

**Bay of Quinte Conference Closing Service**  
***October 20, 2018***  
***Emmanuel United Church, Peterborough***

***A message from Youth representative***  
***Petra Heath***

Hi, I'm Petra. I'm 12 and that kind of sucks because I only just got old enough to join in the Presbytery and Conference Youth stuff.

I went to Conference a couple of times as a "child at Conference" and that was really fun but I could tell the youth were having more fun and I couldn't wait to join them.

Last April in Napanee was my first time. I loved it. I liked that the activities were more grown up and I met a lot of great friends.

The best part was the last night when there was a concert and we danced our hearts out. And there was this part where many of the girls seemed to know Irish or Scottish dancing and they were dancing in that style to this song and I really wanted to join them so I pretended I could dance like them too and I copied their moves... kind of like this: (Petra shows her moves).

I've done lots of fun things with the youth in our Presbytery too. Last month we went to Kingston and did Bubble Soccer. You gotta try it! Just cancel your next meeting and do bubble soccer instead – you might accomplish more!

And now when I barely got started it's ending. I know it's not all over. I know there will be something new but I'll be in Region 12 and some of the friends I made are in Region 11. I know I'll meet new friends and have new experiences but

I'm going to miss the Bay of Quinte Conference and my Presbytery.

I'm young but I do know a little bit about change. I just changed schools. I had been in the same school all my life: Academie Catholique Ange-Gabriel. This year I decided to go to the big high school, like my brother, but I was the only one from my class who went to this school. So I didn't know anyone. I was excited to go to a new school but also really afraid.

I have a journal and I find sometimes it helps to write in my journal and sometimes I make it a prayer journal where I talk to Jesus about how I'm feeling. (we learned this is my confirmation class...you should try it... it helps... so does Bubble soccer...just sayin'). Anyway this is part of what I wrote in my journal after the orientation day.

*The bad and the fear parts of today's orientation was when I first walked in and saw everyone talking and laughing with all their friends and knowing that I had no one to do that with. The first few minutes I was trying to look for people that I knew. I went in my group and saw some girls that looked nice. So I built up some courage and I went over and asked if I could hang out with them. They looked at me in a strange way and said sure but I knew by their look that they didn't mean it, and so that was a loss of hope. I stood there awkwardly alone with no one to talk to and feeling sickly dead inside but still holding it together on the outside thinking I would be in this situation forever.*

*The good things started when I got into my group and I saw how nice my Web Leader was and so that put a smile on my face. ... Then I saw one person from my group and she looked the same as I did: confused and scared but she smiled at me and then I knew that was my moment to make a friend so I went over and I learned that she was in the same position as I was and so we got to be friends. And she and I were very, very thankful to find each other and to have a friend before school started.*

That's what I wrote in my journal. Now when I do a prayer journal I've been taught that I should not just talk but also listen and write down what I think Jesus is saying to me. So this is what I think I heard Jesus saying to me in response:

*When you're starting something new you're always going to find it rough at first. ... You will try to get out of that stage and sometimes it won't go as planned or it will fail but when going through this stage you just need to go with the flow or keep walking till the end. Then once you're out, things will get better and easier and good signs will appear everywhere. Sometimes there will be those moments where you thought you lost everything again and then it turns into a blessing when you found someone who needs your help and that can help you too.*

Doing my prayer journal made me feel better. It reminded me that I'm not alone and that I will find good things and friends even though it's all new.

I hope that you connect with your change and join together, join forces with each other and look for where you are not alone. Where God is helping you through the change. You should not be afraid that's for sure! You have great memories and you will make more. You should always look on the bright side of things even if there is more dark than bright because I think the job of the church is to create more bright things and to convert dark things into bright for other people and for the world.

Thanks!