

## We are all Ministers!

We all are one in mission; we all are one in call,  
our varied gifts united by Christ, the Lord of all. ...

Our ministries are different; our purpose is the same:  
to touch the lives of others with God's surprising grace, ...

LBW Hymn # 576

On May 18 the Joint Council approved a motion by the Growing Young committee to "change the nomenclature from volunteer to minister [in our community of faith]." This should not be too hard for us to get used to. Before the pandemic closed down worship as we knew it we published a monthly schedule called "Worship Ministers", where we listed Assisting Minister (usually a lay person, even youth), Communion Assistants, Lector, Acolyte, Baker, Ushers, Greeters and Flower delivery. All of these, though "volunteers", are ministers serving the community of faith.

A minister is a person who serves in God's name. This applies to all the varied ways we serve the community of faith or serve in our community and world in the name of the community of faith. Think of Congregation Council, all our service teams (formerly "committees), "God's Work Our Hands" and everything we do within the church. We are all Ministers in our service.

Volunteers are people who offer themselves to do something that "someone has to do."  
Ministers have a divine commission to serve in God's name.

When the United Proclamation of the Gospel was formed some people saw this as a means to provide a larger pool of "volunteers." I looked at it from the opposite direction. Joining our churches in common mission greatly multiplied our opportunities to serve, to be ministers in and through the faith community. We have many more chances to find one or more ministries that match our skills and interests. With the addition of St. John's Windish Church we again increased the opportunities for ministry for the people of both St. John's and the UPG Parish.

But our ministry goes beyond what we do in and through the church. Our divine commission to be ministers goes with us into our daily lives. In our families, communities, jobs, school life, civic involvement – everywhere we go, with everyone we meet, we are God's ministers, serving and proclaiming God's love, one heart at a time.

Fellow ministers, let us all be about God's work in the world!

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God's blessing to all of you, servants (ministers) of the Servant.

Tom Keener