



Staying Busy
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Since I last wrote, a lot has happened on the Church calendar. Advent came to a close; we celebrated Christmas; and because of the way our Sundays arrived this year, many of us observed Epiphany (and New Year's Day) this past Sunday. This week, we're already well on our way to Baptism of the Lord Sunday. Is it Lent yet?

Before we advance too far, I want to share one more story from the Christmas season. I offer it in the spirit of Christmas, but also for the new year and the intentions we set.

My four-year-old grandson likes to share what he observes. The week before last, he exclaimed to his mother, "Look Mama! An activity!" My daughter tried to find what he was seeing. "A what?" she asked. She wondered if he'd found something fun to do or maybe a crafting booth. "An activity! There!" he pointed. His finger pointed toward a quiet scene of a baby in a manger, surrounded by adoring parents and some barnyard animals. "A Nativity" for most of us. "An activity" for him. My daughter finally understood.

We could smile at the linguistic mistake of a four-year-old and move on. We could tarry a moment and give credit to his practical wisdom that childbirth and infant care is indeed an activity. Whoever thought the manger scene represented a calm, still night has not been up for 2 am feedings.

The longer I rested with my grandson's gaffe, however, the more power it held. What if we viewed the Nativity as alive with action? Not just in the historical past, but in its meaning for us today. That is, what if the stillness of the manger scene instead propelled us toward a lived gospel, full of action?

Sometimes we need the quiet, calm of God's presence, but my grandson's remark unknowingly challenges us to make our faith active. We search like the shepherds; we pay homage and offer tangible gifts for ministry like the magi; we move out of the familiar like the Holy Family in their flight to Egypt. Viewing the birth of Christ as an activity ensures that we don't simply close out the Christmas season when the tree comes down and the decorations get stored. The Incarnation pushes us into action that isn't seasonal but endures.

So rather than self-help resolutions, perhaps you'll want to set intentions for the new year about how you will be active in your faith. Your intentions might be to pray more regularly or differently, to attend worship or bible study, or to increase your generosity in ministry.

The Presbytery offers another invitation for you this year. In Fresh Impressions, you'll see a new monthly section asking us what we see in 2023. Where are you seeing God's glory and might? How is the Spirit catching your notice? Have you witnessed Christ-like behavior or spaces in which our Christian intervention – activity – is needed? If so, please send us a photo. Throughout the year, we will capture your photos in a collage for the newsletter. Help us see what you see that strengthens your faith and makes it active. Stay busy!