

PROFILE



MIKE AND DEBBIE BURNS MALAWI

The Presbyterian Church in Canada has sent The Rev. Michael Burns and his wife Debbie to serve the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in Malawi (CCAP). Mike is an associate minister at St. James Church, helping meet the CCAP's need for qualified ministers. Debbie is looking forward to discerning a position in Malawi that will allow her to use her God-given gifts in ways and areas that fit with what is needed by the people there.

Mike and Debbie were living and working in the Waterloo region, attending Knox Waterloo when, in 2003, they both felt called to respond in some way to the AIDS pandemic. To learn more they travelled to Malawi to visit PCC partners and see the impact AIDS was having there. They spent the next year sharing their experiences in churches and schools across Ontario, raising funds and awareness about HIV and AIDS. This experience, combined with examples of service from other members of Knox Waterloo, helped Mike and Debbie to discern their call to serve God, the church and the world,.

Both began to pursue their call by pursuing their education. Mike gave up his job as an auto worker for Toyota, and obtained an Honours BA in Global and Women's Studies at Wilfrid Laurier University in 2007, followed by a Master of Divinity from Knox College in 2010. Debbie, who had been working in human resources, also returned to school, graduating with her Master of Social Work from Wilfrid Laurier in 2007. Most recently Debbie was working for VHA Home Health Care in Toronto, coordinating programs for new parents with no support and limited incomes. Debbie also served on Knox's Pastoral Care Committee and as a crisis-line volunteer with Kitchener-Waterloo Sexual Assault Centre.

Mike and Debbie spent a summer teaching English to teachers in China in 2006 and Mike co-led *Youth in Mission* trips to Malawi and Taiwan in 2010. While attending Knox College, Mike worked part-time at Rosedale Presbyterian Church, where he also did his field placement. Much of his work was in the St James Town neighbourhood—a diverse, economically challenged downtown neighbourhood.

Mike and Debbie met in 1995 and they started attending Knox Waterloo later that year. They were married there in 1997 and were ordained as elders in 2001. On January 30, 2011 Mike was ordained at Knox as a minister of Word and Sacrament and both were commissioned as missionaries of The Presbyterian Church in Canada appointed to the Blantyre Synod in Malawi.

Follow Mike and Debbie's journey on their blog at
<http://pccweb.ca/mikeanddebbieburns/>

