



THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA  
L'ÉGLISE UNIE DU CANADA

## January 25, 2018

*"The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet." -Deuteronomy 18:15*

I don't think this passage from Deuteronomy is about the next Moderator of The United Church of Canada, but that was what came to my mind as I read the words.

That's likely because it is a General Council year and people are discerning right now and there will be nominations coming forward as presbyteries meet over the next few weeks. I hear that there is already a nomination coming from one of the presbyteries although it hasn't come to my desk yet.



From time to time people are called into leadership in our church and in our world.

Those standing for Moderator at the 43<sup>rd</sup> General Council will be offering their leadership at a particularly interesting time in the life of our church.

It is a time of uncertainty and of possibility.

On January 10 when the [Interim Report of the Boundaries Commission](#) was released, there were about 1,500 hits to its website link by the end of the day. I think that most people, like me, were caught by surprise by the recommendations. We are still in the time when comments are being offered so I don't want to predict what the final map will look like, but the Commissioners seem to be offering the church a clear message that things will be different from what we are used to.

Where the boundary lines are drawn is just one of the many variables that are part of the planning process that is underway. Plans are being made for the implementation of the structural changes that were approved in the package of comprehensive reforms by the 42<sup>nd</sup> General Council. Of course under our polity, these changes, which now have also been endorsed by presbyteries and pastoral charges across the church through the remit voting process, are not final unless and until the third decision-making step is taken at the 43<sup>rd</sup> General Council. So there remains an element of uncertainty, yet much of the energy of the General Council Office and of people in all the courts of the church is occupied at this time with planning and preparing for change.

I wonder what kind of leader will be called in these times to serve as our next Moderator? Someone who has weathered change in some other aspect of their personal or church life? Someone who will encourage us to remember that we are called by God to be active in building a better world? Someone who will reassure the church that now and always, God

is with us, we are not alone? Someone whose gifts will remind us that whatever our processes and structures, we are called to serve?

Maybe some who are reading this are discerning right now, or encouraging others to step forward. There is a saying that “the church always chooses the Moderator that is right for the time.”

Who will be raised up from amongst us to lead us at this time? Stay tuned...

Nora

[ABOVE: Portraits of former United Church Moderators wait to be hung on a wall of the renovated United Church General Council Office.]

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