



Hope

November 30, 2022

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“We are already waiting,” remarked Sandra Ballesteros. Treasurer and active leader of Parroquia San Jose (San Jose Fellowship) in Beloit, Sandra pointed out the obvious. The search for their next pastor had been underway for months. Now, a highly qualified candidate had applied, but he would need a religious workers visa. Visa applications from Mexico were being processed very slowly, and it was anticipated getting the visa could take a year. “Are you sure you want to wait that long?” I had asked. “Yes,” was the leadership team’s answer. “We are already waiting.”

Dan Gonzalez Ortega first applied for the San Jose position in April 2021. He joined the Milwaukee Presbytery as our Evangelista del Presbiterio/Presbytery Evangelist for Latinx Ministries in November 2022. It took more than a year for all the pieces to fit into place. For San Jose, the wait was worth it. Everyone is hopeful that the fellowship’s Gospel outreach will build up the Christian community among Spanish speakers in Beloit. Dan’s role includes not only pastoral service with San Jose, but also a broader outreach to Spanish-speaking university students in the Milwaukee Presbytery footprint. He will represent the Presbytery in ecumenical and interfaith circles as well. Though he refuses the moniker of “Billy Graham 2.0,” Dan has a passion for sharing the Gospel, and we are blessed to welcome him as a colleague. You can read his inspirational greetings from the November 19 Presbytery meeting here ([English](#), [Spanish](#)). He reminds us how good it is to be with one another finally. It’s been a long wait.

As we move into this time of waiting during the Advent season, our first readings remind us to stay awake and to stay alert. (Rom. 13:11-14; Matt. 24:36-44). We keep hope alive although we don’t know what changes lie in store for us in our Christian formation. We keep hope alive although we don’t know how long it will take for the pieces of God’s plan for us to fit into place.

Yes, we know the Christmas story. I’m confident that Jesus will be born again to us on Sunday, December 25, 2022. Our hopeful waiting is not simply about celebrating that birth millennia ago, an event from the past. A paper calendar could get us to Christmas if that’s all that our waiting signifies.

Instead, we wait in hope for how Christ’s presence will build up our Christian community today and tomorrow. We wait for the changes that reveal God’s active and continual creation. By remaining in our state of wakefulness, we can be ready to receive anew the person of Jesus, God with us, not as an artifact but as an invitation.

Solution to last week’s crossword puzzle

