

Dear friends:

As I write this letter, I can smell turkey broth cooking on the stove, I see Lucas' gingerbread turkey and I sit at still decorated table from last night's Thanksgiving dinner. I am filled with gratitude for family, friends, a home, plenty of food to eat, relative security and many other tangibles and intangibles. I am grateful for all the blessings that I have. I hope all of us can take that heightened awareness of the Good around us into this next season.

The season of Advent, the season of awaiting the arrival of Jesus, starts Sunday, November 29. We will light candles, seeking the coming of the light to push the darkness away. At least that is what we do in the Northern Hemisphere. Our brothers and sisters in the Southern Hemisphere are in the beginning of summer, as we are near the beginning of winter. Some of them are having water rituals just as we have candle-lighting rituals.

But since we are basically animals, I do believe in rhythms and cycles, the deep pull of biology, tides and seasons, in and out, up and down, work and play and rest. One rhythm I particularly live by is that there is a time for speaking, and a time for falling silent before the One who made us.

Whatever part of the world we live in, we are creatures that enjoy, maybe even need, the rhythm of seasons. As we are part of the world in which the darkness grows stronger, I find beauty in the lighting of the candles. But the coming of light isn't the only thing that the season calls out to us.

Advent and Christmas is a time ready-made for falling silent. Ironically, it's hard to do. Our songs and carols sing loudly about silence. Our prayers and poems pile up tons of words about silence. Christmas concerts and parties and get-togethers, sounds of shopping for gifts, all can make the volume go to the top of the meter.

So, from the person who loves to talk, who makes part of her living with words, who doesn't always fully appreciate silence, I would like to suggest we try something. Let's try to have one minute every day that is completely silent. Immerse yourself in God, in Love, in the Good. I am telling myself (and you too): let's shut our mouth once in a while, and open our spirit.

Falling silent doesn't signal a permanent retreat from a world that needs our voices and action. It is a respectful engagement with that part of our God-given soul that demands a period of active rest and listening, in order to engage again more fully and from a more grounded place.

Our God came to be with us in the person of Jesus. We were already so close--but God wanted us to be able to lay eyes on each other. And God came not first as a walking, talking rabbi, but as an infant. A pre-verbal God, as it were, at least for the first 12-18 months.

That's the God I invite you to spend some time with this Advent and Christmas, everyday. A God who doesn't need carefully chosen words to connect with you, and know you, and love you. A God who knows you need to rest and be silent.

Enough said. Let's hush.

Pastor Lynn

