

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **OPERATION MANNA PROGRAM GETS AN EXTREME MAKEOVER**

**Burlington, ON/February 15, 2019** --- The Operation Manna (OM) Program of Diaconal Ministries Canada has been helping churches establish vital community ministries across the country for over 35 years. The impact on churches and communities has been felt far and wide and for that, we are grateful to God.

In recent years, staff and committee members of Diaconal Ministries Canada began dreaming and praying about how this program could extend its reach as well as have a more distinctive, imaginative, and descriptive name to go with it. (Many in the CRC denomination still associate the OM Program with World Renew, where it began initially as a food drop program in Korea. For a brief history of OM, click [here](#).) "Through the OM program, Diaconal Ministries Canada has had such a great resource to support new ministries, but many CRCs just didn't know about it," remarked Tammy Heidbuurt, OM Program Director. So a decision was made in the Fall of 2018 to pursue a full rebranding of the program. We truly believe God was part of this process from the beginning and we are excited to share this news with the world!

As of March 1st, 2019, the Operation Manna Program will now be called **NewGround**.



The overall focus of the program will remain the same: **NewGround** will continue to partner with churches across Canada to help them roll up their sleeves and break new missional ground, nurturing Spirit-led ideas into healthy ministries that bear everlasting fruit. We believe God is always at work and He calls churches to follow Him into their communities to share Christ's transformational love with each and every person. Cities and neighbourhoods should be impacted and blessed through the social action and thoughtful, cultural engagement of local Christians.

The **NewGround Program** will be comprised of **Four (4) Key Activities**:

- **Community Opportunity Scans** to help churches identify the assets, skills, resources, and potential partnership opportunities available in their community;
- **Community Ministry Support** which provides coaching, networking, and resources (including grant money) to equip churches to partner with those in their community and break new ground by starting sustainable ministries and programs;
- **Annual Youth Justice Initiative** which connects young people with the deacons in their church to expose an injustice in their community and find innovative ways to address it, with the help of grant money and coaching; and
- **Deacon Scholarships** will be available for deacons and/or diaconates who wish to pursue “new ground” learning – via books, videos, workshops, etc. – focused on their work.

Rachel Vroege, Diaconal Ministries’ Regional Ministry Developer in Western Canada, summarized the revamped program this way: “NewGround is all about connecting the gifts of our churches and deacon leaders to the ministry opportunities in our cities and local neighbourhoods.” What is even more exciting, according to Rachel, is that the updated and expanded grant and coaching program will also help reach a new generation of justice seekers. “NewGround will inspire hope for transformation and growth in the lives of young people passionate about serving in their community,” she shared. Tammy H. agrees and adds that she hopes “NewGround will enable churches to be courageous and creative with ministry opportunities in their community.

Historically, the OM Program was funded primarily through a one-time offering, typically held the first Sunday in May. This offering will still happen, but as the program extends its reach and breaks its own ‘new ground’, Diaconal Ministries will be seeking other revenue streams to support its expanded activities.

We hope you will join us in celebrating our updated **NewGround** Program. Our contact information will remain the same. Please stay tuned for updates to our website, including all resources pertaining to **NewGround**, in the coming weeks.

**For more information, please contact:**

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