



Northern Spirit  
Regional Council

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## **A question of care... An Advent message and appeal**

Rev Helen Reed, Regional Council chair

Many of us are now planning for Advent and looking forward to this time of preparing for celebrating the birth of God's Hope, Peace, Joy and Love in new ways in the world.

As we move into this time, it appears that we have another piece that we need to negotiate within our faith communities.

It is apparent that, in many communities, we are seeing a rising of COVID numbers, Respiratory diseases in children, influenza returning with a vengeance. Our health care systems are calling for people to return to masking in enclosed spaces to help a system that hasn't recovered from the last COVID waves and is being stretched to new limits.

We know that there are those in our congregations who can't wear masks. We know that there are some congregations that are composed of vulnerable populations of elders and children. We know that at Christmas time, we may find ourselves shoulder to shoulder with strangers or family members who may be, unknowingly, sharing more than Christmas Cheer with their neighbours.

We also know that God asks us to look after each other, to love our neighbor in the same ways that we hope our neighbour will use to love us.

I am hoping that my neighbour will take care of me by maintaining a reasonable space between us when we worship, sing, eat or pray together. I am hoping that my neighbour will offer to wear a mask in those times when we must be closer together because they know that I feel vulnerable and really don't want to catch COVID or Flu again. I am hoping that my neighbor will recognize the need for caution and heed the requests of the health care professional whom we rely on to take care of us when we become ill.

As you plan your Christmas Eve services, those services that we hope will be filled with Christmas Spirit and Christian Love incarnate, would you please consider how you will be loving your neighbour at this time? Would you encourage mask wearing? Especially during singing, would you encourage spacing?

In this sacred time of preparation, of journeying, of wonder may this time of Advent be another moment of experiencing love for all of us.

Blessings

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