



**Sermon:** December 12, 2021

**Scripture Reading:** Luke 1. 39-56

**The Message:** What to do while we wait?

**[Video Version](#)**



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We have all been there. Sitting waiting in a doctor's office.

I think my mother holds the record for patient waiting. Her eye surgeon, Dr. Giavedoni, at St. Mike's Hospital in Toronto, was in great demand, and she was quite used to waiting while he went off on emergency surgery to save someone's sight. Her longest wait was six hours. My brother and I were frantic, assuming she had come to grief on the way home. But she had been patiently waiting, chatting with others. When we asked if she had been frustrated, she looked surprised and said, "but I made a whole lot of new friends!"

Now how do we wait? (Pull out cell phone)

Imagine Mary's pregnancy ... long, hard, ostracized, no hospital, no midwife, just her husband.

In Advent, there is a lot of waiting.

We wait for Mary and Joseph to make the journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem. We wait for the angels to sing to the shepherds. We wait for the innkeeper to offer a stable. We wait for the shepherds to arrive. We wait for the Magi.

We wait for a birth.

We've been nesting. We've been readying the sanctuary and our homes with decorations; we've been singing carols to the unborn baby.

We're in the waiting room throughout Advent. We pace. We're anxious. There are false starts, and prolonged labour.

Imagine Mary carrying this child but also carrying a secret ... that he's a very special child, the child of God. She would become used to holding things in her heart. She's holding, she's carrying the love of God.

Imagine the birth. No doubt there was blood and water, just like at the cross. No doubt Mary yelled at Joseph, cursed God, and then fell in love with the world when she held her son. All the pain and anguish and cursing disappeared, when she held that little one.

Giving birth changes one.

This birth changes everyone.

How will this birth change you? It changed the shepherds. It changed the Magi. It changed Mary. It changed Joseph.

How will this birth change you?

"We are mothers of Christ when we carry him in our heart," St. Francis of Assisi taught. We give birth to him through holy works, which should shine forth as an example for others.

What to do while we are waiting?

St. Francis imagines that we conceive Christ when we love him with a sincere heart and we give birth to him when we accomplish holy deeds that show Christ to the world.

While Mary was pregnant with Jesus, she took a trip. Like my mother, her waiting was made pleasurable in the company of another. In Mary's case, she went to spend time with her cousin Elizabeth, and in doing so, received a blessing from her, as Elizabeth felt the presence of the Holy Spirit. They waited together and Mary was moved to sing. Luke 1.36-56

She sings of joy in God's favour. She sings of blessing and mercy, strength and the righting of wrong. She sings of the world being turned upside down. She sings of God's promise to Abraham finally being fulfilled.

While Mary was waiting, she sought community, and she proclaimed God's work in the world.

We too are called in Advent to seek out community, for there we will find our blessings. We will find God's promise for our lives. And we too are called to sing of our joy in God's favour, to sing with our voices and the actions of our bodies and the prayers of our souls the promise of God that is given to all people.

The arrival of the Christ child will only move from an historic story to a story for every generation and place as we live out the love and peace and justice that God promises for others. From the passive celebration of the past to the active discovering in our present, the Christ story becomes our story.

We have lots to do while we wait.

When we leave, we are Christ's hands and feet and voice and heart in this dreary, fright-filled world. May you give birth to Christ's love, today and always.