

Rector's Column

“Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.”

Isaiah 7:14

Dear Friends,

Every year, it seems to me, I become more deeply sentimental around the holidays – memories of the Thanksgiving dinners and Christmas seasons of childhood creep up on me at unexpected times. Suddenly, my heart can be struck like a bell at the sight of fresh holiday pastries in bakery windows, cartons of eggnog stocked behind glass refrigerator doors at the local grocery, or twinkling light displays that glitter in the cool evenings on houses or lawn trees and that seem to have gone up quite early this year.

The memories of holidays long, long ago don't make me melancholy. Rather I turn the memories in my mind as though considering a snow globe held thoughtfully in the palm of my mind. I consider each memory with curiosity with a desire to remember each moment for both sweetness and tempered reality. Amid the fraught rush of holiday shopping, meal preparations, decorating, cleaning, and baking, arrival of relatives, setting of tables, juggling of dishes, there were simple delights in treats reserved only for the holidays and gatherings of family and friends with little to spend on gifts between us but a generosity of time gifted in one another's company as school was set aside and older relatives had breaks from college or work.

Those on whom we choose to spend the currency of time are made rich by the treasure freely bestowed upon them by our hearts – there is no reserve in the gifting. We are glad to be together. Consuming food without company is merely eating, while sharing stories and joy around a table of loved ones is truly a meal that feeds us both in the moment and for years to come. I think that may be why I didn't like being relegated to “the children's table” when I was little. I wanted to hear the stories that the adults shared among themselves, the memories told as epic narratives and the laughter or tears that each story evoked in the telling. In short, I didn't want to miss the love stories of various kinds.

Ultimately, that is what the seasons from Thanksgiving to Christmas is to me – the sharing of the love stories of our faith. It seems to me that the liturgical year of the church spends many months telling the story of Jesus's ministry and journey to the cross, with only a handful of days set aside on either end of the year (Christmas and Epiphany at each extreme) to tell the epic story of Christ's arrival into the human world and the arrival of the wise men who come to witness God's new creation. The journey of Advent fills the month of December this year, and to me it is a journey to the manger as a gift of our time and attention to the Christ child.



(Continued on next page)

My hope for you is that the journey of Advent may be a time of hearing anew the love story of our faith and bring you to the true treasure of life of which Christmas reminds us – the gift of time. In a recent interview, physicist and musician Brian Cox shared that "we don't know" what time is made of; he explains that our current understanding of time is based on the concept of spacetime, which is intertwined with space, and that further research is needed to truly understand the nature of time. Time is made of something. Memories and dreams may be hard to quantify, but they are the basis for God's love story to humanity, so our faith story tells us in every Advent journey to the manger of God's heart.

In Christ's Peace,
Pastor Rachel+