

Courage, creativity and compassion. Those words are touchstones for my ministry, along with words from the gospel of Matthew, “Take heart, it is I, do not be afraid.” I have held them close as we as a denomination have ventured into uncharted waters! I have been grateful to David Hewitt for his guidance and leadership in the first half of my presidency and to Faith March-MacCuish in the second half.

It’s been a privilege to serve as the last president of Maritime Conference and then the acting president of Region 15. I would encourage anyone to prayerfully consider taking on this role. I had opportunities that I couldn’t have imagined, and I wouldn’t have missed them for the world. Here are some of the opportunities I participated in as your president:

- Affirm Annual Meeting and Conference and participating in a public demonstration!
- General Council, overwhelming in some ways for this first timer, but would go again.
- Oasis, Baptist Annual Meeting in Wolfville, NS
- The United Church of Christ Maine Conference in Saco, Maine
- The Presbyterian Synod in Sydney, NS
- Four presbytery visits: Truro, Sydney, Woolastook and Pictou.

In participating with other denominational meetings, it was no surprise to discover that we wrestle with many of the same things: from anxiety about finances and the future, to how do we best organize ourselves to serve God and our communities. While there may be theological differences that divide us, we are united in wanting to continue Jesus’ ministry and share God’ love with a hurting world.

The Conference Executive worked diligently to wind up the business throughout the fall and then the Transition Commission, those folks elected from each presbytery, became the Regional Executive. We have been working very hard since the fall; we have met either by conference call or in person every two weeks. They deserve to be commended for the energy and dedication they have demonstrated in moving forward without familiar landmarks. This in-between time is full of challenges and opportunities for all of us: congregations, committees, staff at the regional office.

Let us take heart, as we live into a new way of being the church. Let us live with courage, creativity and compassion when our hearts are broken open by the poverty, sickness and violence in our world. Let us live with courage, creativity and compassion in loving one another. Because with every step we take, Jesus is with us, inviting us to keep our eyes on him and saying, “Take heart, it is I, do not be afraid.”

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Catherine MacDonald