

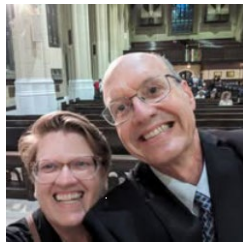


As I write this winter-weary welcome letter for the 2025 Online Annual Meeting set for Saturday, May 3, I rejoice in the appearance of snowdrops in my front garden and mallard ducks assessing possible nesting grounds in my backyard. These are two sure signs of spring in the Sault, and another reminder that the promise of Easter is a certainty we can rely on in the ever-changing landscape of the life of the church.

This year, taking a cue from our sister region, the Executive approved the continuation of the theme that was first launched in 2024. “Upon this Rock” took its inspiration from Jesus’ interaction with Peter as recorded in Matthew 16:18. We put ourselves in the story looking at the etymology of our own names and took delight in considering the unique gifts that Jesus calls each of us to offer to the wider church. This year, as we mark the Centennial of our denomination, I am drawn back to Matthew – this time to 7:24 – where Jesus compares wisdom with the one who built their house on rock. Marking our centennial is both an opportunity to celebrate our past and consider our future upon this rock we call “home”.



But how are we being called to live here now? As we turn our attention to the future, what is God calling us to be upon this rock? Our Growth Animator, Rev. Calin Lau is a great resource to our communities of faith and the region as a whole.



As your Chair, I have been blessed to serve this Region since being installed in November 2023. Highlights include presiding at several celebration of ministry services as well as representing the region, along with our Executive Minister Rev. Peter Hartmans, at the Centennial kick-off service in Toronto. These past 18 months have been filled with regular meetings of the Executive to make decisions on your behalf – faithful decisions that are possible because of the diligent work of our 3 Commissions and our 5 Resource Teams – all the while supported by our dedicated and talented Staff cohort. In preparation for the meeting on May 3, I encourage you to read the Accountability Reports in the Resource Book.

One decision that the Executive made was to extend my term by an additional year. As we continue to find our rhythm as a region and a pattern for our annual meetings, it was clear that the election, installation, and celebration of your Chair-elect, Chair, and Past Chair respectively should happen at an in-person meeting, and since the Festival of Faith is not a meeting of the region but a joint event with our sister region, this realization led to the necessity to revisit terms.

I look forward to “seeing” our Regional Representatives (lay and ordered) at our upcoming meeting on May 3 as we tackle, together, the work that will rightfully come before us and the opportunities that will be put in our way to faithfully serve Upon this Rock we call “home”.

Blessings,
Rev. Nancy J. Ferguson, Chair