

Acts 1:1-11 Waiting

How Good Are You at Waiting?

Depending on the circumstance we wait with anticipation or with dread.

There are the little waits in life, like waiting for the light to turn green. Some people have a hard time waiting for that light. You know who they are as you can see them slightly rolling forward, sometimes even before the other light has turned yellow. You might be that person anticipating the light. The anticipating doesn't change when the light will turn green, but something compels them to let their foot of the break. They cannot wait.

And who of us does not look for the shortest line up whether it be at the grocery store, entry into an event, or a car wash. If you are like me, you will avoid the car wash until there is no line up. Few of us hate nothing more than waiting in line. Sometimes it is because we are in a rush. Mostly, I think we just dislike spending the precious minutes in a day in a line. Something about that just feels wasteful.

We count down the days until an event. With little ones we often count in sleeps, like it is three more sleeps until their birthday, or five more sleeps until we get to go to camp. As we get older one starts to count in days and weeks. For those anticipating the end of the school year, whether students, parents, or teachers, it may almost be down to the count for this year.

We wait and we anticipate. The two seems to go together whether the days are in wait of a joyful celebration or time of year, or when it is appointments, surgery, or even the end of days.

One of the longest and shortest waits can be as people sit at the side of a loved one anticipating...waiting, for that last breath. Sometimes that is a release, always it is difficult. Some of the hardest waiting that happens in life is in hospitals and for all kinds of reasons.

And so often we do not know what we are waiting for. We might have an idea, but not always. I harken back to when I was looking for a call to a congregation for ministry. I had no idea what God had in store for me. I sent out my profile to congregations that I thought would be a good match, even had a few interviews, along with two places that wanted me to come and be their minister, but none of those stuck until I got a call from the interim moderator of St. Andrew's back in 2013. I hadn't even applied or considered St. Andrew's, but the moment I came here I knew why nothing else had stuck. This was the place I had been waiting for without even knowing it.

But I have waited for many things over my life time, paychecks, children, vacations, and graduations. The intent here is to have you think about those times in your life that you waited. Did you wait with eager anticipation, with dread, or with indifference? In your waiting did you actively plan for what was next, like pack your suitcase in anticipation of a trip to the hospital or to the airport? If you are married, it is likely that you spent a whole lot of time preparing for, waiting for, your wedding day.

Waiting. Waiting for what is next. Waiting.

How we wait and what we are waiting for determines a lot for us. Interestingly enough we can wait with both joyful anticipating and fear at the same time. Particularly when we are waiting for something big. Fear, joy, hope, and all kinds of other emotions might play into how we are waiting. Things that we know are going to change how we experience and live in the world, whether good or bad, are particularly difficult to wait for.

Today we heard read the very first verses from the Book of Acts and it signals a time of waiting. This reading reiterates what was written at the end of the Gospel of Luke where we read...

⁴⁴ Then [Jesus] said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶ and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day ⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised, so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

⁵⁰ Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. ⁵¹ While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. ⁵² And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, ⁵³ and they were continually in the temple blessing God.¹

Acts picks up the storyline that ended in the Gospel of Luke, with Jesus summarizing all of his instructions and then telling them to go back to Jerusalem and wait. Wait for the promise of the Father, wait for the Holy Spirit to come upon them.

In between times seem to be difficult for us human beings, the waiting for something to happen. In this case they had seen what the power of the Holy Spirit looked like when it descended on Jesus and the power that he had to heal, teach, and lead. But what does

¹ All scripture quotations taken from *New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition*. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

that look like for the ordinary person? How is that Holy Spirit going to change each person, change those who are touched by it? At this point all they could do was wait.

Pastor and teacher David Lose refers to this time of waiting as an interlude. He writes, "This, as it turns out, is also an important interlude, as they are being prepared for life after Jesus' ascension and their changed role from disciples (students and followers) to apostles (messengers, heralds, and leaders)."² He goes on to say that these are "times of preparation, the pause for refreshment and renewal before the invitation to walk across another threshold, start a new adventure, or cross a boundary into unfamiliar but nevertheless God-beloved territory."³

It is not to say that rest, waiting, times of being refreshed, are not something in and of themselves, but that in those times we can also attend to what God is up to in our lives. We can reflect, learn, observe, question. We can still play, pray, laugh, cry, hurt, rejoice, grieve, that and all the various ways we spend time waiting, transitioning, or resting. But waiting on God, questioning what God has in store, taking time to ponder, to wait for direction, to anticipate, all of this does, and can happen, day to day or in undeniable times of waiting in our lives.

And recognizing that this is about what God is doing in your life is so helpful. We can do this as individuals, as couples, families, or in a group such as this congregation. We went through this when we did our New Beginnings work. It was an active time of waiting...a time of discernment. We didn't really know what we were waiting for until we were there, but we took time to meet, to discuss, to question, to pray, to discern, and to be curious. We continue that even now.

Yes, we have found ourselves directed and having direction, but that work of waiting continues. There were many areas that we identified back in 2021-22 of where we hoped God was leading us and though we have accomplished much and changed so much, we continue to have to wait for the next moment, the next thing we are now able to take on whether it be in the work of relationship building or the work of keeping this place in good repair. This place where we do the relationship building. We do it prayerfully. We do it with anticipation, with hope, and with some trepidation.

The direction is not always clear, for our work here, and for our individual lives, but one thing that God promised is to always be present to, for, and with us in the power of the Holy Spirit. Unlike the apostles and believers, we don't have to wait for the Holy Spirit to be sent. The Holy Spirit is already at work in the world and, when we pay attention, we can see and feel the Holy Spirit at work in, through, and with us.

One might do well to reflect on whether the time they are going through in their lives is a time that God is calling them to wait or to act. Is it a time of active waiting? Of expectant

² David Lose. [Easter 7 A – Important Interludes | ...In the Meantime](#) Accessed May 16, 2026.

³ Ibid.

hope and curiosity for what will be next? And what do you do with that time? How do you live into it?

How you answer this is for you to discern. How we as a congregation live into times of waiting is something we do together in worship and in our work. In our times of meeting and times of praying. Our times of learning and our times of fellowship.

Whatever it is, it is a time for God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to move in, with and through us, preparing us for how we live in the world. All of this is in accordance with how Jesus lived in the world, with care for those who were vulnerable. As the is written by the prophet Micah 8:6

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.

If you are living into this, waiting on God, and living with love, you can be sure you will figure it out. None of us do any of this perfectly, but we can do it faithfully and compassionately. Thanks be to God for the times of waiting, of preparation, and of rest, as we lean into what God is doing in us and in the world. Amen.