THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

L'ÉGLISE UNIE DU CANADA

3250 Bloor St. West, Suite 200
Toronto, Ontario
M8X 2Y4 Canada

416-231-5931 1-800-268-3781
F: 416-231-3103
www.united-church.ca

RECEIVED
NOV 0 1 2021

September 29, 2021

Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council,
21 Wright Street,
Sackville, New Brunswick E4L 4P8

Dear Friends of Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council,

I'm sorry that I'm not able to be with you in person, as you gather to celebrate becoming an Affirming Ministry. This is a wonderful day for you, and for the whole United Church of Canada, as you proudly and publicly celebrate the full participation of people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities in the life and work of your ministry.

For a long time the United Church of Canada has believed that a vital part of following Jesus' Way is to recognize that every person is a beloved child of God, and is deserving of respect and inclusion. It has taken us almost as long a time to move that understanding from our thinking to our living. As individuals, and as a community of faith, you have done a lot of that hard work of becoming more inclusive – through study, self-reflection, exploration of mission and ministry, and discerning the Holy Spirit's nudging. In coming to this day, you've committed yourselves to continue to the joyful work of recognizing the space that Christ has made at his table, and making sure that all who wish to sit there are welcome participants in the feast!

I am singing and dancing, "Alleluia, thanks be to God," for each and every one of you, today. Through and in your ministry, Jesus' work of justice and healing continues, not just this day, but into the future.

I hope that you are celebrating well! In becoming an Affirming Ministry you have taken another step, and helped the wider United Church of Canada take another step, on our journey of faithful witness and service.

Almost five hundred years ago, a sister in faith, St. Theresa of Avila, wrote, "Christ has no body but yours; no hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes with which he looks compassion on this world, yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world..." Thanks be to God that you are Christ's body, blessing the world with compassion and wonder and hope for all.

In celebration,

Richard Bott

Richard Bott (The Right Reverend)
Moderator / Modérateur
The United Church of Canada / L'Église Unie du Canada