

**“Anticipation” - The Rev. Jennifer Adams**  
**November 28, 2010 – Advent 1A**

Here we are Advent 1, the first day of a new Church year which begins with us looking forward, counting down, anticipating. . . lighting one candle after another until we make it to the celebration of God’s coming to us in Christ. There’s currently a commercial on TV that shows a little girl in anticipatory mode – announcing to her family at various opportune moments that Christmas is coming and how long is left, exactly. At one point she tells her Dad that there are “27 days, 12 hours and 33 seconds left until the big day.” Just so he doesn’t forget. Later she proclaims to her family “15 days, 6 hours and 4 seconds!” or something like that. And then in the final scene, all pajama-d up she says quietly to her brother. . . “only six hours three minutes and 42 seconds!” Now granted, the context is entirely different here, she’s getting her information from a Hallmark ornament, but we also wait; we watch, we anticipate. We have been called to live in a heightened awareness of God’s promised arrival.

Now if you’re like me, you have some questions. I’m good with anticipation, I appreciate the posture of hopefulness and a forward looking faith. But just waiting for “God” is kind of hard to wrap your head around and even harder to fit on an actual calendar, so I want to know more: What exactly is it that we’re waiting for, watching for. . . how exactly does God come? I figure that what we are waiting for effects how we wait and how we watch and how we anticipate, so we have to have to be asking some questions. So as we go about these days, it will be helpful to be mindful of what we know so far:

God comes to us as a baby, as a King, as a Shepherd, as a judge.

In the making of the day and the making of the night; in the presence of the seas and the shining of the stars; in the creation of the winged creatures and the four-legged ones too; in humankind, male and female, there is God.

In the fire, in the cloud, in the Voice from above. On the mountain. In the feast. In the fast. Like an eagle, like a lion, like a leopard, like a bear. Like a mother hen gathering her children, God comes.

Like a thief in the night. Like a woman searching for a coin. Like a Father waiting for his Son to return home again. In the breaking of dawn, in the garden, near the tomb, there is God.

As the Holy One. The Holy Trinity. The Almighty. Giver of Every Good Gift. Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier. Mother, Daughter, Brother, Sister, Friend. As mystery. God comes.

At the table. By the lakeshore. On the cross. In the whirlwind. In the peace. In the prophet. In the peasant, as the King. In the womb of a teen-age virgin whose soul proclaims the favor of the Lord, God comes.

In green pastures, beside still waters. In the valley of the shadow of death. In the midst of those who trouble us. In the newness of life. God comes.

In the music. In the prayer. In the people in the pew. On the boundaries, in the Center and far beyond what we can imagine. God comes.

In the hungry, the homeless, in those in prison. In family, stranger and in those whom we'd call, "enemy." God comes.

In darkness. As light. As silence. As Word. In bread. In absence. In touch. God comes.

In our waking. In our sleeping. In our seeking, in our searching. When we need only to get found. God comes.

And that's only some of what we know, according to Scripture – all of it. Which would tell us that the specifics of time and day and entirely accurate descriptions of how God will look aren't what this is about at all. So often Advent becomes like that Hallmark commercial – counting down every day, every minute and second even though from all accounts we know that God has never arrived on schedule (ours anyway) nor has God ever arrived appearing entirely as expected. The when and the how and the what-will- God-look-like? are so completely up to God, that the possibilities are endless. And maybe knowing that as we begin the season of Advent is enough. Maybe it's even part of the point. God can come at any time at any place, however God wants to come among us. Keep watch, for we do not know when. We do not know how. We simply know that God will. Amen.