

Greetings, Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council, Staff and All Communities of Faith.

This is my third month as your President and I wish to share with you what I have been up to on your behalf from August 12, 2023 to September 11, 2023. Each month my postings will begin on the 12th.

August 16 saw my uncle turn 90, on August 23 Dad turned 95..wow!! I know, it's fantastic!! (Dad's 2 sisters birthdays were both in July, one turned 83 the other 98); longevity certainly is working on Dad's side as Mom was the last member of her immediate family and she passed at 89, last fall). So, I decided I would take a few weeks off to enjoy time with my family in August.

On your behalf, I brought greetings on Sunday, August 27, 2023, when I attended the Sunday Morning Service at 11:00am at Middlewood United Church, Lunenburg, NS with Pastor Dana Pardy presiding. This is a 4 point charge including Wesley United, St. Andrew's United and Danesville United rounding out the Petite Riviere Pastoral Charge. These are wonderful people who are welcoming from the time you walk through their door. They have a lovely church nestled along highway #103 just past exit 16. They have a choir who many along with singing play a musical instrument - including guitar, electric guitar, keyboards, the spoons and cello all played by "mature" individuals.(I never want to try and guess anyone's age, I am not very good at it so I stopped guessing as it can be quite embarrassing, for me...haha!!). They also have soloists, duet performers who come up from the congregation and sing to the glory of God. This church was rocking. What talent they have, including their Pastor. Dana and her husband have been music leaders at our Annual General Meetings during worship for a number of years. What phenomenal voices these parishioners have. I wanted to sit back and listen to the talents that the Lord had bestowed upon all those present at Middlewood that morning. As I was invited to attend "A Whale of a Tale" which was a **"Don't Come to Dinner"** event thought out by Philip Pulsifer, Treasurer, Middlewood United Church. It was a fundraiser held in August to go towards the general funds of the church. I hope they did well, even after the "non event" is over, with donations. All churches need our financial help. Thank you for making me feel so welcome in your congregation.

On your behalf, on Thursday, August 31, 2023 via Zoom from 1:00pm-3:00pm, I attended the Financial Accountability and Investment Committee Meeting with Allan Davis, Chair, where I brought greetings from Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council, Staff and all Communities of Faith. With the restructuring of the church and then Covid 19, many have only met online to conduct the business of the church and as I wish to meet as many as possible within the Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council during my time as your President, whenever possible, I wish to attend meetings to learn more about the wider church and the individuals who are doing the work. Allan was gracious enough to send me all pertinent information for the meeting so I could understand where the monies were being spent as well as our investments. These individuals work tirelessly with the monies of the church so I wish to thank them for their graciousness explaining some of the procedures they follow. I enjoyed my time with them greatly and if possible, I will attend a future meeting.

I travelled to Sydney, Cape Breton, NS to attend a Sunday Service at Calvin United in New Waterford, with the Rev. Duncan Roach, Minister. This should have taken place at 10:00am on

Sunday, September 3, 2023. I found out upon arriving that my friend tested positive for Covid. I booked a hotel instead of staying at my father's place and contacted the Regional Hospital in Sydney to book a PCR test, the home test I took was positive, very weak but positive. I had to remain inside until the test results came back, so I cancelled going to Duncan's service as I didn't receive my negative results until the wee hours of Monday morning. I must have been at the very end of showing positive for Covid 19 which was a blessing. I have rescheduled for any Sunday I come back to Sydney, which, if you know me, will be a lot with my Dad living there.

On Monday, September 4, 2023, I was thankful to be able to preside at my mother's Celebration of Life Service at Newsom United Church, Glace Bay, NS. Even though I tested negative for Covid 19, I wasn't feeling or looking the greatest, but as they say, the show must go on and as it would have been Mom's 90th birthday, we felt what more appropriate way to honour her than to have her Service on such a special day. My brother, Rev. Dr. George MacDonald, Florida, arrived home with his oldest son Stephen. George had the first reflection to Mom, speaking of childhood memories of our mother. Donnie Morrison, Division Chair of Regional Services and Support gave prayers to the people. Mr. Joseph Maidment from Newsom United, Glace Bay and Mr. Gordon Scott, Central United, Clifton, NB; both spoke words of remembrance. The UCW catered a reception in honour of Mom being both choir member and organist (when required). It was closure needed as Mom passed away last November 30, 2022. I delivered Mom's eulogy as I wanted people to know how Mom affected my life as well as others. My parents had almost 67 years together, as husband and wife. What a tribute to such a long and loving relationship I witnessed daily. It was such an honour and a privilege to bring condolences to my family, friends and clergy in attendance on behalf of the Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council, Staff and all Communities of Faith. Mom didn't live long enough to see me installed as President but she was extremely proud of me when I became President Elect. She is sorely missed.

On your behalf, I brought greetings as I attended the Covenanting Service on Sunday, September 10, 2023 beginning at 3:00pm between the Rivers of Grace Pastoral Charge of the United Church of Canada, Digby, NS and the Parish of Digby Anglican Church of Canada, Digby, NS. This kind of Anglican-United Church cooperation is nothing new: there have been similar partnerships over the past 50 years in Quebec, Western Canada and the North. This is, to our knowledge, the first project like this in Nova Scotia and we commend the leadership of both congregations for their vision and courage in choosing this path. In the face of the challenges the rural church is facing across our region, perhaps this can be a model to give new life to dwindling congregations in other places. In addition to covenanting with each other, these churches will also covenant today with their new Minister, the Rev. Paul Jennings, to provide leadership to this partnership in its first years. The wellspring and root of our life as a church is our common worship. It is what we do when we gather here together that nourishes and shapes us, as individual Christians but also together as Christ's body, for our daily lives in the community. It is not Anglican liturgy or the United Church order of worship that does this, but the common, ancient patterns and practices that underlie both of our traditions: how we gather to praise God, to hear Scripture speak to us over the ages, to pray for the needs of God's world, and, when we gather at the table, to rehearse God's Kingdom of Peace and Reconciliation. **The service began at Rivers of Grace United Church in Digby, NS** with Rev. Paul Jennings, Minister of Rivers Grace United Church/Parish of Digby Anglican Church; Mrs. Shauna MacDonald, President of Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council of the United Church of Canada & Rt. Rev. Sandra Fyfe, Bishop of the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island

of the Anglican Church of Canada led the procession. David Hewitt, Regional Minister of Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council of the United Church of Canada, Rev. Tom Henderson, Parish of Falmouth and Archdeacon of the Valley Region of the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, Anglican Church of Canada; Rev. Lisa Vaughn, Diocesan Church Vitality Coordinator of the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, Anglican Church of Canada; Rev. Nicole Uzans, Parish of Horton (Wolfville), Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, Anglican Church of Canada; Mrs. Janet Sollows, Pastoral Relations Liaison for the United Church of Canada. **Halfway through this service we moved to the Anglican Church** - a 10-12 minute walk down the street and up the hill or a 3 minute drive. Most chose to drive. We reconvened, processing once again. It was such an honour and a privilege to be sitting at the head of the Anglican Church as your President representing Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council, Staff and All Communities of Faith while seated next to the Rt. Rev. Sandra Fyfe, Bishop of the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, Anglican Church of Canada. She is a magnificent person who showed true grace in welcoming us into the Anglican Church as did Rev. Henderson, Rev. Vaughn and Rev. Uzans. The love shown to us that day by all gathered was heartwarming. Seeing how both denominations are willing to come together for the good of the community of Digby is remarkable with a hope that both congregations have found something in each other that will allow both United and Anglican churches to survive but also to thrive. The other Anglican Clergy gathered that day were: Juanita Barteaux (retired, Annapolis Royal), Ruby Carter (Middleton and Kingston), Dawn-Lea Greer (Bridgetown and New Ross), Kent Greer (Rawdon), Dorothy Miller (Berwick and Aylesford), Sue Channon (retired) - and Keith Denman (retired); Ecumenical guests, Rev. Donald Robertson, Pastor Emeritus, Digby Baptist Church; Rev. Jean-Daniel O'Donncona, National Pastor, Disciples of Christ. Thank you Paul for being so gracious to everyone present. I felt the Trinity today in both churches.

I spent Monday, September 11, 2023 reflecting on the past 22 years (as to where I was when it happened, how we processed everything and the fear of travelling anywhere) since the loss of the twin towers, the damage at the pentagon, those 4 planes (including one plane who took back the cockpit and dove it into the ground) saving countless lives and all the lives lost and changed forever because of the actions of a few. The heroics not only in the air but on the ground that day, and days and months that followed. People showed their humanity to each other and put aside their differences to be there for others, as Christ would have us do each day.

I wish to say a huge thank you to ALL the volunteers within the Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council. Ministry Personnel and Laity should be commended for the tasks they perform each day to keep this region running smoothly. There is so much going on behind the scenes, there is indeed a great deal of work. Many work at this level of the church as well as their home congregations and even more are with all 3 levels including General Council. You should be commended for your commitment to our church and your willingness to help others as we are all children of God.

In Peace and Hope,

Shauna MacDonald
President
Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council