

When the peace of Christ rules in our hearts, thankfulness overflows. Even in the darkest of times, we can praise God for his love, his sovereignty, and his promise to be near us when we call (Psalm 145:18).

Thank you, Lord, for your peace that transcends understanding and your love that endures forever. Amen!

Author Unknown

Where has the year gone? We have survive another year of COVID throughout our Region. First of all I wish to give comfort to those who h=may have lost a loved one in the last year. It has continued to be difficult to celebrate their lives to the fullest extent they deserve. Please know that our thoughts are with you and to know that your memories of those dear to your hearts will continue to be with you always.

Our work as a Region has continued on as best we could throughout this past year. We said good-bye to Laura Hunter our long standing support for Justice, Mission and Outreach work that is near and dear to our hearts. We welcome her replacement Shepard Munikwa a young minister with enthusiasm for the work he is being called to do. We look forward to his participation in our Region and know that he will support our Communities of Faith in finding their place in the JMO work that God calls us to do. Welcome Shepard!

Since the onset of COVID we have had to find new ways of doing our work. Our meetings have continued on throughout the last year similarly to the pervious year. Zoom has been a godsend. Can you image where we would be without such a tool. And to think how easily (for most) we were able to adapt to the changes that were necessary. I think that each of us deserves a pat on the back for our ability to grow, learn and thrive during this time. One note I will make. During the first year that we had to use Zoom for our Annual meeting we had double digits of numbers who were just using the phone. How difficult is that with such a large meeting and the intricacies around voting etc. Last year we had 3. It doesn't matter our age, abilities we adjusted. I find this empowering in the sense it means we are more than what we think or do. We have a great capacity to learn and teach and be more. Thank you!

As an executive we met quarterly throughout the year. Meetings taking place on a regular schedule of June, September/October, December and March. Also we met as required for work that needed to be attended to in a timely manner. Budgets and Financial Statement meetings are typically ones that take place off our regularly scheduled meetings. One other of those was the acceptance of the Bermuda Methodist Churches to be in relationship with the united church of Canada and Region 15. What a celebration! I was truly hoping that I would be able to travel to Bermuda to celebrate this occasion but unfortunately it will not become official until later this year during General Council 44. What this means is we can again start to consider who we are. Are we Region 15? Are we the Red Lobster Region (just joking) put your thinking caps on as we will be again what we as a collective represent and how do we portray that to the rest of the United Church of Canada.

As a Region we have also solidified our Strategic Plan. We can think of our three pillars as guidelines for how our Communities of Faith can live out their work as well as the various committees of the Region. Our Regional Committee have each taken time to discern the work they are called to and are making what necessary adjustments to best reflect what we as a Region

are called to do through our Strategic plan. As much as we wish we cannot be everything to everyone. This plan allows us to focus on what we CAN do. How can your Community of Faith thrive within our plan?

Our three Pillars are:

- Discipleship:
 - Promote the importance of discipleship as a core to the strengthening, vitality and sustainability of our Christian community.
- Mission:
 - Engage Communities of Faith in defining their part in God's mission.
- Leadership:
 - Develop curious, faithful brave leaders.

I truly believe the core of all of these three pillars are work that we do. Let us not only incorporate them in our Region but in our lives as Communities of Faith but also ourselves. Be brave be willing to try new things and learn from what doesn't work and build it into something that does. Tell our communities about the good work we do and open our hearts to others that may need an additional family to help them support themselves emotionally or physically.

We are very rich in our passion for our faith and we as Communities of Faith all across our Region have so much to offer to others. For that I am truly thankful. There are issues that we need to continue to work through and to build our knowledge and respect for racial equity and right relations with our indigenous peoples. This is not just the work of the National church it is work that we all must do to be more respectful and all us can learn a miniscule amount of what it takes to walk in their shoes. We have a long way to go but we can work on those steps.

I cannot close without saying a tremendous thank you to all of our people that serve on our committees whether it be at the Regional level or at local levels. From the bottom of my heart, I truly appreciate the time and effort that you put towards this wonderful church of ours. Without each and every one of you we would not be who we are and would NOT be able to do the work that God calls us to do.

Also, where would we be for all of our staff, I truly do not know how our Executive Minister, Faith Marsh-MacCuish manages all of the work she does for three. You heard me THREE regions. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. David Hewitt, our Regional Minister continues to offer support for our Ministry personnel through these difficult times as well as support for our Communities of Faith are working through pastoral relations concerns and issues. David the work you do is respected, compassionate and truly appreciated and thank you so much as you continue to support those that reach out to you.

Let us not forget all of the staff that we don't hear about often. Those that manage our funds, look after our archives, look after our webpages and announcements keep all of us volunteers in line and up to date with our meetings and to dos. A deep thank you for your commitment to your work and to us. I truly appreciate the work and time that you commit to our passions.

In closing I will offer my support for our incoming President and be there in whatever capacity she may need as we continue to serve you.

Blessings this day,

May your days ahead be filled with joy, love and caring for yourselves, your family and others.

Respectfully submitted,
Jane McDonald
President, Region 15