

ADVENT WEEK ONE

December 1, 2019

Advent Again

Romans 13:11-14

Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers... Romans 13:11

Advent again. So much has changed since the Advent season of last year; and so much has stayed the same. We continue to learn that time cannot be controlled by clocks or calendars. Nor can it be contained in the seconds, minutes, hours and days that flow by and through us with no stoppage. Time will not be tamed.

Paul says to the Romans, “you know what time it is.” I look at my alarm clock to confirm my sense that it is 6:25 in the morning. “Now is the moment for you to wake from sleep,” he warns. My mother’s voice echoes from my childhood, “Nancy, get up now or you’ll miss the bus!” And I burrow deeper into my pillows, sure I can make it even if I snooze for five more minutes. Paul speaks again, “For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near.”

“That’s what you said last year,” I respond to him. “And every year before that for time immemorial.”

The annual repetition doesn’t make it any less true. Salvation is in fact nearer to us when we are awake and looking for it than when we pull the covers over our heads. I want to see that salvation—that time-transcending, moment-crashing joy of knowing that I belong to Holy Goodness and to my people and that they belong to me. And that the “they” of the previous sentence includes all the people I encounter through time, and all those that I do not. I will miss that salvation if I don’t get up and go look for it. Advent again. Time to look.

Dr. Nancy Claire Pittman

President and

Stephen J. England Associate Professor of the Practice of Ministry