

The Role of President (2025-2026)
First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council

Truly wonderful things happen when we say “yes” to God: Saying “yes” brought me into the role of President Elect and then into a year as President of First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council. The theme I chose for the year was the voice of Jesus in scripture:

“Put out into deep water and let down your nets for a catch”

That was good advice to the disciples and is still good advice for us today. When we launch out further from shore, we take a leap of faith and we try a new approach or perspective that could lead to significantly better results. With the **Toward 2035** initiative, we are encouraged to try something different to achieve success. The reality is that we are in changing times with aging and declining membership, along with the closure of church buildings, and we need to reflect on the present time and the future.

My presidency began with celebrations of 100th Anniversary of The United Church of Canada. I joined in the celebrations to which I was invited.

Celebrations of the 100th Anniversary that I attended:

May 27: 100th Anniversary of The United Church of Canada held at Gower Street United Church.

June 7: Burin’s (Scoff) to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the United Church and their church journey.

June 9: As minister of the Britannia Pastoral Charge, I led celebration of 100th Anniversary at Hickman’s Harbour as the four churches came together to celebrate. Certificates that were signed by the Moderator, the Rev. Dr. Carmen Lansdowne, were presented to each church. Following the service, there was a time of fun, food, fellowship and thanksgiving for the 100 years.

June 9: National Celebration of the 100th Anniversary of The United Church of Canada which was held at Gower Street United Church.

Church Dedication:

June 13: I attended the opening of the new United Church at Pacquet which replaced the one destroyed by fire. Greetings and prayer were brought by Rev. Faith March-MacCuish and from the local clergy. The Holy Presence was felt as the new church was formally opened and blessed.

General Council 45:

Aug. 7-11: As President, I was a Commissioner to General Council, Calgary. It was wonderful to join in business and worship with commissioners from across Canada and also with our World Partners. We were all blessed by the participation and leadership of the Youth and to realize their positive impact on the present and the future of The United Church of Canada. Another highlight for me was attending the installation worship service for the new moderator, the Right Rev. Kimberly Heath.

Aug. 12: Having been invited to extend my stay after General Council and participate in an informative session on **Toward 2035**, I took part in a highly informative day.

Funerals:

On behalf of First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council, I attended the following funerals and brought condolences to families and friends:

May 10: the funeral of Rev. Ralph Moores at Gower Street United Church.

May 30: the funeral of Rev. Silas Rogers, St. Jones Within.

Sept. 9: the funeral of Matthew Patey to be a support to his family and to Rev. Faith and her family.

Oct. 11: the funeral of Rev. Walter Biles at Fewer’s Memorial Chapel, Clarendville.

Oct. 17: the funeral of Mrs. Kathleen Newbury, wife of the late Rev. Ambrose Newbury at Memorial United, Clarendville.

Feb. 23: the funeral of Rev. Veronica Brett-Williams at Carnell's Chapel, St. John's.

Retreat at Victoria:

Nov. 1: I shared greetings from First Dawn Eastern Edge at Victoria United Church Retreat and led a Bible Study on the *Loaves and Fishes*.

A Remembrance Day Service:

Nov. 9: I was invited to Central United, Bay Roberts to attend their special Remembrance Day Service to honour the sacrifice of ten former congregants who gave their lives in either World War I or World War II. Their congregation dedicated a plaque in their remembrance. Unfortunately, a family illness prevented my attendance. On behalf of First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council, I wrote a letter for their Remembrance Day Booklet which assured them that their plaque and remembrance will honour those who served in the protection of our rights and freedoms. The letter also reminded them that the plaque was a reminder to both the present generation and to future generations of the faithful loyal service of veterans who fought for freedom.

Meeting of Presidents and President-Elects:

Jan. 21: I attended an on-line meeting with Regional Council Presidents and President-Elects across Canada and we were joined by the Moderator and General Secretary. Each of us was asked to share something interesting regarding each regional council. We were also invited to share a challenge experienced by the region and to report on the progress of **Toward 2035**.

Ocean Ranger Memorial Worship Service:

Feb. 23: I received an invitation from Gonzaga School to participate in the Ocean Ranger Memorial Service at the Basilica of Saint John the Baptist, St. John's. I was blessed to meet with students, staff and the Ocean Ranger families who attended. I offered a pastoral prayer for the deceased and their families. It was a very moving service.

Deconsecrating and Disbanding of Churches:

Oct. 19: Deconsecrating and Disbanding of Templeman United Church at 11 am.

Deconsecrating and Disbanding of Ebenezer (Brookfield) United Church at 2 pm.

Deconsecrating and Disbanding of Trinity (Newtown) United Church at 4 pm.

A time of food and fellowship followed.

Mar. 22: Deconsecrating and Disbanding of Southport United Church, Little Heart's Ease Pastoral Charge at 7 pm.

Disbanding of Caplin Cove United was also planned but delayed because of furnace problem.

Apr. 26: Service of Deconsecrating and Disbanding of Caplin Cove United Church, Little Heart's Ease Pastoral Charge.

Affirming Service of First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council:

May 3: I participated in First Dawn Eastern Edge's Affirming Worship Service, held in person and by Zoom.

Thank You:

I thank my husband, Max, for his support. I thank him for accompanying me to and from the pastoral charges and for getting us safely over the roads. I thank the Britannia Pastoral Charge for their support and for their receiving the President's banner at my installation. At this year's Celebration of Ministries, members of our pastoral charge will present it to representatives of the Bel Island-Portugal Cove Pastoral Charge. I thank First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council for their confidence in choosing me as President and for their help and encouragement along the way. A special thank you is extended to the staff of Regional Office.

Each of us has unique talents. We are "One" as we work together. For all the people I have met on the journey, and for all the experiences and learning, I give God thanks. It is true I have sometimes found it a challenge balancing the needs of ministry on the pastoral charge with the needs and duties of President, but I have truly been blessed. I have rejoiced with the people in their joys and have shared compassion in their sorrows. I give thanks for this special journey in ministry.

I also thank the former Presidents for their help. I offer my support to Rev. Susan Sheppard as she takes on the duties and shares her gifts as your next President.

God Bless.

Rev. Elsie Squires, President
First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council
(2025-2026)