

## ~From the Bishop



Dear Siblings in Christ,

A few years back, I was happy to receive a bread machine for Christmas. It takes a long time to make bread; to measure everything just so, to

proof the yeast, to be vigilant about watching it rise, to knead it and knead it again. And then to shape it into loaves and bake it.

But with the bread machine, all that vigilance becomes unnecessary. Now all I have to do is add all the ingredients to the handy-dandy loaf pan and the machine does the watching and the kneading and the shaping and the baking for me. Under four hours later, I have a warm, fragrant, freshly baked golden loaf of bread.

While I love my bread machine, the art of baking bread is lost to it. There is minimal investment of time and energy. There is a limit to the amount and the kinds of bread I can make with my machine. And truthfully, nothing beats the taste and texture of bread made the old fashioned way.

During this Advent season, I invite you to slow down to consider the making of bread, and not just any bread, but God's bread, given to feed a world hungry for the presence of God. Jesus is God's bread of life, living bread from heaven, born in Bethlehem, which means, "House of Bread".

There's a song called The Baker Woman that poetically describes how Jesus is our bread. Listen in at

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y\\_r1RJftJA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y_r1RJftJA)

And if you choose to replace wafers with bread for Advent, there is a communion bread recipe at <https://inside.luthersem.edu/community-care/chapel/>

During this Advent, our scripture readings will proclaim a word about being vigilant and watchful. I think of the time, prior to the gift of the bread machine, that I didn't activate the yeast properly or I left the dough in a room too cold for the leaven to rise. I was left with a cold lump of dough and had to start all over again.

From the gospel of Matthew, we will be exhorted to be prepared for the unexpected, to wait with anticipation, and an uncomfortable word about the consequences of being caught unawares.

This Advent, consider again the fullness of God's plan and God's timing. Just as the world had to wait for its savior, so do we look for Jesus to come to us – in worship, in our efforts in ministry, in the face of the stranger, in the bread and wine of Holy Communion, in our hearts.

There is value in being watchful, patient, vigilant, and hopeful. This Advent, our worship prepares us to consider God's plan of salvation as God prepares the living bread of heaven to feed you and me with the presence of God, not only at the table, but through a relationship of blessing that fills empty hearts and satiates the hunger that only Jesus can satisfy.

The bread is almost ready. Christ comes to us at Christmas and always, to feed us, fill us, and through us, feed the world with a thick slice of God's love, dripping with butter.

May God bless you this Advent and always.

Yours in Christ,

Bishop Katherine Finegan

