The United Church of Canada
L'Eglise Unie du Canada

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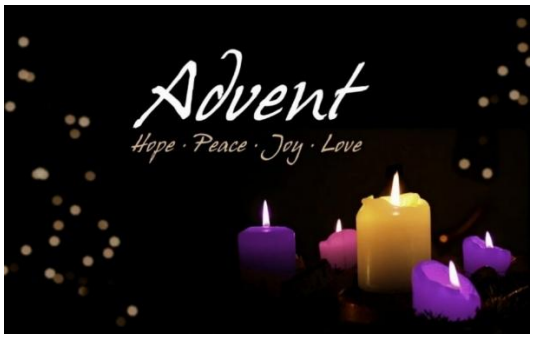
Advent Message from the President
of First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council
November 2026



Dear Colleagues, Friends, and Members of First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council:

Advent and Christmas greetings to you all.

This *most wonderful time of the year* is often one of our busiest and most stressful. We balance tradition and trying something a little bit new, with varying degrees of success. Add in the many church, community, and family events, and the season can feel like a marathon.

Singer, songwriter Amy Grant recorded a song, "I Need a Silent Night", which speaks of the incongruency of the frantic preparation and celebration of Christmas and its message of peace. Is all our rushing and stressing really going to achieve the perfection we think the celebration of Christ's birth requires?

Looking at the traditional nativity scene, there is little perfection. It was never meant to be perfect! There is fear, fatigue and a surrender to 'what will be, will be' as the family finds themselves in less-than-ideal conditions for a birth. I'm sure Mary wished for a silent night. Poor young girl, away from home and family, delivering her first child in a barn.

And then the visitors start arriving! Shepherds with sheep and dogs, singing angels, bright stars and a bunch of wealthy strangers with stranger gifts. In an already crowded town, I'm sure the neighbours were none to pleased with the light show and noise. Oh, for a silent night.

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The lead up to the very first Christmas was just as chaotic as our modern day preparations. Where do we find time to prepare ourselves for the renewal of spirit to be found in the season? Most years, just before Christmas Eve, I catch my breath by having a Winter Solstice celebration on December 21, with a bonfire, prayers and carols in my garden. It is my little 'silent night' in the midst of the seasonal whirlwind. This year, may we all find the time to catch our breath and experience a little silent night and peace in our season of preparation and celebration.

Wishing you peace and joy,



Rev. Susan Sheppard
President

I need a silent night, a holy night
To hear an angel voice through the chaos and the noise
I need a midnight clear, a little peace right here
To end this crazy day with a silent night.
Amy Grant, I Need a Silent Night

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5RJiy7pS7Nw&list=RD5RJiy7pS7Nw&start_radio=1