

## For the Journey

Nov. 27, 2025 - Rev. Dave Crawford



*I said to my soul, be still and let the dark come upon you  
Which shall be the darkness of God...*

*I said to my soul, be still and wait without hope  
For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love  
For love would be love of the wrong thing; there is yet faith  
But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.  
Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought:  
So the darkness shall be light, and the stillness the dancing.*

*\* T.S. Eliot, 1944.*

What is the opposite of waiting? Taking action? Assertiveness? Impatience? Impulsiveness? Can waiting be a virtue? Perhaps if we call it patience? When it comes to Christmas we're generally not very patient. In the church we Protestants tend to merge Advent and Christmas into one season. In response some clergy types insist on the Roman Catholic practice of "no Xmas carols before Christmas Eve"! If they're United Church clergy they do so at their own vocational peril.

Yet there is value, opportunity, in waiting for Christmas, even as the entire secular Christmas culture of consumerism doesn't. Martin Copenhaver offered these words in his book Living Faith While Holding Doubts:

“Most of us think of waiting as something very passive, a hopeless state determined by events totally out of our hands. The bus is late? You cannot do anything about it, so you have to sit there and just wait. It is not difficult to understand the irritation people feel when somebody says, ‘Just wait.’  
“Yet there are different kinds of waiting. Some waiting is passive, but there is also active waiting. A girl who stands on a street corner waiting for the bus to arrive will experience one kind of waiting, a passive waiting. That same girl on the same corner hearing the sound of a parade that is just out of sight will also wait, but it will be a different kind of waiting, full of expectation, a waiting on tiptoe, an active waiting.”

This is the kind of waiting Advent offers, for nothing less than parade of hope is just out of sight, a parade called the Incarnation, Emmanuel, God in the flesh, Jesus. Repentance has always been a key element of Advent, although we often overlook it. Advent invites us into active waiting by encouraging us to examine our lives, our beliefs, our spiritual priorities, by giving our time to worthy causes for the less fortunate, by preparing our hearts for the celebration that is to come. Even the liturgical colours of Advent hint at the connection to Lenten self-examination. Purple and royal blue symbolize not only the colours of royalty in antiquity, therefore pointing to the birth of Jesus, King of kings, they also evoke a sense of penitence for believers.

Active waiting. Prayer. Worship. Mission. Study of the Word.

“Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.” - James 5:7-8.

Grace and Peace,  
Rev. Dave.