

COVENANTING SERVICE WITH LYNNE GARDINER
DELTA-TOLEDO P.C., DELTA
AND FOUR RIVERS PRESBYTERY

Members of Delta-Toledo Pastoral Charge and Four Rivers Presbytery gathered on Sunday, September 27, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. in Delta U.C. to covenant with Lynne Gardiner. This was a particularly special time since the congregation was also celebrating the 187th anniversary of Delta United.

Following the call to worship and opening prayer, we joined in the anniversary hymn, “God We Thank You”. The choir offered the very appropriate “Come, Build a Church” and we moved into the Covenanting liturgy.

Lynne Gardiner has completed her studies at Queen’s Theological College and is now in a time of supervised ministry prior to ordination. Delta-Toledo Pastoral Charge has offered itself as a Supervised Ministry Education site (SME) to enable Lynne to complete her educational requirements. The Rev. Don Stiles will act as the Pastoral Charge Supervisor and the Rev. Myra Garvin will be Lynne’s Educational Supervisor.

Sue Hutton, Chair of Presbytery, presided over this portion of the service. She reminded us that we are a community called together to be God’s people in the body of Christ. We are called to learn and grow in faith and understanding. God has given us all gifts to share for the fulfilment of the Church’s mission to love and serve. Lynne has accepted the responsibility to lead and minister with the Delta-Toledo Pastoral Charge and this is part of the requirement for ordination in the United Church of Canada. A learning Covenant has been established by Lynne, the Pastoral Charge and Rev. Myra. At this time, Sue invited everyone gathered to take the opportunity to commit themselves to this process of learning and growth. Members of Four Rivers Presbytery in attendance included Sue Hutton, Cathy Livingston, Karen McLean, Rev. Bruce Ross, Cathy Ryan, Rev. Kathryn Sarjeant-Powell and Chris Whitty. Sue closed this time of covenant with prayer.

Rev. Myra Garvin and Rev. Bruce Ross shared the messages from scripture with us and Rev. Myra brought words of challenge and encouragement in the meditation “Your Mission, If You Choose to Accept It...”

Today is a day of multiple celebrations – a time to covenant with Lynne but also a time to remember this is the 187th anniversary of Delta United Church.

Myra suggested we imagine Delta-Toledo as a tree planted in Rideau Lakes Township 187 years ago. We are planting our roots deep and the church grows from those roots. The Genesis reading is the story of how God steps in time and time again to encourage us and love us and forgive us.

Today reminds us that this is our story of all those who have gone before us. God has planted this community of faith in Delta. We are also reminded that nothing defines a healthy congregation better than how much it gives away. Discipleship is primarily about witness. Jesus invented service and devoted his life to it. Service is our reason for being.

Who are we to serve? Children first. How are we doing at that? A church that doesn’t serve its children, teens or adults won’t be able to stay open for long. Children are our first customers but there are many other customers who need us as well – the poor, hungry, thirsty, ill etc. If we could reach out to all these we might be surprised at how many responded. We also have another set of customers – those who are lost. They are our mission field. Let us remember our past, celebrate our present and make plans for our future. Amen.

The hymn was VU#595 “We Are Pilgrims” after which the offering was collected. Envelopes had been distributed to receive donations to the Conference Student Bursary Fund. The choir offered the lovely anthem “Come to the Water” with solo by Chris Whitty.

Following the closing hymn VU#288 “Great is Thy Faithfulness” and the commissioning and benediction, Don and Steve Curtis joined the congregation to offer a musical interlude until luncheon was served in the church hall.