

God's House on the Move

1 Thessalonians 3:9-13; Luke 21: 25-36

When Karen said that she was going to ask what the first thing was we did in preparation for Advent, my head immediately went to, “Take a deep breath.” *Exhales*. ‘Cause it’s sort of like you have this moment, and we’re launching and from here on out it’s flat out until Boxing Day. And I think that many of us feel that way. And I think it’s unfortunate that we feel that way. That this time that has been set aside of which we speak as a time for preparation. A time to get ready for a big event, and all we can think to do is wear ourselves out.

Now I’ve never been pregnant, so it probably might miss the mark for me to use this example, but I’m thinking that in the nine months that a woman is pregnant, she doesn’t spend the majority of her time rushing from store to store and baking. I mean, I hear things like *nesting*. And again, I only know that from making a space for things in my own home. Nesting around making a home a home. Making a new house a home. In ministry, we tend to move a lot. So I’ve had lots of experience of making a different house into my own home. And it’s a process, and it takes a little time, and you test things out. But it’s a way of preparing to have something enter our lives.

I thought about all that, and then about us having Communion. What are the signs and portents that we see in front of us? What do these things tell us are in the works for us?

In our home, we are great watchers of TV. Have a few series that we follow every week. And we are absolute nutty movie buffs. One of the series that we follow religiously is *Blue Bloods*. Now, *Blue Bloods* is basically a family of cops in New York. One escaped the family business and became a lawyer instead (which doesn’t say she escaped it very much). And I don’t really much care about the crime that they happen to be solving each week. What captures me is the family relationships that unfold each week. Because Grandpa was the police commissioner, Dad is now the police commissioner, two of the sons and one daughter-in-law are police officers. And then there’s the lawyer. And they gather – a good Irish family, by the way – which means they’re from good stock. Not being Irish myself, or anything. They gather every Sunday for family dinner. And if you’re going to miss family dinner, it better be because you’re in the hospital. One Sunday at family dinner, the lawyer’s daughter (so the commissioner’s granddaughter or the former commissioner’s reat-granddaughter), now university-age, is sitting there at the table talking about going to university in San Francisco. This family lives in New York. And they’re talking about the fact that she won’t be there for family dinner. And how that is going to change the dynamic. And she talks about how much she anticipates missing.

Particularly missing the wisdom that is garnered by the rest of the family at family dinner. They talk through everything. Even if they disagree massively, they talk it all out at Sunday dinner. And she is concerned about not having what it will take to get her through. And grandpa says to her: “Nicki, when you leave for San Francisco, remember this. Remember this: remember us. Remember this table. Remember those of us gathered at this table. Think, if you run into a situation, ‘What would we each say to you?’ And if you do, you will never be alone.”

We gather at family dinner, folks. We gather at family dinner so that we might, in fact, be God’s house on the move, in the world, out where there are people who are looking for the kind of hope we might be able to bring them. Not the kind of home that’s found in the Cabbage Patch Doll – oh boy, that dated me, didn’t it? Where did *that* one come from? Let the hope that’s found when we gather something significant and important that contains wisdom and insight and love. Most abundantly, love. So we gather at family dinner today, and we carry with us into the week and the months ahead, a memory of what it means to sit together and share wisdom and share love and have hope. Take a moment, in all of the chaos, to pause. Take a deep breath, and say to one another, “You matter. Thanks for being in my life.” You matter. Amen.