Roots and Wings:

Since becoming a grandparent, I've been reminded of the role my own grandparents played in my life. Although a couple of decades have passed since their death, the living memory of their presence remains. Their commitment to each other, to community and family and to the church, continues to provide inspiration.

John Reid was honoured by Sharon St. John church for serving as an elder for 50 years, service rooted in rural life, traditional values and commitment to God, yet contributing to the whole ministry of the church. Sadie's faith was expressed in leadership roles as she became aware of current issues facing the church and the world. She gave me a copy of "The Wanderer" an autobiography Sang Chul Lee, saying, "Donna, I want you to read this book. When you do, you will understand why this man is our Moderator." Their faith in action included a growing awareness that the world does not stand still and neither should the church. I deeply value the great tradition I claim as my own, one my grandparents dreamed of in 1925. Roots and wings are part their legacy of faith.

My own ministry, rooted in rural life, yet taking opportunities to expand my vision for the church has been exercised locally, in the presbytery, the conference and the general council. I love it when roots and wings collaborate.

Pairing archives with a new conference facility for those leaders grounded in our past and leaning into the edge of a new day is vastly significant for me. I have found it a fitting way to honour the memory of my grandparents and to support the desire to remember our roots while spreading our wings.

I have invited my family and others to join me in honouring the past and embracing the future by financially committing to this project.

Rev. Donna Tourneur

News from the Maritime Conference Annual Meeting

"What's Left" was the thought-provoking theme of the 87th Annual Meeting of Maritime Conference that took place at the Civic Centre in Sackville, NB from May 29 to June 3, with Conference President Jane Johnson presiding.

Former moderator the Very Rev. David Guilano addressed the court each day. He centred his messages on trusting God for abundant good and how our response might be like that of the disciples after Jesus showed them how to feed the multitudes.

A Service of Remembrance honoured Donalda A. Jardine, Vernon Smith, Renford Grant MacKenzie, Edward Francis Carey, James M. "Jim" Thorne, Fred Chester Burrill, and Donald R. Sutherland.

Church in Action Committee members described activities in Guatemala and the Philippines around unjust mining practices, with reports from the Just Peace for Israel-Palestine Working Group and the Children and Youth in Crisis working group.

Bermuda representatives described the history of racial injustice in the Bermuda Wesleyan Methodist Synod, and gave a copy of its apology to the new Conference Centre. Catherine Christie, Overseas Personnel in Seoul Korea described the difficulties of life in a divided Korea and peace initiatives that are taking place.

Red Letter Philanthropy representatives provided an update on the capital campaign to finance the new Conference Centre and Archives that will open officially on Sept 29.

Rev. Keltie van Binsbergen reported that the team "Runners United" raised more than $13,000 for the Mission and Service Fund during the Bluenose Marathon held recently in Halifax.

Delegates voted to concur and transmit five proposals to the 41st General Council to be held August 11-18 in Ottawa, and approved the proposal, "Calling for a Moratorium on On-Shore Shale Gas and Coal Bed Methane Development."

The court voted in favour of the proposed operating budget for the year 2013, including a 2% increase in allocations.

Maritime Conference endorsed proposed changes to The United Church Crest to reflect the significant role of First Nations people

Rev. Meggin King was elected President-Designate of Maritime Conference, while Pauline Walker was named Lay Representative to the General Council Executive.

On Saturday evening, Intermediates at Conference thanked the court for its support and Youth Forum offered a lively program of music and skits.

Richard (Ricky) Bowley, Sarah (Sally) Budge, Janice Frame, Lynn McKinnon, Scott Stuart Mary Taylor were ordained on Sunday morning. Kimberly (Kym) Burke-Cole was ordained on behalf of Newfoundland Conference.

Rev. Phillip Kennedy was installed as President of Maritime Conference. The next annual meeting will be held May 23-26, 2013.

Maritime Conference Building Project Update

On the weekend of the Annual Meeting, close to 400 people toured the new home for the Maritime Conference – a beautiful facility that will provide state-of-the art archives facilities and community gathering and worship space for all Conference delegates and staff. As the building progresses on budget and on schedule, so too does the fundraising campaign.

The $3 million fundraising campaign has been lead with the commitment of the campaign team members and executive of Maritime Conference who have, together, met a target of raising the first $125,000. The pace of giving set by this leadership group, should it be continued among all members of Maritime Conference, would result in campaign pledges of more than $1 million. At the Annual Meeting, this challenge was issued to the delegates. The participation of our delegates in the financial campaign will play a vital role in convincing others to support the campaign.

As the campaign effort moves beyond the Conference itself, we will look for support among those who value the importance of our shared United Church history and the people who have come before us to shape our congregations and spiritual life. We will look for people who believe that the future of our church will be guided by an understanding and appreciation of our evolution and of the stories of faith that inspire and guide us.

We will search for stories like Reverend Donna Tourneur's description of 'Roots and Wings', included on the next page, and hope that these inspire others to join us in supporting this important project.