



*Clifton Pastoral Charge – Old Barns and Hilden United Churches*

*Advent – Christmas 2024*

*The light shines in the darkness and darkness did not overcome it. – John 1:15*

After dusk, coloured lights share a message of hope. This year, the proclamation of light shining through the darkness feels profound.

It is no coincidence that Advent comes in the darkest time of the year, for into that darkness we welcome the newness of light among us. This year, the darkness has an ominous feel to it. The struggles and fears are real, and evident in our domestic lives, in our community connections, and in the political world we inhabit. Often, as we feel tension around us, we move into self-preservation mode, just to keep from being injured. That is not the way of Jesus. When the difficulties in life are more than we can cope with alone, that's where the spirit of Jesus, becomes a guide for the journey. It helps a lot if your community of faith encourages each other along the way.

This might sound a little cliché right now, but I really do believe that the things we can do and can control, are tucked into the messy package of what it means to be a follower of Jesus. You will note that I didn't say "Christian." That is because things proclaimed and given press by the "Christian Right" feel far from the perspective Jesus took as he moved about his work, including and welcoming especially those who had been rejected.

So, in this message to you who are part of the Bermuda-Nova Scotia Region, of The United Church of Canada, I offer this. Look for the light. Be the light. Point others to the light. It is what all of us are called to do in the simplest of ways; reflect the message of Jesus, through our actions, and words and intentions. Take courage that others have proclaimed the good news of Christ among us, in tough times too and be grateful for that great communion of saints. During those moments, rely on the source of inspiration, the stories passed down to us through a legacy of faith. There are so many good examples. So many people lived with the hope that they might wait through the darkness, to see a faint beam of light illuminating the way.

The stories that find their way into our hearts as we prepare and wait for Christmas are not only found in Hallmark Christmas movies. They do not all have happy endings either. But the stories all point to “God With Us”, while we wait, when we celebrate, and when we practice our faith in everyday life. I give thanks to God, and thanks for you, the people of faith who hold the stories and the hope! You are more important and valued than you will ever know. The world is better for your presence and participation in it.

Blessings of the season, friends.

Rev. Donna Tourneur

President  
Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council



The Clifton Pastoral Charge invites you to join with us this December on-line or in-person, worshipping and singing with your Community of Faith.

December 1 **Advent One – HOPE**

9:30 a.m. in Old Barns

11:00 a.m. in Hilden

December 6 **A Clifton Family Christmas Concert**

7:00 p.m. in Old Barns – All are Welcome!

December 8 **Advent Two – PEACE and White Gift Service**

9:30 a.m. in Hilden

11:00 a.m. in Old Barns

December 15 **Advent Three – JOY**

9:30 a.m. in Hilden

11:00 a.m. in Old Barns

December 15 **Christmas in the Barn**

6:30 p.m. at the Waugh Farm in Lower Truro

December 22 **Advent Four – LOVE**

9:30 a.m. in Hilden

11:00 a.m. in Old Barns

December 24 **Christmas Eve Service**

7:00 p.m. in Old Barns led by Kent Loughhead

7:00 p.m. in Hilden led By Rev. Phillip Kennedy

December 29 **First Sunday of Christmas**

Old Barns Service pre-taped and available on website

10:00 a.m. in Hilden led by Session

