

**Keith Dow, Manager of Organizational and Spiritual Life**

As a pastor and theologian with Christian Horizons, my role is to help us think through how our Christian roots shape our organizational journey and culture. A verse that hits me where it hurts – in a good way – is Micah 6:8. The prophet describes what God demands, what is good and right: “To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” (NIV). Not only have people, at times, been prideful and unjust in the name of the Christian religion; I am personally often too quick to cast judgment, thinking that I have all the answers.

Those of us who hold power, wealth, ability, status etc. in society often profit at the expense of others who have little or who are at the margins. [According to CBS News](#), during the first year of the pandemic billionaires saw their wealth increase 54%. Meanwhile, here at Christian Horizons, those we support were more likely to fall ill or die from the pandemic than many others. The contrast was harsh and tragic.

This is why I see our work at Christian Horizons as so crucial. Through our core values of: *valuing people, fostering belonging, serving others, and respecting gifts*, we work for justice for people who often get a raw deal. At the end of the day – or at the end of our shifts – we labour so that people with intellectual disabilities will lead this movement themselves and be received and heard as the advocates and contributors that they are. There is a lot of work to be done toward a society that embraces people in this way!

“Intersectionality” is a word introduced in 1989 by Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw. While she used it to describe the experience of being Black and female, it is helpful in disability justice circles as well. In her book “Demystifying Disability,” Emily Ladau says that intersectionality helps us to think about how “disability can intersect with any and all other identities.” Multiple identities can overlap in different ways. People can face injustice or discrimination because they’re disabled and because they’re Black, disabled and queer, disabled and female etc. It’s best to not just listen to me, but to learn from people who are at these intersections. Many of the people Christian Horizons supports experience marginalization because of intersecting identities.

Martin Luther King Jr. famously quoted Amos 5:24 in his civil rights advocacy, “But let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.” Our journey has been in learning to accompany and support people who are working for justice – mercifully, humbly, and faithfully. I’m encouraged by the part we each play in this important work and am grateful for the mercy that others have extended to me as I stumble forward toward a more equitable world.

### Making the Connection

- How might you describe “intersectionality?” How might it be helpful as we think about the experiences of people who use Christian Horizons’ services?
- Do you think of your work as a kind of advocacy for justice? Why or why not? There are good reasons why you may or may not have thought about your work in this way before.