



# the Connector

## Newfoundland & Labrador Conference

East & West Districts

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### The Trail of the Newfoundland Caribou

*Rev. Faith March-MacCuish, Newfoundland and Labrador Conference Executive Secretary, led a church group on a spiritual pilgrimage to France and Belgium on the Trail of the Caribou from June 25 to July 4, 2016. The purpose of the journey was to visit all of the places that the Newfoundland Regiment served in the First World War. Each site has a Caribou monument and one of the Caribou is located in St. John's. The spiritual pilgrimage included people of the denominations that had young people serve in the Methodist Guards, the Anglican Church Lads' Brigade, the Catholic Cadet Corps and the Presbyterian-sponsored Highlanders.*

BY REV. SCOTT PARSONS

“The information advertising the trip to France and Belgium on the Trail of the Caribou immediately appealed to me.

The battle at Beaumont Hamel 100 years ago is a defining event in the history and people of Newfoundland and Labrador. I often wondered what it was like for those who were involved. What was it like: to be there in the trenches; to leave the safety and supports of home; to venture to an unknown land that would have felt like a world away.

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**Participants from the United Church, Presbyterian, Anglican and Catholic Churches gathered at the Caribou site in Masnieres; one of the five European sites of the Newfoundland Caribou where Newfoundland Regiment soldiers served.**

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320 Elizabeth Avenue  
St. John's, NL, A1B 1T9

## Editor:

Alison Piercey  
709-754-0392  
a.piercey@nl.rogers.com

## Connector Editorial Board:

Rev. Marilyn Rees, Chair

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**November 15, 2016**

Save the Date

## Moderator's Visit

**October 12-18,  
2017**

**The Right Rev. Jordan  
Cantwell, 42<sup>nd</sup> Mod-  
erator of The United  
Church of Canada,  
will be visiting the  
Newfoundland and  
Labrador Conference**

Pastoral Charges and  
Outreach Ministries are  
invited to make requests  
to host a visit by the  
Moderator.

Please email your request:  
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**Rev. Faith March-MacCuish, Newfoundland and Labrador Conference Executive Secretary, and Archbishop Martin Currie of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St. John's with the Newfoundland wreath laid at the Beaumont Hamel site.**

My knowledge of World War I history was rudimentary. For me this trip became a field school of sorts.

I experienced the history of the Newfoundland Regiment through the battle sites, memorials, museums, cemeteries and our knowledgeable guide.

We were a group of 38; each one with our own connections, passions and interests determining our participation in this journey. We marked the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Beaumont Hamel standing on that same ground where my forebearers met devastation. We visited the sites of the five Caribou that commemorate the most significant contributions made by the Royal Newfoundland Regiment.

At each Caribou site (Beaumont Hamel, Monchy-le-Preux, Courtrai, Masnieres and Gueudecourt), we offered a prayer of remembrance and thanksgiving then sang the Ode to Newfoundland. The words "where once they stood we stand" frequently caught in my throat preventing the sound from emerging. Those words took on a more powerful meaning as I stood on those well groomed sites remembering the scene a century before when it would have looked

more like a construction site devoid of vegetation.

Our guide Glen translated raw cold numbers so often quoted about war into information that was easier to comprehend. Glen told us a soldier died for every two metres of land covered during the war. He put a face on the war by telling personal stories of individuals.

Glen's son Jeremy and our bus driver Pete added to our experience as well. Pete not only got us to and from the many sites we visited, he drove the winding roadways to find a cemetery where a relative of someone on our tour was buried so that we might pay respects.

Jeremy walked the fields near the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemeteries often finding pieces of shrapnel. At one such cemetery he found an undetonated First World War bomb that someone moved from a farmer's field to a visible place against the cemetery wall to await its removal by the bomb disposal unit. It was another tangible reminder that the cost of war is not limited to a generation.

We were able to tour the Canadian National Vimy Memorial; to

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**The Beaumont Hamel Newfoundland Memorial; one of the six Newfoundland Caribou.**

visit the Memorial to the 49<sup>th</sup> (West Riding) Division and Essex Farm Cemetery where Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae penned the famous poem "In Flanders Fields"; to attend one of the daily Last Post Services at the Menin Gate in Ypres which lists the names (engraved on the walls) of over 54,000 missing Common-

wealth Servicemen; and so many other sites that impacted me and I'm sure everyone else on the tour.

It was a time to remember events that happened long before I was born. This experience was more of a gateway to the past bringing deeper meaning than just a remembering of facts.

It opened me up to the generation who lived through that brutal war. It helped me remember and honour those whose lives and innocence were lost even if they returned home from the front.

When visiting cemeteries we always encountered gravestones of unidentified soldiers bearing the inscription "Known Unto God."

For me it offered some solace and beacon of hope to think that



**The war graves in France and Belgium are immaculately cared for. Not one grave is neglected or in disrepair.**

even in the hell of battle these individuals were never lost but known to and held in God's eternal love and grace."

*Rev. Scott Parsons is a United Church chaplain serving the Health Sciences Centre, Her Majesty's Penitentiary and the Janeway Hospital.*

## Campbellton Pastoral Charge Summer Sing and Dessert Night

Members and guests of the Campbellton Pastoral Charge gathered at Faith United on September 1 for the 3rd Annual Summer Sing and Dessert Night.



This year's event featured hymns

of remembrance and peace to honour the past.

Desserts were based on foods served during the World War 1 era. Everything from molasses tart, jelly and custard, gingerbread, trench cake and much more was served.

Many thanks to Patricia Hooper and the senior choir for planning such an enjoyable evening of food, fellowship and song.



Earlier this year a service to commemorate the Battle of Beaumont Hamel was held and ringing of the bell took place on July 1.

All three events were reminders of the need for peace in our world.

*~ Glenn Hooper*

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## Trinity UCW Stitching with Love

**H**ats off to Trinity United Church Women with hats for these newborns!

Last year in Newfoundland and Labrador, there were over 4,400 babies born in our hospitals – with the majority of these births occurring at the Janeway Children's Health and Rehabilitation Centre.



**Traditional jiggs dinner enjoyed by all involved with the knit-a-thon.**

That's a lot of newborns needing to be covered with love.

Each year the UCW at Trinity United, Blaketown hold a knit-a-thon to knit their hearts together with those little newborns and provide baby bonnets for these newborn infants.

The knit-a-thon provides not only a time to knit and reach out in love by giving back to the community but also a time to connect and share laughter, fun and stories among each other over a jiggs dinner prepared by the men of the congregation. It is quite an enjoyable night of giving and sharing together.

Over the last few years, hundreds and hundreds of baby bon-



**Many hand knit baby bonnets lovingly made by the United Church Women from Trinity United, Blaketown for newborns.**

nets have been donated to the Janeway and Carbonear Hospitals. And this year was no different. What a wonderful way to reach out in love.

*~ Sandra Russell, Trinity UCW, Blaketown*

## Stella's Circle Receives the Better Business Bureau Torch Awards for Ethics

Stella's Circle has won the Better Business Bureau Torch Awards for Ethics in the large company category (51+ employees) for Atlantic Canada.

“The Torch Awards for Ethics honours companies whose leaders demonstrate a high level of personal character and ensure that the organization’s practices meet the highest standards of ethics, and consequently generates trust. These companies generate a high level of trust among their employees, customers and their communities. The Torch Awards for Ethics also reward companies for ethical marketplace behavior and building trust with consumers.”

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## Pasadena-Howley Pastoral Charge

### Thank you Daphne Lush for your dedication

On June 12, the congregation of Humber Valley United in Pasadena surprised organist and choir director Daphne (Verge) Lush with a certificate of appreciation.

We celebrated Daphne's 55 years since graduating from the Grace General Hospital School of Nursing and her many years of faithful service leading music with her quiet, gentle and unassuming spirit.

Her minister, Rev. Dr. Tony Newell, joked that he was in another kind of training at the same time that Daphne was in nurse training.

Following the service, the entire congregation went outside under the beautiful silver birch trees and celebrated with a congregational barbeque. The people lingered for nearly two hours, not wanting the occasion to end.



**Rev. Dr. Tony Newell presents Mrs. Daphne Lush with a certificate of appreciation for her music leadership.**

Daphne leads with her gentle spirit but also with her courage as a person living with cancer.

She has taught us all so much more than new and challenging hymns.

Through all her medical challenges, Daphne has often observed that the love and respect she finds with the choir and congregation, has kept her determination strong during some very trying times. We salute you Daphne!

Rev. Newell offered Daphne God's blessing and quipped, "I hope you are our musical leader for the next 55 years!"

"Oh my! I hope not," said Daphne. Well done, thou good and faithful servant.

*~ Doreen Wall, Observer Representative for the Pasadena-Howley Pastoral Charge*

## What's Happening?

### Council of Finance & Administration

November 2, 2016

February 22, 2017

### West District Executive

November 9, 2016

January 18, 2017

### Conference Executive

November 16, 2016

March 15, 2017

### East Executive

November 30, 2016

### Women in Ministry Retreat

April 24-26, 2017

### Conference Spring Meeting

May 26-28, 2017

### Moderator's Visit

October 12-18, 2017

### Clergy Retreat

October 11-13, 2017

### Fall Learning Event

October 13-15, 2017



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## From Apology Towards Reconciliation

30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the United Church Apology to First Nations Peoples

BY REV. FAITH MARCH-MACCUISH,  
CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

**I**n 1986, at the 31<sup>st</sup> General Council in Sudbury, Ontario, Moderator Bob Smith extended an apology on behalf of The United Church of Canada to First Nations Peoples.

Thirty years later on August 20, 2016, I attended the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the apology in which Bob Smith delivered that apology again in the same place.

One of the things that touches me again and again when hearing the story of the apology was the courage and the strength of the Elders to state how broken the relationship was and to name that what was needed was an apology and not just an apology of words but a lived apology.



Participants replicated the walk of the General Council commissioners to the site where the First Nations Elders waited in their teepee beside a sacred fire in 1986.

Everyone gathered at the site of the Apology Cairn. Anishinabe Elder, Art Solomon, lit the sacred fire and did a teaching about his peoples' journey, their relationship with the creator, and the teachings of the Elders that are being passed to the next generation.

My daughters who travelled with me found the teachings of Elder Art particularly meaningful, especially when he spoke of how our walking upon this earth needs to be done with respect and integrity and about how important it is to pass on the spiritual teachings and traditions to the next generation as they will one day be the teachers and the Elders.

Elder Art spoke of the relationship with the church and said that he respects all paths to the creator and that we all need to celebrate that which puts a person in a right relationship with the creator and with each other.



Rev. Faith March-MacCuish, Conference Executive Secretary, and those who travelled from our Conference, gather at the Apology Cairn, the site of the first official Apology made by the UCC to First Nations Peoples in 1986, in Sudbury, Ontario.

During the teaching, people were invited to smudge. For my daughters and my mother, it was their first experience with smudging and we spent some time afterward talking about its meaning and significance.

All Native Circle Conference Leading Elder Nelson Hart closed the day with teachings and a prayer. The ceremony ended with all people socializing at a barbecue hosted by Huntington University.

Sunday morning all participants worshipped at St. Peter's United Church in Sudbury where the service centered around the honouring of the Apology and how we are called to continue to live out the Apology."

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## My experience with the Explorer Project

### Chelsea Skanes

*The Explorer Project is a recent initiative that invites young adults who have not yet discerned a call to ministry into partnership with a church in another Conference. Sparked by conversations about recruitment for future ministry leadership, Toronto Conference rolled out the program in 2015. Newfoundland and Labrador Conference joined in the project for summer 2016. Chelsea Skanes left her home in St. John's to join her host congregation in Barrie, Ontario.*

“I was lucky enough to be chosen as an Explorer Project participant. I could have never guessed how incredibly life changing this experience would be.

Little did I know that spending the summer in Barrie, Ontario at Burton Avenue United Church would be amazing for me mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually.

So much happened in three short months. I had my hand in almost

every aspect of a service; communion, children's time, delivering meditations, worship leader, choosing hymns, writing prayers. I feel so blessed to have had the opportunity to experience so many parts of what happens on a Sunday in church.

I was able to attend and participate in a multitude of gatherings, meetings and events. Among many, many things, I got to participate in the church's Strawberry Dinner, hosted a touton brunch

for the congregation, attended Toronto Conference Annual Meeting and went to a presbytery meeting.

I met people from the entire presbytery and conference, and every person and experience has taught me something new.

From the first day I arrived to the day I left, I felt nothing but love and support from the entire Burton Avenue United Church

**“I felt a lot of things during this experience that could only have been interjections by God.”**

congregation, my host family, and the entire presbytery.

I feel so grateful for every single person that I interacted with during this project, both from home and from Ontario. For every minister that took the time to chat with me about their experiences, for my host and home committees, for my host family welcoming me into their home and lives and giving me the opportunity to experience so many neat things and for every person who invited me on ad-



ventures to see some of the many sights Ontario has to offer.

I feel so grateful to now have two church families that hold pieces of my heart safe because I have built so many beautiful relationships with people in the two provinces that it's almost overwhelming. I'm excited to see how the friendships,

new and old, flourish and develop as time goes on following this experience.

I have no idea what my future holds. However, I do know that I have changed, and that I felt a lot of things during this experience that could only have been interjections by God.

So for now, I'm just along for the ride, with my eyes and ears and heart and mind and soul a little more open to the calls in my daily life. And that's honestly one of the best changes that I could have ever experienced from this project.”



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