

## **Message from the Chair of the Unified Board**

### **2019 Annual Report**

As we reflect on 2019 and look forward to 2020, we are reminded of the impermanent nature of our world, our communities, and our individual lives. There are tumultuous events happening globally that have far reaching impacts. In our own corner of the world, change is all around us as life marches forward.

We have accomplished a lot in Highland Hills Pastoral Charge over the last year. Whether it is new sanctuary chairs, a dishwasher, basement flooring and painting at Highland Hills United or a new furnace at Maple Lake United, our congregations continue to work together to make things happen.

A very significant event was held in April to honour the leave-taking of Zion United Church after more than 127 years as a place of worship. The organizers spent countless hours planning a beautiful closing service that celebrated the history of a beloved sanctuary that for many years “has been a place of heart-centred belonging”. Continuing to quote from a prayer given at the closing service, “But endings are hard. We have been frightened to lose this gathering place...Help us to let go of this place where we have had the opportunity to worship, to practice your love, and to perfect our service to this community, and beyond. Lead us into the glory of that essence that is the legacy of Zion United Church.”

As with life, while endings happen so do new beginnings- Highland Hills United continues to contemplate a new vision for itself. In September a “Transforming Your Community: How Churches Can Engage Their Neighbourhoods” workshop was held to help us consider how we might be a church with our community. More work will be done throughout 2020 as we work together to explore these ideas and strengthen our church community.

In 2019 we experienced many losses as some members of our community passed away and others moved away to be closer to family, health care, etc. We all share the pain of these changes and losses and offer our support to those who are grieving.

We continue to be blessed with people who are willing to help with the myriad of tasks in our pastoral charge and churches. Thank you for what you do.

We are also blessed with people who show care and compassion for each other and our neighbours, locally and beyond. Care and compassion are hallmarks of our pastoral charge.

Lois Deacon

Chair, Highland Hills Unified Board