# Moderator’s Advent Message 2020

## Transcript of Videotaped Message

Hello! My name is Richard Bott. I’m the Moderator of The United Church of Canada.

At the moment, I am preparing to move from one home to another.

Yes, in the midst of a pandemic.

Why? Because it’s necessary. I have no choice!

It’s difficult. I want to do all things NOW. All the things at the same time. ALL the things!

Wash the walls! Paint the walls! Buy the boxes. Fill them up.

Transfer my Internet connection. Give things away! Recycle things! Throw other things away!

Right…find a place to live.

I want to do all the things at the same time. Right NOW. But it’s impossible.

You see, this is my reaction to stress. I try to do all the things at the same time, and when I can’t, I freeze. I get stuck.

But, listen:

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away; a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.

These are the words of Qoheleth in Ecclesiastes, chapter 3, verses 1 to 8.

The Advent season is not just a time of waiting; it’s a time of preparation.

When we prepare for a baby coming, like Jesus; for a move, like mine, we have to remember that there are important things and less important things, and we have to remember that there’s a time for everything, in its order. There are times when we need to take a moment to discern that order with God before we’re able to act.

We have to move one step at a time. Without fear. Without worry.

Because God is here. God is with us. God is with all of this wounded world.

That’s the Christmas message, isn’t it? In good times and bad, “in life, in death, and in life beyond death, God is with us.” Advent, especially *this* Advent, can be a time for us to stop and remember that.

Advent and Christmas will be different this year from any other most of us have known. We will need to limit our movements, to keep our physical distance, to cover our faces. None of these things make our celebrations easier, but they are necessary for our health and the life of our neighbors.

Perhaps the distance this pandemic brings can allow us to prepare our spiritual life, our interior life, for the coming of the Christ child.

One step at a time, each in its order.

May the peace of Christ be with you now and every day to come.