

FIRST AND CENTER

Pastor's Blog

December 4, 2018

“Don't let the sharp edge of your expectation get dulled by parties and drinking and shopping.” That's Eugene Peterson's translation of Luke 21:34. Although the context has nothing to do with the coming of Christmas (though it is situated in a second coming passage), it seems the perfect verse as we enter into Advent's first full week. The party and shopping season, of course, has been well underway for several weeks now. How is your expectation doing?

I am not railing against Christmas parties or buying presents. I have already bought some things for people I love and hope to celebrate at some parties over the next few weeks, maybe even throw a party myself. What I think Peterson's translation pulls out is how those things can sometimes become the focus instead of the background. The central part of Advent is expectation. But of what? Expectation of presents round the tree Christmas morning? Expectation of remembering that Jesus was born so long ago?

Sure. And yet, that is not enough expectation. I am still holding onto the promises given that day. “Peace on earth.” “Good will.” Mary's song about the poor being lifted up and the powerful brought down. Anything less than that is a temporary substitute for utter and complete joy.

I will wait, this Advent, and I will try to hold onto a sharp edge of expectation for more. Not more stuff, not more parties, not more cookies or wine. More good will. More peace on earth. More world turned upside down. I believe; help my unbelief.

MY GROWN UP CHRISTMAS LIST



No more lives torn apart.

That wars would never start.

And time would heal all hearts.

And everyone would have a friend.

And right would always win.

And love would never end.

...This is my grown up Christmas list.

~ The Rev. Shelly Stackhouse,
Transitional Minister