Dear Friends in Newfoundland and Labrador,

It is a privilege to be serving you in this new role as Minister for Justice and Mission for the eastern Regions of the United Church of Canada. Slowly we are finding our ways of living into our new structures.

VISITS

I had a visit to St. John’s area in the winter to begin getting to know the good works that people are already involved in throughout your Region in relation to Justice, Mission, and Outreach ministries and was inspired by the diversity, strength, and generosity I encountered.

I am currently in the midst of planning to visit in the Western part of the island after Holy Week as I travel to the annual meeting of the Regional Council in Gander. **Please be in touch right away if you would like me to stop and get acquainted in your area.** I am also looking to return for a couple of visits in the fall.

I’ll be available during your annual meeting, May 3rd -5th , and would love to meet as many of you as possible to hear your hopes, concerns, and ideas. I will be assigned a table where we can meet up during open sessions and breaks. I will also be leading a workshop called “Justice and Mission *Reboot”* . Please join me!

My goals this year in your Region are to discover what social justice issues people are currently involved in, and to begin making connections – to one another, to those with skill and passion, to resources, and to the wider community and the wider church. Also, I am actively listening to you to try to envision ways that our new structures can best support the work of justice and mission.

LET’S GET CONNECTED

I will be working this year to help those of us with a passion for faith and justice work to be connected, to have online spaces where we can find out what’s happening, ask questions of like-minded folks, and share our struggles and celebrations. Here are 3 ways currently that you can be part of this network we will be growing:

1. Join the [***Justice and Mission – UCC Atlantic Facebook***](https://www.facebook.com/groups/2365723733503082/) group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2365723733503082/>
2. [SIGN UP HERE](https://mailchi.mp/b497f8ee340b/justice-and-mission-ucc-atlantic) to receive emails by registering to be part of the ***Justice and Mission Network*** (only occasional mailings, I promise!) <https://mailchi.mp/b497f8ee340b/justice-and-mission-ucc-atlantic>
3. Watch for the launch of the new ***Regions East Website*** where we will be posting resources, and information related to Justice, Mission, and Outreach actions.

AWESOME PEOPLE AND STUFF YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

As I prepare updates for you over the coming months, I will be including brief profiles or introductions to folks or things I think are important or inspiring.

MEET Lenora Timmons - Refugee Matters Coordinator for Atlantic Regions

Lenora has been volunteering as the coordinator for the Maritimes for a couple of years, and recently agreed to add First Light Eastern Edge Region to her role, for which we are truly grateful. If your congregation or community has been involved in sponsoring newcomers over the last few years you may want to be in touch to get on Lenora’s email list. She regularly shares news of events, webinars, changes in rules, and encouragement to groups. She is also a good starting point of contact if your group is experiencing issues. lenora@allaccountingneeds.com

Here is an introduction from **Lenora Timmons**:

*My role as the Regional Advisor, Refugee Program is to liaise between the sponsor groups and the United Church of Canada (UCC), while supporting groups with the application process to sponsor refugee(s) either through PSR (private sponsorship), BVOR (blended visa-office referral), or JAS (government joint-assisted) applications, especially those applications that are submitted under the UCC SAH (sponsorship agreement holder).  My role is also to provide resources to applicants as they progress through the entire sponsorship period, including before the families arrive in Canada, while the families are in Canada, and after the sponsorship period ends.*

*About me:*

 *I am a Chartered Professional Accountant located in a small town in Cape Breton, NS.  My passion for supporting sponsorship of refugees stems from my desire to make a difference.  We are blessed to live in Canada, while many families, on a daily basis, have to deal with poverty, hunger, war, lack of education for their children, and other untold atrocities.  I believe it is our duty to share our good fortune with others wherever possible.  Our local United Church resettled a refugee family of 5 in Cape Breton, NS in 2016 and we are currently waiting for 2 more refugee families to arrive (a family of 6 and a family of 3).  Being part of this sponsorship has changed my life for the better.  As for being the Regional Advisor, it’s been a rewarding experience helping others make a difference as well!*

[**Guide to the Good**](https://guidetothegood.ca/) – NL-based social enterprise looking for members and partners

When I (Laura) visited St. John’s this winter I met Kim Todd, the founder and CEO of a creative social enterprise called “Guide to the Good”. <https://guidetothegood.ca/> As members of a faith community who are seeking to “love and serve others” and “live with respect in creation” let’s imagine the ways we might connect with others who seek to do the same. Here’s what they say about their vision and goals –

“*at Guide to the Good we are on about #thinkplanetlivelocal, and we want to make it easy for people to choose local, social, and green for their purchasing and lifestyle choices.”*

*“to share information about the bazillion cool local companies that offer products and services to the community”*

*“Proximity is love!”*

*“Community is love!”*

Check it out and imagine ways that your community of faith may be energized by connecting with this inspiring social enterprise!

Blessings all as we head into this sacred time on our way to Easter!

Laura Hunter

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