



An Advent Blessing between Love and Christmas

Advent waiting is winding down. Anticipation has been building. Now you are facing the culmination of the season, the celebration of Christ's coming into the world.

How is it with your soul?

So much of life is waiting, and we rarely know the parameters of the wait. There's no prescribing a four-week season with certain benchmarks along the way. Hope, peace, joy, and love aren't the ways we usually define our anticipation.

Were the waystations on the journey helpful this season? Is the light growing in your soul as each new candle is lit in the Advent wreath?

You've lived long enough to know that sometimes anticipation builds and builds, only to end in disappointment. Perhaps you journeyed through this season with cautious hope, uneasy peace, tempered joy, or measured love?

But maybe this season is teaching us something about how we travel.

The waiting, the anticipation, the arrival – all part of the journey.

The shepherds who hear the angels say, "Do not be afraid," go and find the Christ child. But they do not stay there. They return to their fields, changed by their encounter but not finished with their journeys. The magi who will visit on Epiphany have a longer wait, a longer journey before they arrive to meet the Christ child. They, too, keep going. Their lives are changed, and their journeys continue.

Hope, peace, joy, and love are not ending points or even waystations.

They are the way we journey.

As the season of Advent wanes and Christmas approaches, may we hope with abandon, resting, working, building toward something better. May we pursue peace in our lives and for those around and beyond us. May we treasure joy where we find it and spread it generously. May we know the love of God who travels with us, and never lets us go. And may we live into and out of love, more enduring than hate and stronger than fear.

The journey continues. Thanks be to God.

