



Pastor's Corner



This coming Sunday we'll enter the sanctuary and instantly feel that something has happened at church: the Christmas tree will be up and the sanctuary will be decorated. But it will be more than that. There will be an anticipation of something. Something that we might not be able to put into words, as words so often fall short for us. There will be a sense that something important is coming. And there is—the season of waiting: Advent.

“Advent is a time when we prepare ourselves spiritually to celebrate the birth of the Savior. Advent is the church's response to [the] amnesia [of the world around us]. Advent is a four-week period when Christians pause and say, ‘Let's remember what this is all about. Let's remember who the child is, born in Bethlehem two thousand years ago. Let's remember the hope and the promise that come from him. Let's remember who he called us to be and what he called us to do. Let's remember the mission he gave us as we seek to live as Christ-followers.’”¹

Advent prepares our hearts for the manger. And the manger points us to the Cross. The two are inextricably linked, for the sole purpose of Jesus' birth was so that he could die for our sins and show us the way to the abundant and eternal life. We cannot celebrate Christmas without being led to Easter; and we cannot celebrate Easter without remembering and reflecting on Christmas.

It's a full circle.

This year, let's not rush through Advent. Let's not forget to “wait.” We're so good at thinking ahead, planning ahead, forging ahead - what gifts will I buy for the family, when will we put up the decorations, when will we send out the cards - but when we do that, we lose the promise of “now.” And “now” is what Advent is all about. It's about the waiting and it's about the preparing of our hearts for Christmas. It's about being intentional: anticipating what is about to happen and understanding how that will change our lives. I invite you to not dash to Christmas this year. Instead, let's wait together and prepare for what is about to happen. I believe, if we can do this, we will experience Christmas in a more meaningful, more joyful way.

Peace be with you all,

Kara

¹ Hamilton, Adam. *Not a Silent Night: Mary Looks Back to Bethlehem*, 2014.