

A Message from the President

*Praise the Lord with the sound of trumpet,
Praise the Lord with the harp and lute,
Praise the Lord with the gentle-sounding flute.
(Voices United # 245)*

As I travelled across the conference since being installed as President, it is very apparent that we praise God in a variety of ways... in song and music... in reflection and sacrament... in prayer and process... in conversation and laughter over coffee and meals... in shared work and in meetings... every time we offer ourselves to God and work to further God's realm here on earth. .

Praising the Lord can seem challenging in this particular time of being the church. There is both excitement and grief in letting go of presbyteries and the conference and move into something brand new. It's also challenging in a world with violence, poverty and environmental degradation. But the promise of God is that we are never alone... that God is with us, inspiring, enlivening and empowering us to work towards God's shalom.

Our scriptures are full of God doing the unexpected, and being revealed through ordinary people... Sarah who thought she was too old... Moses who stuttered... Esther who saved the entire Hebrew nation... Daniel who would not bow to the king... Mary, a pregnant unmarried teenage woman... Joseph, her intended husband... you... me...

And of course, through Jesus, an ordinary baby, born in unfortunate circumstances; who grew up to be for us who follow him, the fullest expression of God that we have known. He was born into a world that knew pain, war, poverty and racism. Long before Jesus' birth, Isaiah spoke on God's behalf and said, "I am about to do a new thing, now it springs forth, do you now perceive it?" That question is just as pertinent today. For us as people of Maritime Conference, this coming year brings many new things! But as you may have heard David Hewitt say, "It's still us!" Trusting in God's promise, we can be like the people of old, ready to see the new thing God is about to do in our midst.

May hope, peace, joy and love be present in the endings and beginnings... Catherine