



The United Church of Canada L'Eglise Unie du Canada

Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council
21 Wright Street, Sackville, NB E4L 4P8
Tel: (800) 268-3781 ext. 6137 • Email: info4rc14@united-church.ca



Advent Message from the President of Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council November 29, 2023

Dear Friends,

It's a frosty Wednesday morning as I settle into writing this Advent letter. It's November. Each day the hills that surround my home grow a little more grey. Each day the air is a little quieter as the winged ones make their way to warmer places.

Much to my eyes delight, nestled among the holly bushes that grace our front door, hang clusters of brilliant crimson holly berries. During the season of abundant growth, the holly is hardly noticed hidden by lush greenery and blooming hanging baskets. But at this time of year, while the land turns grey, the crimson berries beckon us to take notice, reminding us that indeed the world is not all grey and dreary. Indeed, the world is beautiful.

Advent is like that. In a world of anguish with ongoing wars, when the streets of Bethlehem are silent, in a world grasping at how to address climate change, in a time when food security and the need for safe homes make the national news, in a time when the opioid crisis is reaching all corners of the country, in a community where families struggle to deal with serious health concerns... somehow... from somewhere deep inside a fa-la-la creeps out... and breaks into our ordered life. And signs of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love appear.

So, on this day, I say "Thank you!" Thank you that across the region congregations like yours will be dusting off nativity scenes and propping up a weathered Mary and Joseph.

Thank you, Creator, for crimson berries that refuse to fade and Advent candles and the sound of *Hope is a Star*. Thank you, God, for the good old Christmas pageant where shepherds forget their lines and someone inevitably spills a plastic Jesus from his swaddling clothes.

While there is more than enough to be concerned about, pause awhile. This Advent be on the lookout for sparkle... or crimson berries... expect to see a Holy light in the shadows.

This Advent I invite you to listen to the many biblical characters whose stories you will hear in the next few weeks. Imagine what it might have felt like to be Zachariah and lose your voice. To be like Elizabeth, who didn't let age stop her from bringing forth new life. To be like Mary and Joseph who listened to the angels. Ordinary people like you and me, who faced fear, doubt, and loneliness and said "Yes" anyway. Hallelujah!

May their stories help us all experience a Holy incarnation here and now - an incarnation of the living God who dwells in our midst - in the messiness and the beauty of the here and now.

Ready or not, Advent is here. It is not possible to keep it from coming. For indeed we are all pregnant - pregnant with possibilities!

God bless us everyone. We are not alone. Thanks be to God.

In Peace, Paix, Wantaqo'ti, Sankewi,

Elizabeth Stevenson

Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Stevenson

President, Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council

elizstevenson@gmail.com

506-650-4812

Advent



*Hope * Peace * Joy * Love*