

## ***Jeannine Friesen - Autobiography***

I was born in Saskatoon, SK to an Air Frame technician in the RCAF and a stay-at-home mother. I spent my early childhood on the prairies until Dad was posted to Trenton when I was six. Public school was completed at schools in the Trenton-Belleville area. I attended the Protestant Chapel in Trenton until we moved off the base. I attended a United Church before my parents decided to return to worshiping in a local Anglican congregation. I became involved in youth group, taught Sunday School, and was confirmed.

At fifteen, I discerned a calling to ordained ministry. It was a feeling that never left. I earned a Bachelor of Arts degree at Queen's University, Kingston. After a year working to earn money, I enrolled in Master of Divinity studies at Trinity College, Toronto. Having met all requirements for ordination, I was ordained in the Diocese of Ontario in 1985 as Deacon and 1986 as Priest. I was the first woman in full time parish ministry in the diocese.

I married Doug Friesen, a military Chaplain, in 1988. We spent five years in Germany after which Doug was posted to Royal Roads Military College in Victoria. Our children were born in the late 1990's. I did several short-term positions with parishes in transition in the Diocese of BC. In 2001, the Dean of Christ Church Cathedral offered me a position on the cathedral staff. We were in negotiations when Doug was posted to CFB Suffield. As it happened, the priest at one of the local parishes left shortly after we arrived in Suffield and I became their Interim Priest. A similar situation developed when Doug was posted to Cold Lake. Those were enriching experiences as I learned how to assist parishes in transition as they prepared to hire a new rector.

While in Cold Lake, I applied to join the CAF Chaplaincy and ultimately enrolled in 2009. I was posted to CFB Esquimalt for the first six years as an operational chaplain in the Pacific Fleet. I spent enough time at sea to earn a Sea Service Insignia and be awarded the Operational Service Medal.

I spent two years in Ottawa at Army HQ as Staff Officer to the Canadian Army Chaplain during which I was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Commander. I returned to Esquimalt in 2017 and served my remaining two years as the Senior Fleet Chaplain.

Since releasing, I've been active in the Diocese of BC. I am currently the Incumbent of St Columba, Tofino, a ministry my husband and I are undertaking as a team. My most significant position since leaving the CAF was working full time as Priest in Charge of Christ Church Cathedral, Victoria. This was a demanding job that included supervision of employees, chairing multiple meetings as well as being the forward-facing personality of a prominent downtown Victoria church. I oversaw a process of identifying the priorities of the cathedral as they prepared to hire a new Dean.