



The United Church of Canada L'Eglise Unie du Canada

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Advent Message from the President of Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council December 8, 2023

It is hard to believe that Christmas is around the corner; when we will celebrate once again the birth of the Christ child. In the anticipation of that celebration, the season of Advent calls us to take time to reflect through the four Sundays prior to Christmas Day on the hope, peace, joy and love that enters our world.

In the waiting, I have more questions this year about what the birth of Jesus can do for a violent, conflicted, hurting world. It's hard to take out wrappings, buy the presents, and prepare for the festivities when it feels like the weight of the world is on our shoulders. I am sure that Mary and Joseph felt that weight as well as they made their journey. The weight can feel overwhelming. It is unfathomable when we hear the news reports of innocents being lost and bombs taking the lives of the young who have no say or influence in war. Mass shootings becoming common place. Food bank usage increasing dramatically. Isolation and loneliness are becoming a world health concern. So, what can the birth of Jesus do for this violent and hurting world?

I believe I may have more questions than answers. There are times in the questions when the spirit breaks in and I hear the words of the hymn in More Voices (147) *God, Help Us to Treasure* by John Oldham:

***God, help us to treasure
these moments of myst'ry;
to hallow the Sacred
in all that we do.
Through-out ev'ry season
may we be your agents of love, joy and blessing as hearts are renewed.***

In preparation for the birth of Jesus, I do not believe that we are called to wait, I believe we are called to reflect and act. In a place where we often can feel helpless against the weight of the world, may we remember Christ calls us to be agents of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love.

May this advent season be a time when we affirm with humility and courage: Jesus Christ—the life of the world. May it be so!

In peace and hope,

Shauna

Shauna MacDonald

President

Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council

