



*Advent/Christmas 2016*

*Dear Friends in Christ,*

*I find myself to be distracted easily lately. Distracted by news, by stories, and by ongoing coverage of political ins and outs. I succumb at times to a mixture of being fearful for the future, angry at the state of things, or tired of hearing about all of it. I live with the knowledge that remaining in those states – fear, anger, and overload, are not healthy states to exist in. And for that reason, I find that I am yearning in a different way for Advent.*

*I'm yearning for a time of quiet that without mindfulness and intention will not come.*

*I'm yearning for signs of hope in our troubled world that will transcend the injustices of our time.*

*I'm yearning for the broken things of this world to be made right.*

*As I reflect on these longings, I'm aware that the world is as the world has been: those who were awaiting the coming of God's promised Messiah likely desired the same things. Those days were filled with political woes and uncertainty, violent unrest, injustice, and a general longing for the world's wrongs to be made right.*

*And yet, in the Incarnation of Jesus, those things were not made right, as people hoped. Instead, Jesus, the long awaited and anticipated one, set to work showing people waiting for external change how to change themselves. How to be more hopeful. How to be more joyful. How to be more at peace. And how to more loving.*

*It occurs to me as we enter into this time of waiting and preparation, filled with uncertainty and yearning for change, that the very work of waiting is to allow ourselves to be changed. To carve out some space inside us for hope to grow, joy to be found again, peace to be our home, and for love to become the language of our lives. In case we're wondering, in action this looks like moving beyond lament for the state of the world. It means realising the possibility that the yearnings we have for things to be mended and brokenness made right are actually the yearnings of God, who changes the exteriors of our world by changing the interiors of those who live here.*

*May we be changed this Advent.*

*And may we bring change to heal the world.*

*In Hope, Joy, Peace, and Love,*