

## *Shannon MacLean BIO*

Shannon MacLean is an extroverted optimist who has a special place in her heart for people who spend their time on the margins of society. It is through spending time with those who hold so little power that Shannon has found the most prophetic teachers and has felt closest to God. Her time living at l'Arche taught her what it means to truly live in community. Sharing life with people who have intellectual disabilities made Shannon realize that some of the best lessons in life are not learned in a classroom and some of the greatest teachers cannot be measured by their IQ. The following years were spent living and volunteering in Bolivia. She had to un-learn so many of the things she thought were true. Understanding that suffering and joy often coexist was one of the many lessons she learned working in orphanages and prisons. Coming face to face with your own privileged changes a person. This is where she had to struggle with the fact that "maybe we have it all wrong... maybe we need to live our lives differently"... and she never saw the world with the same eyes again. Shannon has always loved kids and couldn't wait to be a mother! Raising her three amazing children (Julia, Grace & Jack) and helping to raise her nieces and nephew (Meghan, Hannah and JD) and international "sons" (Cheol Ho and Jay) has been her deepest joy. Through parenting, Shannon learned quickly that "fair" doesn't mean everyone gets treated the same, but that they get what they need. She learned how vulnerable we all are and how to look for the best in every situation. Mum is her favourite title by far. Shannon is grateful for the young people who have walked with her over these two decades of youth ministry, they have filled her with hope. They remind her to laugh every day, that you CAN make the world a better place and to embrace each moment in life. Her love and passion for young people fuels her desire to follow the words of the prophet Micah 6:8, "what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God". Aside from Scripture, and the amazing people who Shannon has been blessed to have as mentors, Shannon has also found wisdom in strange places! A long time ago Shannon started a bumper sticker collection on her van. Even though the van went to "van-heaven" a long time ago, the wisdom in those bumper stickers remain to be guiding principles for Shannon: "The best things in life aren't things." "Well behaved women seldom make history." "Children should be seen, and heard and believed." And "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world: indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." -Margaret Mead

### **Other notable facts about Shannon:**

Shannon is a PK (preachers kid) (and a Preachers GRAND-kid X2).

She lived in several locations across NS as a child, although she calls North Sydney home.

She graduated from Mount Allison with a BSc in Bio-Psychology, then from Yorkville University with a MA in Counselling psychology and finally from AST with a Diploma in Youth Ministry and an MDiv.

Since 2003 Shannon has worked with youth and children in the United Church. First at Stairs Memorial, then at Edgewood-Oxford United and finally becoming the youth minister at Woodlawn United Church.

Shannon is excited to be taking the next step in her journey. She and her family are moving to Truro, Nova Scotia. Shannon has accepted a call to become the new minister at St. Andrew's United Church and is very much looking forward to this next adventure!