

WAITING...ACTING

The Rev. Deacon Dorothée R. Caulfield
The Second Sunday of Advent
December 4, 2022

May only God's word be spoken; may only God's word be heard. Amen

Here we are 2 weeks into Advent. The season of waiting. I don't know about you but I'm a little tired of waiting. As a child, I remember the impatience I felt as we moved from thanksgiving into the pre-Christmas season. That's how I saw it - a pre-Christmas season. Those 4 weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas loomed large. It felt like it was a year.

Of course, as I grew into adulthood and time evened out, I realized what a short time 4 weeks is. And yes, as I've grown older 4 weeks now seems like an impossibly short period of time. Funny how time and our perception of it is relative. Which makes me think of Kairos, God's time.

As I now know this season of Advent to be a period of waiting, not just the interminable time between Thanksgiving and Christmas. I realize the value of the waiting time. Of course, we have the image of Mary preparing to give birth to the Christ. That is a whole other kind of waiting. But this week's readings all show us the lineage of Jesus. From our opening sentence from Isaiah, in the wilderness prepare the way, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. We are asked to cast our gaze back in time. To a set of scriptures that we as Christians believe foretells the coming of Christ and his connection to the root of Jesse.

As we look closer to these readings, we see lessons of waiting and Kairos – God's time.

Our psalm says, 'in his time shall the righteous flourish,' I say that time is now! There are things we must do to make our time the right time. And there are many peoples who have waited a long time for justice and equity. But there comes a time when waiting is not enough; it's time for action. I believe this is that time.

Our recent diocesan convention, the 246th of our diocese - passed record resolutions. Here are 4 examples of the resolutions.

- A 501c3 was established to hold and administer funds received and identified for reparations. An important move to work with the 1.1 million dollars set aside for reparations.
- It was resolved that December 10th, which is Human Rights day, was set aside on our calendar to commemorate Eleanor Roosevelt. An important recognition of her work for all people. She was a courageous and tireless advocate for human rights. First as the first lady of the United States and then as the country's first delegate for Humans Rights to a newly formed United Nations.
- We voted to establish a Break the Silence Sunday. Affirming the General Convention's resolution to set aside the Sunday closest to November 25th, which is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against women, as a day to honor this important work. Our diocese resolved to go one step further and said that there should be zero tolerance on violence against **all** people within our churches, homes, schools, and our communities.
- Lastly, I'll share that the diocesan task force on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault proposed that we participate in 'Thursdays in Black' a campaign of the World Council of Churches, which is a global movement for a world without rape and violence.

There were a few more resolutions that I won't go on about, but I brought my calendar of business if you want more information about these and the other resolutions.

I tell you all this because I believe the time to act is now. We can and we must listen to John the Baptist. The voice crying out in the wilderness. It is time for Grace to wait patiently for the Christ child to be born at Christmas AND it's time for us to act.

We can and must wait patiently for a priest who will come to lead us AND we can get busy and get to the work that God is already calling us to. Feeding the hungry, giving shelter to the homeless, helping the women who are escaping domestic violence. Yes, some of you are involved in these things -**and** there is so much more to be done.

It's also important to study the bible. Holy Scripture teaches us how to live as Christians. We are called to live different lives than our culture's CEO's model. In our second lesson this morning from Paul's letter to the Romans it says that by steadfastness and the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. Together we can read the bible and learn how to model our lives on these teachings.

We are called to take a page from John the Baptists' book. We need to be a voice crying out in the wilderness. John preaches about repentance. Yes, we have much to repent for. I am proud of the work that Grace undertook to look at our collective complicity with slavery. It's a start and a wonderful model as the church, but there's more work to be done, personally and corporately.

And now I want to share a word of hope. Yesterday, at the electing convention of the diocese, yes, a second convention in less than 4 weeks – a big thank you to Sue Monroe for sticking it out for Grace, we chose the man who will be our next diocesan bishop when Bishop Andy retires in about 16 months. The Rev. Matt Heyd was elected on the 4th ballot. He addressed the convention after confirming to Bishop Andy that he would indeed serve. The word he gave us and the word I want to share with you is renewal. I think that's also a prophetic word for us at Grace Church. I know we're all eager for a priest to lead us, but the work is ours to do. We can renew our commitment to this church and get busy. Whoever comes one day to be our priest will see that we are committed to the work we have to do because that person will find us already engaged in God's holy work.

Please pray with me.

God of hope and love, bless this congregation gathered here and scattered afar. Help us each to discover what holy work you have for us to do. Help us to be repentant where we need to and give us your vision for renewal in our church that will guide us into our next steps. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.