

For a month now you've been staring at this blue banner draped across the altar proclaiming "wait for it!" You've seen an illustration of the Hamilton star combined with a nativity silhouette. Until today, you have not had a chance to listen to the beautiful song from the musical Hamilton- "Wait for It," that inspired this whole Advent series on waiting. Now, on Advent 4, the wait is over. But first, I want to tell you a bit about the song you're about to hear.

It's being sung by Aaron Burr: a young lawyer, smart, with some privilege. He's chosen to throw his influence in with the patriots, who are urging for a separation from England, an American Independence. Some patriots want to see change happening very quickly. They are throwing tea in the sea and stealing British cannons. Others take a more patient, measured approach. Burr is one of those, but he too is irritated by people like Alexander Hamilton who seem to be taking the short cut to the top.

We're joining the song about a minute in, the slow and calm melody has started to build in intensity.

[\[show clip\]](#)

"I am **the one thing** in life I can control."

Wow. Yup.

We do a lot of waiting, and so much of what we wait for is **not in our control**. Test results take time to process, no matter how quickly we'd like answers. The package from Amazon will arrive when it arrives. And no matter how many times they ask, 7:00 a.m. Christmas morning is still governed by the clock . . . about 21 and a half hours from now. My kids can't change that.

Psalms 13, 94 and the prophet Habakkuk are among the many who have lamented, cried out, "How long O Lord!" How long is this wait going to be? Why is it taking so long? Have you abandoned your people forever?

A lot of waiting is not in our control and **we wish and hope and pray** God would do something about it.

I've been doing a lot of wishing and hoping this week, because, folks, this Advent waiting isn't just about counting down the days until Christmas. It's also about waiting for the coming Kingdom of God . . . that day when "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." We pray it every week. In Advent we are reminded that God's work is not complete, that we are still waiting for the New Heaven and New Earth.

Mary paints a picture of that new heaven and new earth in Luke chapter 1. She goes to visit her cousin Elizabeth, also pregnant, and talk to a listening ear about her situation. Mary's already told God, yes, let it be with me according to your word, but naturally, the girl's got some concerns. Hanging out with Elizabeth for a while, Mary eventually claims her place in this big picture story of the work God is doing in her and through her.

Visiting Elizabeth and really claiming her place in the resistance, that's when we hear Mary sing, we call it the Magnificat, of a "world turned upside down" (that's another Hamilton reference), where

God has brought down the mighty from their thrones  
and exalted those of humble estate;

and

he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich he has sent away empty.

We hear Mary sing of this world, power flipped upside down,

I hear this and my heart breaks with the new set of tax laws, favoring the wealthy and cutting programs for the poor.

How long, O Lord.

I am sick of waiting when some weeks we seem to be moving away from the better world.

Except it's Advent and I refuse to give up hope. Even with the Herods in the world clinging to their power.

And so I look to Mary— poor, vulnerable, scared— and I try to figure out how it is possible that she’s singing this song of joy, of hope.

**That’s what faith is-** it’s singing this song of joy, this song of a world turned upside down, this song of God’s justice, even when—especially when— it looks like her justice is far off.

Mary’s singing resistance. She’s refusing to be quiet. She’s singing her faith that God’s not done here yet, God’s still got work to do.

And rather than sit on the sidelines, wondering “when, how long,” Mary sings. She joins in, she says yes, again and again. Every bump on the road to Bethlehem, riding on a donkey, huge belly in front of her, she doesn’t quit. She knows God’s in this.

It’s active waiting. Or, as Aaron Burr sang, “I am not standing still, I’m lying in wait.”

Are we? As we wait for God’s Kingdom to come, are we sitting on the sidelines, or are we echoing the words of Mary “yes God, *let be with me according to your word.*”

It’s hard. That’s why I bought this sign a few years ago. [I held up a large glittery sign, in pretty script, “Believe in the Miracle.”] Sometimes God’s work is sooooooo sllllooow. But I have this sign, to remind myself on those days, I believe in the miracle. I believe in hope. I believe in thy kingdom come, a better world, God’s justice here. Power upside down.

You may not be waiting for a better world. You may be waiting for January scans to see how the tumors are looking. You may be waiting for a new job, or news of a family member who’s dropped out of the picture just before the holidays. You may even be waiting for God to break into your life in a bold new way, give you a new call. Don’t stand still. Live. Wrap presents. Sing. Hug your friends.

One of the last scenes in *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas* takes this same defiant hope and faith we see in Mary saying yes. Remember the Grinch?

But this... this sound wasn't sad. Why... this sound sounded glad. Every Who down in Whoville, the tall and the small, was singing, without *\*any\** presents at all! He hadn't stopped Christmas from coming, it *\*came\**! Somehow or other... it came just the same. Just like God’s justice, it will come, Thy Kingdom will come.

So we wait, actively.

[after this we shared in a confession from Ann Siddel

Our souls magnify the Lord,  
and our spirits rejoice in God our Saviour,  
for he looks with favour upon us  
and sees our unrealized potential.

In the tradition of Mary,  
and all who have said “yes” to God,  
we stand here today,  
to add our assent to theirs.

Like Mary, we feel overwhelmed;  
we wonder if we are worthy, or capable,  
of following the calling.  
Like Mary, we have our questions  
and we will not be afraid to ask them.

Like Mary, we will hear and ponder  
the assurance that God will empower us.  
Like Mary we will strive to say -  
"Let it be with us according to your will."

To whatever God is inviting of us  
at this time in our lives,  
and relying on God's grace,  
we say "yes."

~ written by Ann Siddall, and posted on the **Stillpoint Spirituality Centre and Faith Community** website. <http://stillpointsa.org.au/prayer/prayers-and-liturgies/>  
The benediction was based on a quote Barack Obama and Martin Luther King Jr. favored, a metaphor dating back to 1810, the moral arc of the universe is long, but it bends toward justice.