

Dear Central Friends in Christ,

The day after Halloween, the all-Christmas, all-the-time radio station started with "Mommy got run over by a Reindeer" and the crooning sounds of "Silver Bells." Of course, the halls of Macy's were already decked out. The half-price sales on candy and Halloween costumes were set alongside the wreaths and bells for Christmas.

Once again, our fast-paced, instant messaging, frenzied culture jolts us from one holiday to the next, so much so that our whiplashed calendars almost forget a thanksgiving season of gathering, rest, and thankfulness.

Once again, the church will look odd in waiting to decorate on December 6 with our traditional "Hanging of the Green" service, holding off to sing "Christ is Born!" until Christmas, lingering in the waiting of Advent for a baby to be born.

But that is so much more like a real life with God. We don't jump from party to party, pretending that there isn't a whole lot of 'ordinary' that fills our days. We don't neglect pages of a year's calendar that might have held the grief of lost loved ones, the anguished prayer over the violence and poverty in our own KC neighborhoods, the daily mess and fullness of relationships that aren't as bright and shiny as a polished silver bell.

What we do in church matters. What we do as the Church matters. Our rhythms, schedules, practices, rituals, songs and sermons are God communicating with us another way—a way that orients our lives toward the One who breaks in to it all and puts on flesh and dwells among us in Jesus Christ.



This Advent, be a part of regular disciplines of worship, daily prayer, an Advent study or service opportunity through which God can re-orient your life. Please remember to offer yourself generously through the sharing of your treasures that also re-orient your life and sustains the ministry goals of your church for 2009. Join me and my family in making an Advent commitment to *Hurry Less and Worry Less* this Advent—making room for the true miracle of

Christ to be known and experienced in our lives. Join us on the journey, and I'll look forward to seeing you this week in worship!

In Christ's service with you,
Rev. Amy L. Gearhart, Senior Pastor