



The Maritime Conference
The United Church of Canada
L'Eglise Unie du Canada

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Dear Friends,

I've been waiting all year to say, and finally can, Merry Christmas! Once again, this Holy time of year is upon us, a time that is filled with wonder, dreaming, and anticipation. Some of the youngest among us know all too well how hard it is to wait, and I have to admit that I still find it hard to wait for the excitement of Christmas.

For me, Christmas is a time to take a deep breath in and to experience the best of what it is that makes us Church. It's a time when many of our congregations get to welcome people in from the cold, whether they are coming home, or are exploring church for the first time. It's a time of holding each other close, especially those in our churches and communities for whom Christmastime is difficult—grief-filled, lonely, full of unmet expectations. And it's a time of re-commitment—to remember why we are church, to experience Jesus—Emmanuel—being born in us and among us once again, and to promise anew to be God's people, who try our best to walk in the light and spread it in the world, as difficult as that can be sometimes.

It is my wish that this season will be a gift to you, a calling to continue to live the sparkle of the Lights of Advent—Hope, Peace, Joy and Love, for our Conference and for the world. May you know, now and always, the love and compassion of the baby whom we celebrate, Jesus, the Christ.

On behalf of myself, Scott and Ethan, may you have a Happy and Holy Christmas, and know that all things are possible for 2017.

In Wonder and Excitement,

The Rev. Catherine Stuart,
President of Maritime Conference