



An Advent Reflection from Pastor Nominating Committee member Gayle Ford

December 2023

Greetings to each of you, my brothers and sisters in Christ,

I am one who loves the Church Calendar with its rhythm of faith and its invitation to experience the arc of God's redemption story throughout the year. Each year as I come into Advent, I find myself cherishing the opportunity to once again settle into the miraculous story of the coming of Jesus. And each year, the theme of "waiting with expectancy" impacts me in a new way, often because of my lived experience throughout the year that has brought me to its December.

You may guess that for me this year, it wasn't hard to discern where my heart responds to the idea of "waiting with expectancy." Around this time a year ago, the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) had just been formed, and for me the **expectancy** part of Advent was front and center. Now, almost a year later, the **waiting** part is trying to jostle for first place ahead of my expectancy.

I wonder if that is happening for you, as well?

Waiting is so very hard, and I feel sure that waiting is even more difficult when you feel that you don't have access to the process. Our committee understands that difficulty, and I do hope that our communications, while certainly not perfect, have given some measure of information to you. The bottom line, for me, is the desire for us to know that we are all in this together. We are all waiting together.

It may well seem like the PNC is not waiting because we are able to take action while everyone else has to wait because the only "action" they can take is prayer. But the truth for us as one Body is that, in Him, the prayers of the congregation ARE action and the "action" of our committee has increasingly become one of prayer and discernment.

I believe our unity is displayed by coming together to assure each other of God's goodness, even as we wait. I believe we can survive without a senior pastor, but we won't survive if we lose our faith in God's goodness, God's timing, and God's deep love for our flock.

To all of you, I want to say how deeply grateful I am for your presence, your gifts, and your faithfulness to our fellowship. Times have not been easy for the Church universal in these past years, nor for us, so my heart warms when I enter any time of worship or fellowship to experience the steadfast faithfulness of those who have chosen to be here.

I hope you will join me this Advent season in waiting well—and with expectancy—for the person God will bring us to be our next senior pastor. Let us encourage one another to remain confident in God's goodness.

With deep gratitude and affection,
Gayle Ford

Psalm 27:13-14: I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.