

**CHRISTMAS ISN'T CANCELED - WE'RE JUST WAITING!**  
**ADVENT DEVOTIONAL**

3<sup>rd</sup> Week of Advent – Waiting in Messy Joy

December 19, 2020

Text: Matthew 1:18-25

Meditation:

Last Advent season I was in a messy place in my life. I was in an adversarial relationship with a fellow Christian at St. James. After the latest incident, where I had angrily confronted her with my opposing opinion in a meeting, I wanted to apologize, because I felt ashamed of my behavior. I sought her out at Wednesday night service and sat beside her, seeking forgiveness for this latest outburst. She literally shrank away from me as she responded with; “Do you realize this is the third time you have had to apologize to me?” I was sick at heart because I knew she was right!

After the service, I went home feeling bad about myself with a darkness inside, that can best be described, by what I once read in a book, as “soul pain”. I felt utterly desolate and alone. I asked God for forgiveness and wisdom to turn this situation around. God heard my prayer and planted the idea in my mind, to call and ask if I could sit with her at Christmas Eve service’ as we would both be attending alone. I believe she was totally amazed by my request, but she agreed to this arrangement.

During and after the Christmas Eve service, I began to feel at peace for the first time in a long time. After the service, as we both wished each other “Merry Christmas”, I began to feel joy at the coming of the Christ Child and the beginning of a new and different relationship with my friend in Christ!

1. Have you ever found that acting on “righteous” anger isn’t righteous at all?

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2. Have you experienced the joy and peace of repentance and forgiveness from God?

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Prayer:

My prayer is from one of my favorite hymns:

“Change my heart oh God, make me more like you”. Amen.

