

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus says to the disciples, "Put out into the deep water." It is a simple invitation, but not an easy one to accept. Deep water requires trust, attentiveness, and a willingness to move forward even when the way ahead is not entirely clear. That image has stayed with me this year as I have served as President of the Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council.

This past year has been shaped by both celebration and challenge. I have participated fully in the governance life of the region, attending all executive meetings, along with additional meetings where we worked through questions related to regional structure and how it is currently serving our communities of faith. I also took part in a panel discussion on the newer regional structures, and in further conversations within our own region about what is working well and where we need to improve. These have been thoughtful, honest discussions, rooted in a shared desire to support ministry faithfully and sustainably.

Beyond the region, I have been involved in broader church-wide conversations, including General Council in Calgary, where we celebrated the 100th anniversary of The United Church of Canada and where I was first introduced to Toward 2035. I also participated in centennial celebrations in Newfoundland, including a special service marking 100 years of shared history and witness. These moments of celebration offered both gratitude for the past and a clear reminder that we are being called to think carefully and creatively about the future.

At the same time, much of this year has involved what I would describe as holding space in change. I have been present for times of transition and discernment across the region, including church closures, covenanting services, and moments of grief alongside communities and colleagues. I have found all of these to be holy moments.

What weighs most heavily on my heart in this season is the level of exhaustion I see across the church. Volunteers, ministry personnel, and staff at every level are carrying significant responsibility, often with limited resources and increasing demands. The faithfulness of those who continue to serve, lead, and show up for one another is both humbling and inspiring, and it deserves to be named and honoured.

And yet, I remain hopeful. Not because the work is easy, or because the answers are obvious, but because Jesus continues to call us forward. I continue to see people showing up with courage and care. I hear stories of long, patient faithfulness beginning to bear fruit. I see communities willing to ask hard questions, to try new approaches, and to trust that God is still at work among us.

As President, I have tried to listen carefully, to encourage honest conversation, and to help steady the work in a time of significant change. We are not being asked to have everything figured out, but we are being invited, together, to put out into the deep water, trusting that we do not go alone.

Thank you for your commitment to this very worthwhile work, for your willingness to serve, and for the many ways you continue to live out Christ's love in your communities. It is a privilege to walk this journey with you.

Grace and peace,
Rev. Dr. Mary Taylor
President, Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council