

ARE WE THERE YET?

When our children were little, “are we there yet” was a frequent question in the car. They were always good travelers on trips but on trips to special places like Cedar Point they would grow impatient. I thought about this cry, “Are we there yet?” when thinking about the pandemic. It seems like an exceptionally long time since March. Unfortunately, when looking for the end of Covid as our destination, we are not there yet. When thinking about Christmas, it seems the time is going by so rapidly and I do not know why I feel so rushed. It will be a quiet day, our Son and Daughter-in-law will stop by, but we probably will not see any of the others. Their Christmas gifts are wrapped but will not be opened until 2021. We want to be happy; it is Christmas! The Christ child is coming! But it is supposed to be a time of gathering, a time for hymns, a time to rejoice with family and friends. We will miss much of that this year. It must not have been a good time for Mary and Joseph either. Mary was due any day, but they were required to go to Bethlehem for the census. That must have been a hard journey. Then they had no place to stay, the town was crowded with people and no rooms available. So, they took shelter in a Manger, a place for animals. Did Mary and Joseph say, “Are we there yet?” along the journey? I think we have had about 3 years of 2020, but a new year is coming and a savior, whose birth we will celebrate, albeit quietly without our hymns of praise sung with fervor, without our cries of “Merry Christmas” as we meet in church, without our lighted candles lifted as we sing Silent Night, Holy Night. It was a hard journey for Mary and Joseph, and it ended with praise and thanksgiving in a Manger and brought us a Savior. 2020 and the Pandemic will end and next year we will, God willing, once again join to celebrate the holiest of days. We will say “remember when” and say a prayer of thanks and gratitude to God who brought us through.

Isaiah 41:10 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again. Rejoice!

Lord we thank you for the gift of a Savior on Christmas day! May we celebrate the birth and pray for peace and the ending of the virus in our world. Be with those who mourn the loss of loved ones this Christmas, those who are alone and isolated, those who are ill and afraid, those who are separated from loved ones. Be with our Pastor, bless his ministry and be with his family. Be with our staff and leaders, bless them. May these days that separate us from each other only draw us closer to you, our God and Savior. In the name of Jesus, whose birth we celebrate, Amen.

Grace Epperson