

Isaiah 43:18-19 – “Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it. I am making a way in the wilderness...”

I was recently asked, “How is this restructuring thing with the Region going?” The answer depends on your perspective. From the perspective of President, I feel that it is going very well. A few months into my term, I was reminded that if the Region was a human, it would be only a months-old baby. At one point, I said that we were pulling ourselves up and trying to stand. At this time, I feel that we are on our feet and starting to run. There have been growing pains but it is important to focus on the new things that we are doing instead of where we have been. It is also important to note that governance is a process and not a destination. It is continually evolving.

Last year, Rev. Catherine MacDonald described the role of President as the “best gig” in the church. I would have to agree. I have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunities that it has afforded me and all the faith-filled and enthusiastic people that I have met. Some of the events I took part in this year were joyous and some very sad. Some were educational and some were very thought-provoking. These activities included:

- An anniversary service in Kingsport with a wonderful play “Gallons of Tea” telling the story of church union in 1925.
- A covenanting service in Kingston for Rev. Dr. Christine Marie Gladu.
- Being an ecumenical guest at the Atlantic Presbyterian Synod meeting in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island.
- A coast-to-coast Zoom call with Regional presidents from across Canada with Nora Sanders.
- A workshop in Elmsdale conducted by the Moderator the Right Rev. Dr. Richard Bott.
- Preaching at 2 decommissioning services for churches in Beach Meadows and Brooklyn.
- Meeting twice with CoFEE (Communities of Faith Ensemble Event). This is a group of clergy and laypeople in the Western end of the Annapolis Valley who meet regularly to discuss events and enjoy each other’s company.
- A workshop in Liverpool on Stewardship with Rev. Roger Janes.
- Worshipping with the congregation in Digby the Sunday after fire destroyed their historic church hall.

I also worked on the task force with the Bermuda Synod representatives and United Church representatives this year. This was a very enjoyable experience. There was a good spirit and productive conversation among all members. At the time of writing this report, our work is still ongoing, however, I hope that by the Annual Meeting we will have something concrete to report. We have a long history with the people of Bermuda and look forward to cooperation for many years to come.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not mention the work of the Regional Council Executive and the staff members in Region 15. It has been a pleasure to work with a group of people so enthusiastic for the United Church of Canada and their responsibilities. Each Division Chair has handled all business coming from each committee and conducted their Division meetings capably. The reports to the Executive are thorough and clear. Staff members have been great to work with and also deal with concerns in a timely and professional manner. If you have to lead in “the wilderness”, these are the people you want to have with you!

An image that I have used this year is 'God is the potter and we are the clay'. We are constantly being called to re-shape and re-form ourselves into serviceable vessels. What works today may not have worked yesterday and may not work tomorrow. We need to be open to the Spirit moving among us and working through us to get the work done that will bring about God's kin-dom here on Earth.

Respectfully submitted,

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