

Live in Hope!

Yesterday I heard this wonderful reading on the radio about the memory of eating Christmas dinner at the “Kids Table.” The author recounted how the children at the “kids table” would share the joys and wonders of what their mornings had been like; telling one another what Santa had brought and what new and wonderful things they would get to experience and play with. The author highlighted the laughter and the joy that they shared, but also talked about the want to move from the kids table to the adult table. As a child I can remember that feeling, that want to be older, that want to take part in the conversations that always seemed so important; the want to do more than what I could as a child. What made this piece on the radio so amazing is that the author then described the year she moved tables. Achieving that great feat of being old enough to sit at the adult table felt so good, like she had made it, but she soon realized that the conversations at the adult table were all centred around politics and current events and that there wasn’t as much joy. As she sat and listened in one ear to the deep adult conversations, through her other ear she could hear the joy and the wonder, the laughter and excitement coming from the kids table; that place she had wanted so badly to graduate from, but now wanted to return to. The piece closed with a comment about the magic of the season reflected in the great joy and wonder found at the kids table on Christmas night.

I think what really grabbed me about that story was the description of the magic in the season. Kids are particularly attentive to that magic and they embrace every single bit of it. Adults struggle with it. Every once and awhile I feel myself being overcome with the joy and the magic of the season, I can feel it bubbling up from somewhere deep within, but it is so often quickly overrun by the worries of the day like paying the bills, picking up that item, making sure I ordered the right size of sweater for the boys, cleaning up the mess, getting all the work done that needs to get done, meeting what feels like the endless deadlines of the season. Soon whatever magic was there, fades away and what originally felt like the “spirit” of the season, now feels like the “work” of the season.

I want to say to you embrace the magic; embrace that wonder and joy, but I also know that is hard to do, so maybe a change of wording might help. The magic of the season is connected to our feelings; it is the excitement and laughter heard at the kids table and what that joy evokes within us. It is the anticipation of what Christmas morning will bring. It is the wonder that the children in our lives have of not being able to sleep out of excitement. It is that feeling that comes over you when your senses experience the season, more so than your brain just thinking it through. It is believing against all odds that the impossible can be possible and the wonder of seeing it come true. That is the magic of the season, but there is another word for that magic that is much more familiar to us all, particularly in the church. The word is *HOPE!*

We have hope, that the seemingly impossible is made possible everyday by God. We have hope that prayer does make a difference. We have hope that the support of our family of faith makes the tough times, less tough. We have hope that our loved ones who are unwell, will be well soon. We hold onto hope every single day. So, I invite you today, and in this season of preparation that we are in, to embrace hope. This advent and Christmas season will be different, but embrace the hope that says it can and will be wonderful and good. Yes, we will not gather with as many of our family members, if at

all, but embrace the hope that even though physically we cannot be together, that we will find meaningful ways to connect. Yes, we may not be able to share in as many of our traditions, or have as many gifts under the trees, or make as big of meals, or create the extravagance of the season that we may be used to, but hang on to the hope that reminds us that we actually do not need of all that and that even without it the true importance of the season will shine brightly in our lives.

Embrace the hope that reminds each and everyone of us and yes, even though things are different, that God still comes into our everyday and brings joy, wonder and peace. That is the magic that we feel and that is the hope that we hold. So rather than being upset that things are so different, rather than complaining that nothing feels the same, find joy in the little things, make new traditions that are simpler, enjoy the company of those who are with you and make every moment as wonderful and as filled with laughter as sharing a meal at the kids table, where worries, concerns and fears are left someplace else.

Live in hope!

Sincerely,

Rev. Adam Hall