**Reflection for Monday, November 27, 2023**



I’ve developed a different kind of relationship to the holidays over the past four years. That’s because my local family (husband, son, and self) have occupations that don’t necessarily lead to days off on holidays.

Last Christmas, you may remember, was on a Sunday, so I got up and came to lead the Sunday service (perhaps slightly bleary-eyed after our Christmas Eve service), Randy went off to drive a bus, and my son Wilson reported for duty at his fire station.

It turns out that Sunday worship on Christmas day, when a lot of people are home opening presents, is intimate and wonderful. I didn’t know quite a few of the few people who came to church that day—they just happened to be in town. I offered the shortest of sermons, and David took requests for Christmas Carols.

This Thanksgiving, though, the calendar was on our side: Randy currently has Thursdays off! Then my son Wilson called and said that he was on duty on Thursday, but that his company was making Thanksgiving dinner with another company, and would we want to come join them at the fire station?

I was very enthusiastic about this. I called my mother, who is always up for an adventure, and told her our plans: “Oooh, I wish I could go,” she said.

So on Thursday, Randy and I drove down to Hayward where, unbelievably, our dinner was not interrupted by any emergencies. I was invited to offer grace, and I was glad to do so. There was plenty of turkey, but also “burnt ends” of ribs. No green beans, salad, sweet potatoes, gravy, or pies. But there were collard greens and the best cinnamon buns I’ve ever had in my life. We ended the meal with a toast: Martinelli’s sparkling apple juice. They were on duty, after all.

All of which is to say, that it wasn’t a traditional Thanksgiving, but I loved the humor, the good spirits, and having warm cinnamon buns for dessert. Best of all was the miracle of first responders not having to respond to anything but a good meal. I give thanks for the togetherness we experienced, and hope you found your own version of good company and good spirits.

Gifts come from unexpected places. Let’s go forth into Advent, preparing for God’s presence. Here’s a toast to anticipatory gratitude!

In faith,

Elizabeth

**Announcements**

**Sunday December 3, starting at 4 p.m., we will be having our annual Advent Workshop! Join us for crafts, food, and carols!**

**Our first Advent Wednesday will be a Taize Service at 7 p.m. on December 6, in the sanctuary. We will be joining with the Good Table for this meditative musical service. We hope you can join us!**