

First United Methodist Church

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How are you doing at waiting?? Is it driving you crazy, or is it easy for you? Our current church season, Advent, is a season of waiting. We know something great and exciting is coming (Christmas), but we really want it to be here **NOW!!!** Or at least I remember that feeling from when I was young.

As a society we have generally become unwilling to wait. I can order something on my computer and have it delivered in a few days. We have walk-in clinics that advertise "No Waiting." There are express lanes in many supermarkets and big box stores. Sandwich shops advertise they are "Freaky Fast" and they deliver your lunch sandwich to you usually within 15-20 minutes.

I'll admit that at times I'm not good at waiting. If I know what I want I tend to want it now! If my schedule for the day is full I tend to get impatient at the few traffic lights in our community that always seem to turn red just as I'm approaching. "I don't have time for this!!" is my thought as I grudgingly step on the brake.

Yet waiting, stillness or quietness, and being patient is built in to the cycle of the Christian year, as well as the faith experience. Joseph (from the Old Testament) had to wait years before being lifted out of prison and slavery after being kidnapped and sold by his jealous brothers. There's a well-known Psalm that speaks about the power and presence of God being evident in the world. Yet this same Psalm, toward the end says, "Be still and know that I am God." (Psalm 46:10) King David was anointed to be the future king of Israel as a child, yet he would have to wait years before he would actually become the King.

Yet, the hardest period of waiting from Bible days, really isn't recorded in the Bible, because there was simply silence from God. You see, there's a period of about 400 years from when the last book in the Old Testament was written (Malachi) until the story of Jesus begins to unfold (Matthew and Luke). Throughout the Old Testament there usually seemed to be someone; a prophet, a judge, a leader of some sort, that spoke on behalf of God. But after Malachi's message of judgement, there is simply silence.

There were still many faithful people seeking to live God's ways. They longed for, they hoped for a Messiah, a savior, some sort of message or word from God. But there was simply...silence. This is in part why the appearance of an angel to Mary, Joseph, and Shepherds was so startling and yet so captivating. It meant that God was up to something. God was at work in the world.

As I write this article, we are approaching the Third Sunday of Advent. Christmas is just 10 days away. We are still waiting; most likely a bit impatiently...but we're still waiting. Yet, our wait is nothing compared to the people of many years ago who waited 400 years for a sign. So, we wait for a few more days knowing that indeed, God is at work in our midst. May our prayer today be, "God, open my heart and mind to see and experience you today, even in the midst of waiting!"

Serving Together,

Pastor Keith

The message theme this week is "Discovering Your Strength in Weakness; the Manger and the Stable." Worship is at 8:30 and 11:00 am. Sunday School begins at 9:45 am. Please keep in mind that there will be only one morning worship service on December 24 and 31. Morning worship, those Sundays will be at 9:30 am. **Our Christmas Eve Candle Light Services** are as follows; Friday December 22 at 5:30 pm in the Chapel, Sunday December 24 at 4:30 & 6:30 pm in the Sanctuary. **Christmas Carols and Candle light** will be a part of all these Services. **Communion** will be offered at the 6:30 pm Christmas Eve Service.