

Waiting and Watching

I wonder how many December church newsletter articles have been written by pastors through the years about the theme of “*waiting*” in Advent. Advent is a season of waiting, although as a commercial society we are really not very good at waiting for Christmas to arrive. In stores, Christmas season begins before Halloween and ends promptly at midnight on December 24. After that, everything left goes on clearance and we start getting ready for the next thing. Companies and organizations have their Christmas parties all through the month of December, hurrying to squeeze everything in before December 25. But in the church year, Christmas doesn’t begin until December 25 (*although we start celebrating at dusk on December 24*) and the season lasts through January 5, until the Wise Men arrive on January 6 and the season of Epiphany begins.

As I write, it is not yet Advent, and yet I am in a season of waiting. How many days until the baby comes?, I wonder every morning. Will it be today? One day, the answer will be “Yes,” but until then, we continue to wait.

As you read, it will be the season of Advent, and most likely baby Kamprath will have arrived. And yet, we will wait. We will wait for another baby, a baby we’ve waited for before. The kids will remind us at their program that it really is “*All About That Baby*.” As we wait, our celebrations will begin. We’ll celebrate Jul Gott and raise money to feed hungry people. We’ll feed some hungry people ourselves at the Pasta Dinner fundraiser, as our Confirmation families raise money for camp next summer. We’ll gather gifts for the Angel Tree. The church will be decorated for Christmas, and our worship leaders will be

preparing for joyful Christmas services. And then, whether or not we’re ready, on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day we will gather together and worship our God – our God who came among us one night so long ago as a tiny baby. And we will know, once again, without a doubt, that God’s kingdom has come, that God’s love has been born in our world, and that God’s promise of new life is right here in our very presence.

I plan to be out for most of the month of December on parental leave, and Pastor Matt will gone for some of the month as well. Pastor Mike Clark will be providing pastoral coverage during the time when we are both on leave. But I want you to know, dear sisters and brothers, that even when I am not among you as your pastor during this special season, you are in my prayers and my heart is ever thankful for you. Matt, Anna, and I all want to say “*Thank you*” to the congregation for your prayers, your love, and your generosity as our family prepares for the new baby. We especially want to thank Linda, Sandi, and Cindy for planning such a lovely Baby Shower. We are blessed to be a part of this church family, where Christ’s love is shared so freely.

—*Pastor Laura*