

St. Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church

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Dear People of God at St. Michael & All Angels,

Anna B. Olson, who wrote the book *Claiming Resurrection in the Dying Church*, which the Vestry looked at for almost a year, wrote that her Advent spirituality had been shaped and informed in great part due to a simple grammatical fact of the Spanish language: the words for “to wait” and “to hope” are identical (*esperar*), and it is only through usage and context that one can determine their meaning.

We are mostly through the season of Advent, when we are expected to spend time in hopeful expectation as we wait for the coming of the Savior. Waiting is tempered by our hope, and our hope is tempered by patience, or at least I think that’s how it is supposed to work.

This year is a particularly good one for talking about waiting and hoping. We face an uncertain future in many ways: the resurgence of COVID and the precautions that come with it, the global economy, wars between countries, political tensions, racial inequalities, and last, but not least, our own uncertain future as a church. We hope and we pray hard about our future, but in some ways, we know that what we were is a shadow of what we can become. We have to rely on hope, because only God will reveal what comes next for us, no matter how hard we try to make it happen immediately.

In this era of instant gratification, where we are used to having information at our fingertips with a quick search of Google, it is tough to wait. We can order our groceries or supplies online and swing through a line in a parking lot and have them brought to car instead of navigating the aisles (especially during the busy holiday shopping season). Movie theaters are empty as we sit down on our sofas and watch the latest movie on Netflix with just the push of a few buttons. Spending our time waiting has become one of the ways in which we are looked at as less than, when we don’t have the means to pay for the quicker alternative.

But during this season, the Church is asking us to slow down. We are being asked to listen, to watch, and to wait. And as we take the meandering path in the wilderness as our siblings in Christ have over the past millennia, we are asked to take notice of those around us who may have less or be excluded.

I invite you to join us as we celebrate the season in varied ways – from the “Longest Night” service on December 21 at 7:00 pm, where we acknowledge that God’s light in Jesus can help us to get past those times of loneliness and sorrow; to the joy of the birth of our Savior on December 24 at 5:00 pm; to the familiar carols and stories of God’s coming among us at our service of Lessons & Carols on January 1 at 9:30 am. **St. Michael & All Angels will not have a service on Christmas Day this year.** If you aren’t able to make it to worship in person, know that you can find all of our services livestreamed (and retained) on both YouTube and Facebook. Head to our website to find more details.

May the peace and joy of waiting and hoping – hopeful waiting and waitful hoping – surround you this Christmastide,

Rev. Jason Miller

Priest-in-Charge

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Upcoming Schedule

Sunday, December 18 – Fourth Sunday of Advent Worship Service

In person and streamed at 9:30 am

Wednesday, December 21 – “Longest Night” Worship Service

In person and streamed at 7 pm

Saturday, December 24 – Christmas Eve Worship Service

In person and on streamed at 5 pm

Sunday, December 25 – Wishing you a Blessed Christmas (NO SERVICE)

Sunday, January 1 – Lessons & Carols

In person and streamed at 9:30 am

Sunday, January 8 – The Baptism of Our Lord Worship Service

In person and streamed at 9:30 am

Annual Meeting in person to follow