



**WHAT  
CAN'T  
WAIT**

**ADVENT 2019**

What can't wait?

Sunday, December 1st

# 1st Sunday of Advent

## Hope Can't Wait

One: Christmas is coming! We cling to that good news – to the promise that God comes to be with us, to be in the hunger and the hurt that lives in our world, and in each of us.

**All: Even as we remember God's promise, sometimes despair rules the day – sometimes it seems like the only possible response to the world around us.**

One: We confess that it can be easy to lose hope,

**All: to dismiss far-off dreams, to laugh at wild imagination.**

One: But this Advent, we turn from our despair,

**All: and we say we *hope can't wait*, and we choose a new way: we choose courage, and faithfulness, and we choose to step into the unknown with trust now.**

One: We light this candle and we pray,

**All: may we catch the sparks of hope in our hearts, and light our world with God's dream of wholeness.**

 Lighting of the Advent Candle 

*"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."*

John 14:27

What can't wait?

Thursday, December 26th

# Happy Kwanzaa



*The seven communitarian African values are: Umoja (Unity), Kujichagulia (Self-Determination), Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility), Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics), Nia (Purpose), Kuumba (Creativity), & Imani (Faith)*

What can't wait?

Wednesday, December 25th

Whatever your cross,  
whatever your pain,  
there will always be sunshine,  
after the rain

Perhaps you may stumble,  
perhaps even fall,  
But God's always ready,  
To answer your call

He knows every heartache,  
sees every tear,  
A word from His lips,  
can calm every fear

Your sorrows may linger,  
throughout the night,  
But suddenly vanish,  
in dawn's early light

The Savior is waiting,  
somewhere above,  
To give you His grace,  
and send you His love

Whatever your cross,  
whatever your pain,  
"God always sends rainbows  
after the rain."

Author Unknown



*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, to give you a future and a hope."*

Jeremiah 29:11

What can't wait?

Monday, December 2nd



*"The Lord is my light and my salvation; I will fear no one. The Lord protects me from all danger; I will never be afraid."*

Psalms 27: 1



What can't wait?

Tuesday, December 3rd

### What can't Wait

Will you come if we open the doors? Yes, was the answer. The night was going to be cold, in the low 20's. The Mission had said they would not open for inclement weather until December 1. A couple of phone calls later, they said they would open if people would call by 8:30pm to reserve a spot and then be at the door by 9pm. The folks in the courtyard said they would not or could not go to the Mission. "I am banned for life by the Mission." "I don't feel safe there." "I'd rather be outside, they don't like me there."

A long time ago on another cool evening in a crowded town, innkeepers said, "No, no room here," to a young couple. The woman was heavy with child and tried to rest by riding on the donkey. The night wore on. Finally, the husband said, "We can't wait." "Is there someplace we can rest?" A cattle stall and a manger became the first night shelter for the new family of three.

That story of long ago has familiar elements to our story that cold October evening. We looked at each other. We agreed. We can't wait. We opened an emergency warming shelter. We can't say no to these folks who might freeze during the night. Within 1 and 1/2 hours we had pulled together cots, blankets, hot drinks, and a crew to host sleeping folks in four hour shifts. The first evening there were eight. The next night 12, then 10, and eight on the last night of the week. An emergency warming shelter couldn't wait.

JoAnn Sims

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*"God is our shelter and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble."*  
Psalm 46:1

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What can't wait?

Tuesday, December 24th

## Christmas Eve We Can't Wait

One: Christmas is almost here!

We come to revel  
in the wonder of that good news –

**All: in the promise that God comes to be with us,  
that God comes to be born  
in the unlikeliest of places:**

One: in a stable in Bethlehem,  
among worn and weary travelers,

**All: and among us, and within us,  
and for us and for all the world.**

One: This Christmas Eve,  
we gather around this ancient story  
and we say we can't wait,

**All: and we choose to live the promise  
of God-with-us, this night, for all of our days.**

One: We light these candles and we pray,

**All: may hope, peace, joy, and love  
be born anew in us this night.  
May our lives shine with these promises,  
and light our world with God's faithful presence.  
Amen.**

 *Lighting of the Advent Candle* 

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*"You are all around me on every side; you protect me with your power. Your knowledge of me is too deep; it is beyond my understanding."*  
Psalm 139:5-6

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What can't wait?

Monday, December 23rd

**December Skies**

© Rob Porter 2012

Verse 1:

Dawn breaks, night falls  
The longing we feel in our heart calls But try and try, we just can't buy  
The treasured kiss, a lover's bliss

Verse 2:

Seek and you'll find  
We all walk the path between heart and mind Incomplete until we meet  
Lost not whole, a wandering soul

Chorus:

Lose the lie, begin anew Happiness is not for a chosen few It waits for you

Verse 3:

Ocean waves, mountain peaks  
The spirit of life within all speaks  
A growing sound of love unbound  
The lingering sighs of December skies



Verse 4:

Storms rage, stars shine  
The world around us is divine  
The poet dreams, the mad man schemes But one in kind, intertwined

Chorus:

Lose the lie, begin anew  
Love is never for a chosen few It lives in you

Outro:

Dawn breaks, night falls  
The longing we feel in our heart calls A growing sound of love unbound  
The lingering sighs of December skies  
Oh, hear the sound of love unbound The lingering sighs,  
You can feel them rise,  
In December skies

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*“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

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What can't wait?

Wednesday, December 4th

WHAT

I was hungry and you gave me something to eat-  
English Muffins- with or without cheese!

I was thirsty and you gave me a drink-  
Coffee's good today- have a cup!

I was a stranger and you took me in-  
You've not been here before?  
Welcome- it's good to see you!

I was naked and you clothed me-  
I have a size 12 pair of boots being saved for you!

I was sick and you looked after me-  
Not doing well?  
Remember: Free Medical Clinic tomorrow  
at 9 AM, 2nd Floor!

I was in jail and you came to visit me-  
Welcome back! It's great to see you again!

CAN'T WAIT

The Divine in me-  
Seeing the Divine in you!

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*“You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you.”*  
Isaiah 26:3

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What can't wait?

Thursday, December 5th

- WHAT CAN'T WAIT? -

All my life, I have been a positive person. I have usually seen the glass half full. I've been accused of being a bridge builder, a mediator, the person who always saw both sides of every issue. I have even been called wishy washy, because I do see both sides!

But now, in 2019, I am not feeling so positive. I am less and less seeing both sides of every issue, and I am feeling like I really may need to draw a line in the sand. It is feeling more and more like a moral issue for me. We have so many pressing issues that are going to affect our children, our grandchildren, our Nation and our World. I don't want to feel pessimistic, I really don't. It is not in my DNA.

I am blessed with four children, ten grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. I am concerned for their future. Will they have clean water to drink, clean air to breathe, a safe place to live, parks and wildlife to enjoy and love, like I always have?

I believe strongly in peace and justice and getting along with our neighbors, locally and in the world. And still, we have wars: over what, property, resources, power and greed? How much wealth does one person or one nation need? When we have wars, innocent people die, not to mention the soldiers on both sides. It is so senseless.

I am concerned about the Soul of America. What happened to thinking of others, not just ourselves? Not everyone is born with the same privileges. I think of my own life: born into a family and extended family that loved me, supported me, nourished me, fed me, clothed me, and sheltered me. Many do not have this privilege. They start from a different beginning.

So, what can't wait?

1. Acknowledge that there is global warming. Whatever the cause, we must do something, for our offspring and all crea-

What can't wait?

Sunday, December 22nd

## 4th Sunday of Advent

### Love Can't Wait

One: Christmas is coming! We embrace that good news – the promise that God comes to be with us, that God's love is born among us, now, and every time we remember it.

**All: There is something special about the way love comes this season: unassuming, unconditional, whole-hearted.**

One: We confess we have not loved our neighbors, or ourselves, with our whole hearts.

**All: We sometimes choose false security and hollow comforts rather than risking real connection or authentic community.**

One: But this Advent, we turn toward each other,

**All: and we say *love can't wait*, and we choose a new way: we choose generosity, and grace, and we choose to open our hearts and our lives to one another now.**

One: We light this candle and we pray,

**All: may we kindle the sparks of love within us, and light our world with God's wholehearted embrace.**

♡ Lighting of the Advent Candle ♡

*"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."*

Romans 8:18

What can't wait?

Saturday, December 21st



Snowman by Doug Roy



Images submitted by Tim Duerfeldt

*"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."*

Joshua 1:9

What can't wait?

tures. That is a moral issue for me.

2. Striving to get along with our neighbors, locally and globally. People are fleeing violence, wars, lack of resources, poverty, and genocide. How can we not help? My great-grandparents and grandparents came from Sweden to America in the mid 1800's and around 1900, for freedom of religion and a better life for their families. Does that sound familiar? Another moral issue.

3. People are literally living on the streets and under bushes and bridges in McMinnville! Let that sink in! How is that possible in America, the richest country in the World? For me, this is a moral issue. I know many of these people by name, through working in the Star Room. They are not numbers, they have names. There are solutions to this problem and we do not have to reinvent the wheel to accomplish them. It is being done in many communities all around us. It is going to take heart, and soul and resources and commitment and time. What did Jesus say? "Love your neighbor as yourself." Our neighbors need help in McMinnville, in Oregon, in America, at the borders, and all around the World.

It seems so daunting, so impossible. Where do we start? Does it start with a Dream, imagining a World that cares about everyone's wellbeing, a planet that is clean, able to sustain people, plants and animals and a home for everyone? I think it begins with truly caring and supporting people in power with the same dreams. One person can't change the world, but many people with the same dream can. When I imagine this dream, and meet people with the same dream, it inspires me, it gives me hope. My prayer is that we can all come together, every city and nation, and through our joint efforts and love, make these dreams a reality. May it be so, so we can truly have Peace on Earth!

Respectfully and with Love,  
Gloria LaFata

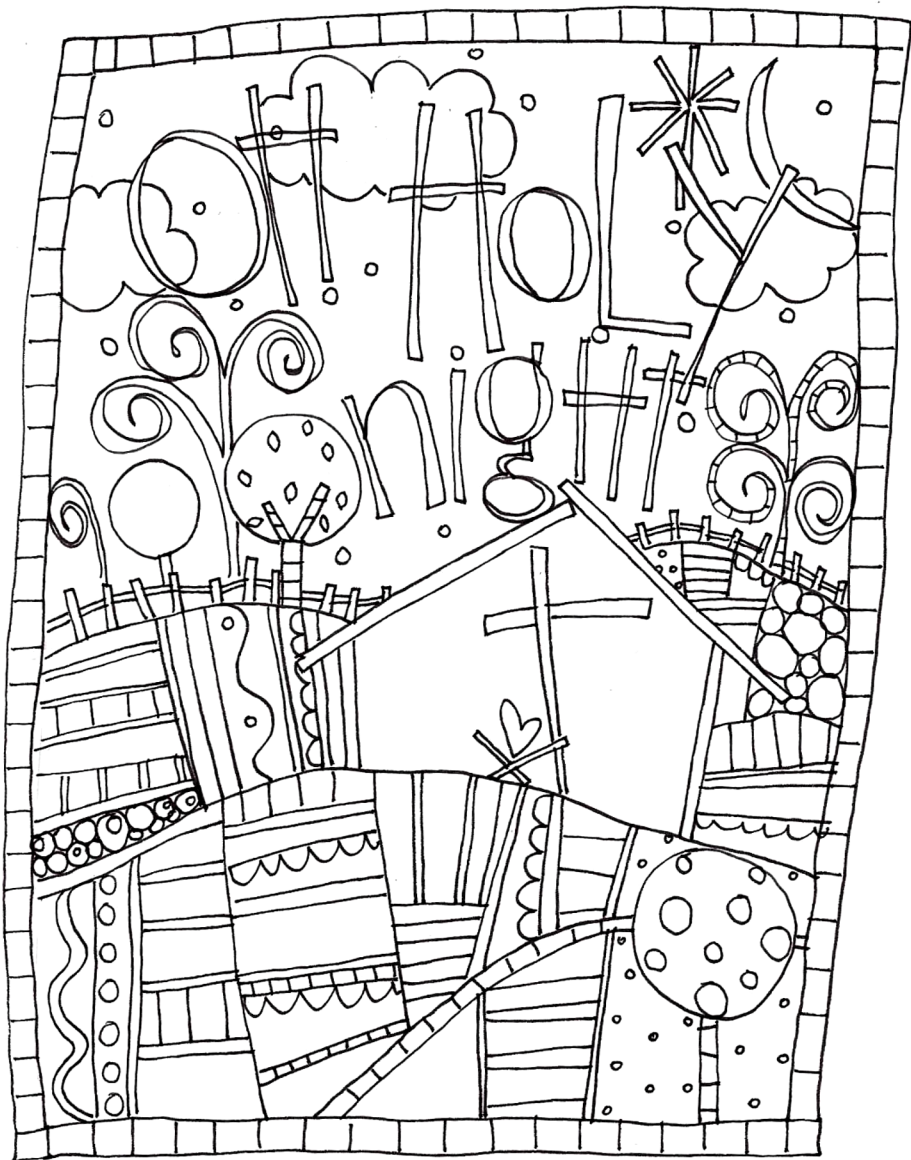
*"You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world."*

1 John 4:4



What can't wait?

Friday, December 6th



www.homegrownhospitality.typepad.com

Malachi Nelson invites you to listen to  
O Holy Night performed by Josh Groban.

Type this link into your browser <https://youtu.be/hJw-ey1DPRA>

*"He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name."*

Psalm 174:4

What can't wait?

gies? thought not really. I looked at the shiny red wagons that could hold my dolls and my puppy, and my rocks and my pet chickens. Again my mom asked about the doll buggy and the next time she asked about the doll buggy I looked at her with sad eyes. I asked when was Christmas coming? She told me to be patient. We rolled out cookie dough and cut out stars, trees, bells, Santas, and reindeer. Mama asked me to eat all the burned cookies. Which I did. Our living room had a high ceiling so Daddy carried in a tall tree. We carefully hung tinsel on its branches. I continued to worry about the doll buggy. My siblings came home for Christmas; they got to eat all the perfect cookies.

Christmas morning I peeked into the living room, nestled under the tree was a red wagon carrying Raggedy Anne and Raggedy Andy wearing matching pink and blue flannel jammies just like mine. I could hardly breathe I was so excited.

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Years later I learned my mother spent hours in her walk-in closet stuffing those dolls and making matching outfits for them. Now they sit on a shelf in my office, a bit faded. Raggedy Anne has mended holes in her body from a play date with my puppy. The beloved red wagon is gone but the cherished memories linger.

Anne Engen

*"You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them,  
because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world."*

1 John 4:4

What can't wait?

Friday, December 20th

### Fall and Winter 1949 Though the Eyes of a 5-year-old Girl

Church people said my home was large, I didn't think about it as big. Having brothers who played basketball up and down the central hallway was normal, but meant I had to carefully slide along the walls if I wanted to move from the dining room to the living room. My siblings were in high school or college and seemed so tall and busy.

Our house was surrounded by tall poplar trees planted by the first owner in 1910. I love the piles of crunchy yellow leaves that Daddy raked up. I climbed the grape arbor to feast on purple and sweet green grapes. My swing had long ropes so when I learned to 'pump' I could go higher.

Daddy carried into the house a large piece of flat wood telling me it was plywood to go over the dining room table. Mama threw sheets over it making room for all the relatives coming to eat on Thanksgiving. Daddy always said a prayer then everyone watched him carve the turkey.

Winter settled in. Water dripped off the edge of our deep eaves making icicles which grew thick and reached the snowdrifts. Daddy shoveled sawdust into a furnace in our basement. Mornings I'd scurry across the cold floors to stand on the floor register, the hot air blowing up my flannel nightgown. When Daddy came home from work, and dinner was over I'd crunch newspaper to help him build a fire in our fireplace. I'd cuddle in his lap as he read me chapters of Winnie the Pooh or Wizard of Oz stories. In the living room was a huge wooden radio with dials and lights. If you pressed your hands on it when it had warmed up, you could feel vibrations. Out of it came music and stories.

Mama asked if I'd like to look at the "Magical" book. It had pictures of every thing you ever wanted and it was named Sears and Roebuck. She said Christmas was coming, and turned the pages to show me the toys. Would I like to look at the doll bug-

What can't wait?

Saturday, December 7th

There is no sugar coating the injustices in our world but the ones that deeply call me to act are those where children are victims.

We live in a county that, on average, has 150-200 children in foster care during any given year. That number might seem small, let's talk about a larger number. There are roughly 944,000 children in Oregon, statistically 188,000 of them are suffering some form of abuse yet in 2018 in Oregon, just 12,585 children were martyrs of founded abuse; nearly 40% of them are under the age five. Why are we able to only protect 14% of the children who are unsafe?

There are so many neglected; children who were born to a mother with no pre-natal care; toddlers who eat everything in sight because they don't know when they'll eat again; a parentified eldest sibling who is protecting and caring for his younger brothers; teens who are being molested by their own parents. It is gruesome. Their stories are horrific and scary yet so many turn a blind eye to abuse or neglect because "it isn't my problem," "not my place," or "I don't know the details." . . . Caring for the children in our community can't wait. Legally and with some reason, parents have more rights than children; children who have been exposed to abuse, substances or other forms of neglect often don't have a voice or even a resource to voice their fears to. Caring for the children in our community can't wait. It can't wait! They need more than love, they need to be safe and healthy. Our children deserve it. We as children deserved it. Raise your hand in your mind if you needed someone to just speak up for you.

I did, I was abandoned by my mom [dad didn't know]. I never entered foster care, my mother wasn't offered the services needed to provide for me; housing, food, medical and mental health. I got myself to school but often didn't eat. I needed someone to call my dad, the police or child protective services to force me into an environment where I could be safe and have my basic needs met. There are children in our neighborhoods, schools, or communities who need you to make that call. Don't wait. It can't wait.

Jessica Payne

*"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."*

Philippians 4:6



What can't wait?

Sunday, December 8th

## 2nd Sunday of Advent

### Peace Can't Wait

One: Christmas is coming! We claim that good news – the promise that God comes to be with us, to remake the world as we know it, to point us again towards life.

**All: We name the One who comes the Prince of Peace, yet sometimes we cannot imagine ourselves into a new day.**

**We mourn violence but are not shocked by it, even as it claims more and more from our world.**

One: We confess that peace can seem too far away,

**All: a task beyond our grasp, an unreachable ideal.**

One: But this Advent, we turn from our violence,

**All: and we say *peace can't wait*,**

**and we choose a better way:  
we choose kindness, and vulnerability,  
and we choose to hold each other gently,  
and to walk lightly on our earth now.**

One: We light this candle and we pray,

**All: may we kindle the sparks of peace in our lives,  
and light our world  
with God's promised shalom.**

☮ Lighting of the Advent Candle ☮

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*"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."*

John 16:33

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What can't wait?

Thursday, December 19th

The promise of a healthy future cannot wait. Several years ago, I was working with a team of Chemeketa students in the remote community of El Cedro in the far eastern corner of Nicaragua known as the Southern Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAS). We worked with AMOS Health and Hope, our partners in Nicaragua, and during one of the home visits I met Cristela and her family. It took several hours to walk to her home through very rugged terrain. Cristela's family was grateful to receive a water filter and the hope for a healthier future. Towards the end of our time in El Cedro we had a community celebration and Cristela's entire family made the trek into the village where the school is located to participate in the festivities. This photo of Cristela represents the hope that I often see in the eyes of Nicaraguans who are truly grateful for the love and support they receive from AMOS and partners like FBC McMinnville. Our continued support, through travel and donations, make this hope

possible. For these families, that hope cannot wait. A clean glass of water and a properly trained local healthcare provider can mean the difference between life and death.



David Hallett

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*"Those who know your name trust in you, for you, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek you"*

Psalms 9:10

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What can't wait?

Wednesday, December 18th



Waiting for rain or sun, don't know which for you, but rain for me



Gardening is always a waiting game, wee Delicata squash

Joani Jernstedt

*"For God is not a God of disorder but of peace."*

1 Corinthians 14:33

What can't wait?

Monday, December 9th

Can't Wait

Can't wait:

To see the love in your mommy's eyes,  
And the joy in your daddy's smile,  
To hold and rock you,  
To tickle your tiny toes.

Can't wait:

For the fun ahead of us.  
To read books, to color pictures.  
For Easter egg hunts and baseball games,  
For sand castles and building blocks,  
And trips to the zoo!

Can't wait:

To meet the precious one  
Joining our family this Spring.  
Yes, we can't wait!

Tim and Diane Marsh

Finding it hard to await the birth of their grandson, March 2020

*"Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times  
and in every way. The Lord be with all of you."*

2 Thessalonians 3:16

## What can't wait?

Tuesday, December 10th

### What can't wait?

When you get that diagnosis, the one that comes with a limited life expectancy, 3 months, 12 months, 18 months....., what do you do? Of course, you grieve the losses. But, you also have the opportunity to say, "what can't wait?"

When you know you have a limited amount of time left in your own life or in the life of someone you love, you have a chance to seize the moment to do the things, make the changes, be the person you want to be.

That's exactly where Dianne and I found ourselves nearly 4 years ago. Her diagnosis came with an average expected survival of 12 -13 months, we hoped for 18 months (we got over 2 and 1/2 years). We knew we couldn't wait to live the life we dreamed of, to do things we had talked about doing SOMEDAY. No more somedays, we were focused on now. Life couldn't wait, we needed to live it now.

Of course, there were treatments to work around, but as soon as Dianne was able to travel we started making memories.

We rode the train through the Canadian Rockies, visited family and friends in Wisconsin, Tennessee, Washington, California, Texas, and South Dakota, camped with our church family and made many trips to the coast. Our last trip together was to Crater Lake where we had spectacular weather and were able to make the hike to Watchman Lookout. Priceless!



## What can't wait?

Tuesday, December 17th

Patience has never been a virtue I have mastered. There are so many things that I can't wait to happen. I can't wait for Fridays which mean the end of the work week. I can't wait to cuddle up on my couch and read a good book. I can't wait for the next episode of "This is Us."

For this holiday season, the thing I can't wait for is being with my family. Our daughter Paige is studying abroad this semester in Budapest, Hungary. Our son, Prescott, started college at OSU in September. This means Carson and I have officially become "empty nesters." We are learning to grow into this next stage, but I miss my family. All four of us have not been together since early June.

Carson wrote, "Our nest has been empty for two months now. Time heals all. The period between me tearing up has grown. Ever since we moved into our new house when I go off to bed at night I would holler down the stairs 'Good night little buddy.' Prescott would holler back 'Good night.' Now when I go off to bed I have to quicken my steps as I pass the stairs. This practice too will fade."

So for me, I am counting down the days until December 22, when Carson, Prescott, and myself will land in Budapest and meet up with Paige. We will spend the holidays in Budapest, Vienna, Salzburg and Munich. And yes, it will be wonderful to see these cities in all their glory and the sparkling lights of the winter festivals and New Year.

But what I am most looking forward to, the thing that can't wait, is sitting around the dinner table where we will share stories, we will laugh and we will fall into our natural groove and banter. Paige will tell us about her adventures, Prescott will ask unending curious questions, Carson will contribute witty humor, and I will try to add words of wisdom while smiling in gratitude. And for a little while we won't be empty nesters, we will be mom and dad again, we will be family. So with all the peace, hope, joy, and love of the season and of who we are, we will be the Benner family. I can't wait!

Georgine Benner

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*"Wherever you are going, God has already been there  
and paved the way for you."*

Matthew 6:27-30

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## What can't wait?

Monday, December 16th

It was December 2009. Linda and I knew we needed a change in worship experiences. The next month we began driving from Keizer-Salem to attend the 11am service here at First Baptist Church of McMinnville. We felt God's Spirit leading us to a new church home. For the first year, just the joy of being here seemed to be enough. Yet how long would we need to wait? Before we finally could move to McMinnville, we had to sell two houses, provide care for several family members and complete some other obligations. Forty-two months later we moved into our McMinnville home. What a relief. More time at home. Why was the wait so long?

As a younger adult I thought that I was fairly patient. Let others in while driving – no problem. Waiting and hoping my students would improve their math comprehension – I can do this. Yet, I have a “doer-fixer” more than a “sit and wait” type personality. How many times have I prayed “why don't others have a similar sense of getting things done?!” Lord have mercy!!

During this time of Advent, I am committed to more time in reflection, meditation, and just being quiet. I do trust in the Spirit's timing thus will work towards maturing my “patience” skills.

Thanks for being part of my faith community. It is such an amazing gift. I am so very grateful.

Don Watson

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*“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”*

John 14:27

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## What can't wait?

But more important than what we did was how we lived together. Knowing that our time was precious, that we could not wait, we lived in the present, spending quality time together. Each day we had was an opportunity to show each other how much we cared, what we appreciated, how deeply we loved.

So, “what can't wait?” Living life to its fullest, telling your loved ones how much you love them, taking things off the “bucket list” by actually doing them, doing the things you've always talked about doing, but most important of all is to be present, live in the now.

Martha VanCleave

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*“He will cover you with his wings; you will be safe in his care; his faithfulness will protect and defend you.”*

Psalms 91:4

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What can't wait?

Wednesday, December 11th

When my husband and I got married 21 years ago, a fella came up to us and had a very wise truth to tell. He said, you will find true happiness together if you follow this news. "The woman wants to change the man. The man wants the woman to stay the same. They are both wrong." If you can agree, you will find true love and so we do.

Heidi Reinker



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*"He will cover you with his wings; you will be safe in his care;  
his faithfulness will protect and defend you."*

Psalm 91: 4

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What can't wait?

Sunday, December 15th

## 3rd Sunday of Advent

### Joy Can't Wait

One: Christmas is coming! We cherish that good news – to the promise that God comes to be with us, singing and dancing and feasting, like we do, crying out, and mourning, like we do, too.

**All: We say this is a season of joy to the world, and we hold that in tension with the heartache that persists, within us and all around us.**

One: Our losses are thrown into sharp relief this season; our unfulfilled hopes weigh heavy on us.

**All: Sorrow can sneak up on us, or it can settle in slowly.**

One: This Advent, even in the face of our sorrow,

**All: we say *joy can't wait*, and we choose what's more: we choose delight, and celebration, and we choose to also notice the good and nurture it now.**

One: We light this candle and we pray,

**All: may we catch the sparks of joy all around us, and light our world with the good news of God among us.**



Lighting of the Advent Candle



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*"Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;  
his love endures forever."*

1 Chronicles 16:34

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What can't wait?

Saturday, December 14th



What can't wait?

Thursday, December 12th

## I PRAISE THE DANCE

I praise the dance, for it frees people from the heaviness of matter and binds the isolated to community.

I praise the dance, which demands everything: health and a clear spirit and a buoyant soul.

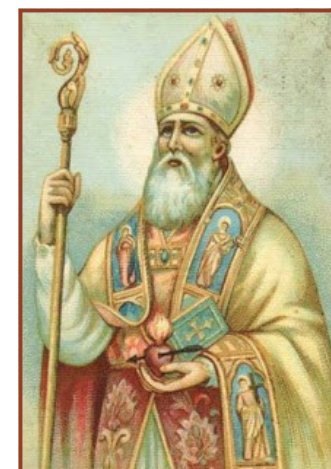
Dance is a transformation of space, of time, of people, who are in constant danger of becoming all brain, will, or feeling.

Dancing demands a whole person, one who is firmly anchored in the center of his life, who is not obsessed by lust for people and things and the demon of isolation in his own ego.

Dancing demands a freed person, one who vibrates with the equipoise of all his powers. I praise the dance.

O man, learn to dance, or else the angels in heaven will not know what to do with you.

– Saint Augustine



Submitted by Malachi Nelson

*“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you”*

1 Peter 5:7

What can't wait?

Friday, December 13th

### Bubble of Anticipation

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As a child, when asked what I wanted to be when I grew up, I always proclaimed, "a ballerina!" I started ballet lessons at age five. For years, in the privacy of my bedroom I would practice poses and gestures, including deep bows as I imagined roses being tossed at my feet during a standing ovation. Unfortunately, I had to wait. My teacher wouldn't let us dance "on pointe" until we were 16, when our growing bodies had matured. This was for protection of the development of our bones. But the budding ballerina in me was frustrated and anxious. The waiting for my first pointe class was grueling. Soon, that fateful day arrived.

I showed up early for class with my shiny, new toe shoes. We were instructed by older dancers on how to put them on, stuffing lamb's wool in the toe area, and then tying them correctly with the equally shiny ribbons. There I was, in my black leotard, pink tights and ready to dance pink toe shoes.

Class began with the usual amount of warm up. I pictured myself as a member of the Joffrey Ballet, equal to the world's best ballerinas. I remember well the moment when we faced the ballet barre, our knees bent in soft, first position plié. Our teacher called out, "Plié, relevé," which meant rise to our toes. The bubble of anticipation burst with the first stab of excruciating pain. My hands clutched the warm-up barre in a death grip, as I tried again and again to rise with ease. Each time the pain worsened.

When it was time to step away from the barre and move across the floor, I simply could not do it. But, oh, how I tried! I struggled for a few more weeks, until my teacher asked for a meeting with my mom and me. She told me that my feet were not made for toe dancing. Although I was trim weight wise, my

What can't wait?

growing-into-womanhood body was stocky, and out of proportion needed for a ballerina. My feet were a normal size but my toes unusually short. My heart was broken. I get teary remembering. The first bubble of my life's desire burst. The sadness and sorrow were awful, not to mention embarrassing. If I'm not a ballerina, then what am I?

I eventually rose above the perceived tragedy under the mentoring of the savvy teacher. She helped me see that there were many forms of dance in which I could excel. You see my older sister was an accomplished ballerina. Very machine like, without feeling, my teacher said. I, on the other hand, exuded emotions in my dance. Soon I became more of a "show dancer," thriving in modern dance and musical theatre. I learned to turn the world on with my smile, and not rely on what my body can or cannot do.

I've come to see that life is full of desires that form a bubble of anticipation. Waiting is part of the process. Some of those bubbles take flight, and some just hover. In the end, every bubble will burst. What I do with that is in my hands and not my feet.



*"You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world."*

1 John 4:4