciliation) and the Banner (https://www.thebanner.org/news/2018/08/talk-walks-and-steady-work-canadian-crcs-on-the-journey-toward-reconciliation).

4. NADC Communication. I have been making regular posts on the NADC tab of the Classis Website. It is a place where I am able to add info about upcoming events, stories of things that have taken place in the ministries of deacons and reflections from learning, reading and experiencing our service together. Some of the ways we are working to supplement emails and newsletters, are to create consistent hubs of communication that can be easily followed, like our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/yournadc) and web tab (www.classisalbertanorth.ca/nadc). Posts relate to the CRCNA and CAN umbrellas, as well as highlights from our ministry partners. They also give an opportunity for our local churches to be connected and tell their stories. Input and local deacon content is always welcomed; I would be happy to include events or stories from your diaconates.

5. Honduras Water Project. The 2018 team went back to the project in Varsovia for a third year, which meant doing a few different things like cement floors in homes, finishing pipes in the village and even building latrines, fun! They have really been able to cement some strong relationships and have been a shining example to the communities around them, who are now looking to them as local leaders. Praise God for how he moves among the people there and thank you to the churches for your continued support.

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