



# THE MESSENGER

December 2016, Volume 7 Number 8

All Saints' Church 51 Concord Street, Peterborough, NH 03458

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## Our Mission (What we do)

*Our mission is to help people grow in their faith and trust in God by helping them recognize their God-given talents and to use them to serve God and their neighbor.*

## Our Vision (Where we are going)

*Our vision is to be a community in which God's love is experienced and shared.*

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Dear Parishioners,

'Tis the season for waiting for the arrival of the long-awaited Messiah.

And we do not wait alone...

We are waiting with Mary and Joseph.

We are waiting with Zechariah and Elizabeth.

We are waiting with all those traveling to Bethlehem for the census.

We are waiting with all those traveling with the wise sages from the east.

We are waiting with the shepherds and the innkeepers.

We are waiting with the morning rising star.

Even, we are waiting with Herod.

I don't like to wait. I'm not much good at it. If my Internet connection is slow or the microwave is taking forever or the line is too long, all silly things, I sometimes find myself tapping my fingers or obsessing about yet another worry, or even pacing. Oh my!

Or what about waiting for important things – a phone call from one of your children, a doctor's diagnosis, peace in Israel or Syria, the results of an election, a job interview, graduation, healing, a wedding proposal, justice in our own land, or the birth of a child. My guess, like me, it's not easy for you to wait, either.

Prayer helps. Rather than fret, demand, stall, spin, pace, bide time, fixate, or clamor, we can pray. One of the things I love about being in South Africa, though there is a lot of waiting, there is also a lot of pulling up of chairs, sharing a cup of tea, holding hands, laughing, playing cards, massaging a neck, taking a long walk, or singing, while peeling an apple very slowly. And then the waiting becomes a joint expectation for whatever will happen next.

In other words, you're not praying while you wait. The waiting is prayer; make the most of it, because the present moment is really all you have anyway. Take it in, don't let your plans or needs get in the way of what you can discover with each other and with God.

I think that's what it must have been like to have travelled with Jesus. Efficiency was replaced with intimacy. And those traveling discovered that while they were waiting for whatever Jesus would do next, they were also being "waited on" by God. God waits with us, for us and between us, and when we wait, we are invited to be traveling in the ways of God.

And so what a blessed season we have, this Advent, to raise our hands to the heavens giving thanks for each precious moment, while we wait for the birth of the Living Lord.

May you and your family have a blessed Advent and a beautiful Christmas,

Always,

Jamie+

## Christian Education

### *A New Season*

*If it be your will  
That a voice be true  
From this broken hill  
I will sing to you  
From this broken hill  
All your praises they shall ring  
If it be your will  
To let me sing.*

~ Leonard Cohen

### THE MESSENGER

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I write this at the end of a tough week, feeling truly atop "a broken hill". This was a very difficult week after an even more difficult election "season." I cannot recall a time in my (admittedly short) life where my country has felt more pained. I didn't live through the '60s, though I have heard and read and listened to a great deal of stories from that time... I imagine it felt similar to how it feels now, perhaps worse, perhaps better. I can only speak to my own wounds and those of my friends and family and community. What pains me more than a fractured nation is what I perceive to be a fractured church. What do we do about it? How do we heal? If there is any instrument in this country to accomplish the daunting task of reunifying, it surely must be us... right?

I recently read the book *Tribe* by Sebastian Junger, a journalist who uses the slim book to reflect on his experience as a war time journalist. His book contains compelling evidence about the challenges veterans face upon returning from war but more importantly, the challenges we face as a nation. He argues that we have abandoned the central, ancient elements of tribal community which unite us, give us meaning, help us have a healthy relationship with conflict, suffering and trauma.

Our modern lifestyle, including our churches, have fostered a narrative of separateness where most of the population is artificially isolated from war and violence. During tribal combat, warriors abandon the details of their lives which isolate them from one another in order to become a cohesive unit. Upon returning to the tribe, they are put to work as farmers, workers, hunters, etc. In our modern society, soldiers discover the same unity on the battlefield, where education, skin color, home town, and political party fall away, and imminent danger binds one to another. Then they return home to find a country bickering divisively, bitterly, over all of the above and more. It results in desolation. Moreover, he argues that the two political parties each embody and reflect a crucial, perhaps even genetic, tendency in tribal culture and therefore we play out our divided politics because ultimately, both are correct, both are necessary.

If we believe, truly believe, that we are the Body of Christ, we are bonded to each other, even more so than soldiers on a battlefield. But before we can feel it, we must leave room to hold each other's pain. This election called forth voices crying out from every corner, "I am not seen; I am not heard!" Muslim voices, black voices, gay voices, working class voices, disempowered voices from the rust belt to the inner city... we must listen and we must listen now. Spiritually, a new season is upon us: the season of Advent. We wait for the One in whom all voices are held and cherished, in whom the pain of the world is a burden willfully embraced. We await the One whose life taught us how to find unity in entering into the vulnerability of another. He taught us that true power comes from standing in the place where we are the same, rather than retreating to the corners where we are different and alienated. He, too, was born into a fractured world, on a broken hill in a barn beneath the stars. We wait for our Messiah whose love heals all wounds. May we lay our gifts, our lives, our nation, at his feet.

And then get up and follow in his footsteps.

Becky Goodwin, Director of Christian Education

## O Come, O Come!

Please come and be sustained during Advent on Tuesday mornings at 7:30 in the Parlor. We will gather for Morning Prayer, followed by reflection and a brief discussion using short (2-3 minute) videos chosen from the *Work of the People* series *Interrupted By Hope – Turning Towards Advent*.

*“We have our plans, our time, and ideas about how this holiday season should work. However, Advent changes all of that. The arrival of this season shifts our focus and gives us a greater expectation than day-in-day-out living. Advent interrupts our schedule and points us toward a new hope. It brings the blessing of an unplanned arrival. God seeks to stir within us so we may turn our faces toward something new.” WotP*

Here is the planned schedule. I hope you can join in on the journey!

Week 1 Nov 29 *“Learning How to Hope, Advent as Reorientation”* - Brian Zahnd, Pastor and Author

Week 2 Dec 6 *“Be Still and Look, Advent as Being Still”* – Glennon Doyle Melton, Author

Week 3 Dec 13 *“A Womb for a Wounded World, Advent as Poetic Imagination”* - Malcolm Guite, Priest, Poet, Scholar

Week 4 Dec 20 *“The Risk of Incarnation, The Incarnation of Christmas”* – Parker Palmer, Author, Activist and Educator

*Sandi Albom, Intern*

## December Saints' Days

12/1	Bill Raymond	12/11	Max Scheinblum	12/20	Sarah Kendall
	Timothy Ryan	12/12	John Calhoun	12/21	Kate Coon
12/2	William Marot		Martha Manley	12/25	Jesus of Nazareth
12/3	Janet Fiedler	12/15	Deb Rogers	12/26	Finnian Brown
12/6	Hellyn Egan	12/16	Catherine		William Cahill
	Christine Howe		Cauthorne	12/27	Lois Walen
12/7	Lily Bell	12/17	Michael Carter		Noah Harrington
12/9	Doris Covey		Caroline Sarles		Isak Harrington
	Carleigh Brown	12/18	Barbara Wood	12/30	Nicholas Ryan
	Hadley Bates	12/19	Sheridan Johnston		
12/10	Renee Charney	12/20	Carl Wagner, Jr.		

*If your name is missing from our Saints' Days lists, PLEASE let us know so you can be remembered!  
Just call or email the Church office: 924-3202 or [diane@allsaintsnh.org](mailto:diane@allsaintsnh.org)*