

December 10, 2023

“Learning to Wait in An Instantaneous Society”

FORT COLLINS MENNONITE FELLOWSHIP

300 E. Oak Street, Ft. Collins, CO 80524

Worship: 10:00 AM

Pastor: Steve Ramer

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SEASON OF ADVENT

During Advent we are called to wait for the coming of God’s Chosen One; the One who will help birth a new world, the world that God desires. We are simultaneously giddy with excitement and filled with anxiety since so many of the details still need to be worked out. But like intrepid investigative reporters, during our time of preparation, we must seek to uncover the who, what, where, when, and how of this great and radical Advent hope!

1. GATHERING

Musical Prelude (Stan)

Call to Worship (based on Isaiah 64:1-9)

Leader: O that you would tear open the heavens and get down here!

People: So, what is taking you so long God?

L: We know that when you do, the mountains will quake and you will light a fire within us so hot that it can boil water!

P: Those who tease and attack us might also think twice and tremble!

L: From the beginning of time no one has heard, nor seen anything like you. None of our substitute deities can ever suffice.

P: We know that you do rush to the aid of those who seek to follow you.

L: But we also know that we fail sometimes to do what is right.

P: Please don’t be angry with us, please do not hide your face.

L: But you O LORD, are like a potter who is in love with the clay, a loving creator gently caressing us in your hands.

ALL: Our God, you are like no other, forgetting our mistakes and those times we lack faith, still calling us your people!

*“We must let go of the life we have planned, so as to accept the one that is waiting for us.”
— Joseph Campbell*

Opening Prayer (based on Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19)

Our good and faithful Shepherd, you are so far beyond what we can imagine. Lend an ear to us; stir up your might and come to save us! Restore us, O God; let your face shine so that we may be saved. Please do not be angry with our weak-kneed prayers as we wait for you. Restore us, O God of hosts; may we feel again your gentle hands and find renewed strength to follow you - never turning back. May your face shine on us again so that we may be saved.

Congregational Singing (Stan)

Welcome and Passing of the Peace

Leader: May the peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also, with you.

All: Let us offer one another signs of peace, reconciliation, and love.

"I believe that a trusting attitude and a patient attitude go hand in hand. You see, when you let go and learn to trust God, it releases joy in your life. And when you trust God, you're able to be more patient. Patience is not just about waiting for something... it's about how you wait, or your attitude while waiting." — Joyce Meyer

2. HEARING GOD'S WORD

Scriptures: 1:26-38

A heavenly messenger named Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee, to see a virgin named Mary who was engaged to a man named Joseph.

"Greetings most favored one of God! Don't be afraid, Mary, for God is not only with you but is most pleased with you."

But none-the-less, she was still apprehensive due to the sudden appearance of the messenger and began wondering what these words might actually mean.

But the heavenly messenger continued, "Mary, you are about to become pregnant and will give birth to a son, whom you will name Jesus.

Not only will he be a very great man, but he will also be called God's Son and will inherit the throne of his ancestor David. But your son's reign will never, ever come to an end."

Still greatly disturbed, Mary said to the messenger, "How can I become pregnant, since I haven't been fooling around with any man, not even my fiancée?"

But the messenger said to her, "With God anything is possible!"

Then Mary declared, "I am the servant of the Lord and so may it happen just as you said." And with that the messenger left.



SERMON: "Learning to Wait in An Instantaneous Society" (Steve)

If the Advent Season is all about waiting, then maybe HOW we wait is just as important as WHAT we are waiting for. Waiting is difficult and we currently live in a society that hardly has to wait for anything. Delayed gratification is still considered a sign of emotional and spiritual maturity. So how we wait is crucial.

3. RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Congregational Singing (Stan)

Response (everyone)

Joys and Concerns (everyone)

Offering & Music (Stan)

Sending (based on 2 Peter 3:8-15a)

Beloved of God do not ignore this one fact, that with the Lord one day can be a thousand years and a thousand years can pass just like a single day. Our God isn't as slow as you might think but is patiently waiting on us to repent and find true salvation. We may not know the exact day when the Chosen One will return, but we wait for a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness will reign. So may the Chosen One of God find us striving to live in peace.

"Whatever we are waiting for - peace of mind, contentment, grace, the inner awareness of simple abundance - it will surely come to us, but only when we are ready to receive it with an open and grateful heart." — Sarah Ban Breathnach