

President's Message

This past year has gone by faster than I'd ever anticipated. I have already visited three Presbyteries, and been guest-preacher at two pastoral charges; I am scheduled to visit three more presbyteries, and Bermuda synod, over the next two months. I have had the privilege of representing Maritime Conference on a number of pastoral occasions. And each visit I have done, has impressed me with the dedication of the church folk who are there.

There is confusion and sadness, certainly, as many see attendance falling away from regular Sunday worship services, and as our congregations age. But there is also a sense of excitement, as pastoral charges and congregations start to explore new ways of being church in their communities and in their world. Home church, mission church, coffee bar church, shared ministry, cyber congregations —all are part of the options opening up to those who are passionate about being the hands and feet of Christ.

As I sit at my desk this (very!) cold February afternoon, I am reminded of the words of the hymn that tells us, "In the cold and snow of winter, there's a spring that waits to be, unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see!"

Our church is in that waiting stage. We are waiting to see what sort of spring is coming for our church, our mission, our identities as people of faith and a community of Christ. Our General Council Comprehensive Review task group has been trying to get at the bottom of some of these questions of identity and mission, and has now circulated its findings from congregations and individuals across our country. As I type, Presbyteries are being asked for their input, and Conferences will also be asked their opinions, thoughts, hopes, and dreams, for the future of our church.

Here in our Maritime Conference, many churches have taken part in these discussions at various levels. We have been talking amongst ourselves, asking how our church needs to change, and what it needs to hold on to. We have looked at the outreach and mission work of the church as a whole, and grappled with issues in the wider world, such as our involvement in mining companies, and our response to the situation in Israel/Palestine. Closer to home, we look at our ministry with seniors, Aboriginal peoples, youth, and many others. We have looked to the Spirit, trusting in her wisdom.

The song I've quoted includes, also, the words, "From the past will come the future; what it holds, a mystery." As this past year's President of Maritime Conference, I am confident that we can move forward in faith, trusting that God's purpose for us will be made clear. Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

In faith,

Rev. Meggin King