

A Time to Check-In for Brenda Peszle

Yes, it's time for me to check in! I've been introduced as the ministry student from Fonthill, Ontario who has been attending services here at Port Nelson United Church since January, but I felt you just might want to know a little bit more about me and why I'm here at this church.

My name is Brenda Peszle (pronounced "pays-lee"). I am a Master of Divinity student at the Atlantic School of Theology in Halifax, Nova Scotia, where I am in my final year of my studies. I am also hoping to be ordained in the United Church of Canada in congregational ministry. Currently, I only have two academic courses and my Grad Project to complete, which I hope to have done in the Fall of 2019. I am also finishing my ministry practicum in the form of two Student Field Experience courses, which are being supervised by Northeastern Seminary in Rochester, New York. My fifteen-week stay at Port Nelson United Church is the site for one of these two remaining 'Student Field Experience' courses where I hope to get involved in meeting many of the members, adherents and, others and, where I hope to participate in some of the Sunday worship and, other gatherings. During my time here, I am required to facilitate a small study group. Rev. Dr. Michael Brooks has agreed to meet with me regularly where I hope to be able to discuss with him and, to learn from him as one who has recently celebrated serving ten years in ministry at Port Nelson United Church.



My focus for the Grad Project is on legacy and vision: where a community of faith comes from and where it discerns it is going. I find Port Nelson United Church to be of interest. I am delighted to be somewhere where I can experience, with the community, a spirited hope for the next phase of the faith journey as the community of faith develops and actively lives out its mission statement and core values.

While I am at Port Nelson United Church, I am simultaneously part of two other on-line and one live community. I am also a sometime student at Emmanuel College, University of Toronto where courses are not yet available on-line. Call it unique, but I attend three seminaries and love the journey!

I serve the United Church of Canada. This seems to be an anomaly at AST because there don't seem to be too many students who were born, baptized, confirmed, educated, served and chaired many committees and on Council, was licensed as a Lay Worship Leader, was discerned and is attending seminary[ies] as purely a product of the United Church of Canada. In my growing up years when the United Church was considering partnering with other denominations, this was also part of my upbringing. Youth programs were primarily Anglican and there was much fellowship with the Presbyterian churches. Since my undergrad program, I have benefited from getting to know many denominations and continue to frequent many of them. My experience in the U.S. reveals to me many more denominations and their practices.

As for my educational background, I first studied political science and economics in a bilingual program in Toronto. Then I sought certification as a secondary/elementary teacher in Buffalo, New York. I have worked in both the provincial and federal governments; in print and television media; as a professional writer and a self-published writer; have worked as a network administrator in IT but, traded in my technical interests to follow God's call to serve. This took me first to Citizenship and Immigration, then towards public education but always with the church beside me. Life's journey clipped my wings with a health matter, and I solely became both caregiver, lay worship leader and, student.

What I expect to get from this Field Experience are insights on ministry as a [lowly] vocation; how legacy is a factor in future vision; how faith challenges us in contemporary life. I look forward to learning more about this community of faith during this time of transition for the church and, during a period of major transformation for the United Church of Canada. Thank you for welcoming me as your ministry student.

May the Peace of Christ Be with You Always,

Brenda Peszle