The hike from Holden Village to Hart Lake in the Cascade Mountains of Washington is about 4.5 miles each way. It’s a great introductory hike because the first 4 miles are basically flat...meandering through forests next to a gushing creek at the base of railroad creek valley. In the last half mile, the hike climbs about 600 feet to the pristine, crystal jewel called Hart Lake. Hikers do well to know that when they get to the intensity of the climb they’re almost there. I’m telling you this story because I believe it applies to semesters, too. When the climb get’s steep, remember you’re almost there.

Our friend, Maggie, was a very precocious third or fourth grader when she described the hike: “The longness of the flatness helps the shortness of the upness.” This is our mantra for the morning. The longness of the flatness helps the shortness of the upness. This also applies to semesters. And I think I hear Peter saying it applies to God.

You see Peter’s letter speaks insightfully about the power of God as both slow and immediate. Listen, “The Lord is not slow about his promises as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but all come to repentance.

Then the very next statement is “The day of the Lord will come like a thief.” This sermon is not about whether the power of God is sudden or slow; about whether our coming to faith is flat or up. . .It’s rather to think about the relationship between the long and slow and flat and arduous with the sudden, immediate, urgent. Because life is both. . . and believing in Jesus is both.

Pr. Brian Konkol posted an article in *Sojourners* recently call *A Season of Urgent Patience*. 
We recognize that urgency and patience should not be viewed as opposing forces, but rather, they exist as connected companions. In other words, there are moments when immediate action is essential to prevent lasting harm, yet urgency without patience leads to short-sightedness, impulsiveness, rashness, and even disaster. On the other hand, patience without urgency can lead to complacency, procrastination, lack of action, and of course, disaster. And so, whether it is national policy decisions or the complexities of daily life choices, we live within the dual tensions of urgency and patience, and we strive for a faithful fusion of both characteristics.

This letter attributed to Peter is an important witness from early in the second century when the people’s expectation that Jesus’ imminent return simply wasn’t happening. On the other hand the writer makes clear that slowness is not for the sake of complacency or indifference, but for a turning Peter calls repentance. This is a turning toward God And sometimes these turnings are very abrupt and sometime not.

Konkol’s point is that the longness of the flatness will help us in the shortness of the upness.

urgency is required in light of pressing concerns, an overindulgence of immediacy also contains a long list of shortcomings. Discipline and patience are required to bring forth intellectual depth, balanced consideration, and lasting compassion.

As I read his article I thought about the Boe Forum and Jared Cohen’s assertion that technology will make it easier to start revolutions, but harder to complete them. Almost anyone can create a flashmob, but gathering a million people in protest is not the same thing as the long, slow, arduous work of uniting them in justice or peace.

In Advent the abiding symbol of this is pregnancy. It will be a season when with Mary, the world and we become pregnant with God. And learn to wait. . . because the long, slow growth of gestation is essential to the promised new life. But pregnancy also teaches us about urgency—at the onset of labor no matter the day or time or prior commitments you drop everything and pay attention.

I suppose I most want to say God, for whom a thousand years are like a day, is in the long and slow and flat. My fear is the neglect of attentiveness or appreciation
for what may seem drab and drear prevents us from recognizing God in the bold and dramatic. I fear that the miracle tradition has so taken over our consciousness that we miss God in the slow and flat. If we miss God in the slow, we won’t see God in the bold or dramatic either. I notice that Jesus was very taken with seeds and soil, with trees and fruit, with words that take a long time to understand with journeys that are long and challenging. I love Peter for holding before us the gifts of slowness and patience. And whether you’re cooking stew or baking bread, memorizing a poem or observing a landscape, falling in love, healing, growing into a vocation or grieving—don’t diminish the steady power of days that feel like a thousand years.

But I also want to recognize that we can get caught in thinking about things, preparing to act, balanced consideration, a façade of patience that is in fact complacency. I like to say as long as people are breathing it’s not an emergency. But if someone isn’t breathing it is urgent. And any conviction worth anything says it’s NOT time to take a CPR class or search the internet or look for someone to delegate. It’s time to breathe with and for your neighbor.

While I think social justice and advocacy often fail in unsustainable urgency, I know good intentions and thinking also fail in inaction.

It will be a sermon for another day: there are those read these words in II Peter about fire and decide it’s good to burn the earth up. Having read it out loud, I need to say this is insane and irresponsible and I’ll be happy to talk it through with you interpretively. If we are not able to breathe, we have an emergency. And it is time to be attentive to it. For all my appreciation of God’s patience and persistence, it is time to turn from the insanity of consuming and disposing and polluting and trashing. Then again this turning will only be sustained if we lean into long and slow work of seeing life and its meaning differently. I have a daughter who is a teaching ecologist. Her first passion is not that children learn to recycle. Her first passion is that students learn to love the earth.

A few of you have asked me what Susan and I have learned in the debacle of her injury this fall. We’ve learned a few things about sudden turns. We’ve learned a lot about long, slow patience in healing. But the most important thing we have learned may well be to not wait until one is in crisis to be connected to a community. There are lots of things about grounding community that are long and flat, hard and not very exciting. But when you get to the steepness of the upness, there is no substitute for people around you.
Or maybe you were hoping I’d just talk about love, so I shall. To say urgent patience is to say that in love—God’s love, neighbor love, or romantic love—- one cannot separate the urgency of passion from long, slow, vulnerable conversations. The letter of Peter promises God’s patience and God’s urgency and calls us to live toward both. And Advent is an invitation to practice the walk.
Holy Communion
Wednesday, November 28, 2012

Prelude “There is No Rose” by Z. Randall Stroop, arr. Louke

Welcome/Announcements
Call to Worship
L: Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
C: And blessed be his kingdom, now and forever. Amen.
L: Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid. Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your Holy Name; through Christ our Lord.
C: Amen.

Hymn “Wake, Awake” ELW #436, vs. 1

Scripture II Peter 3:8-13

Sermon Pr. Paul

Hymn “Wake, Awake” ELW #436, vs. 2

Holy Communion
L: The Lord be with you.
C: And also with you.
L: Lift up your hearts.
C: We lift them to the Lord.
L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
C: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

The celebrant proceeds with the Eucharistic Prayer.
L: …Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angel and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who forever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:
C: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.
L: …Therefore according to his command, O Father,
C: We remember his death, we proclaim his resurrection, we await his coming in glory;
L: …And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us we are bold to say,
C: Our Father, who art in heaven…

The celebrant breaks the consecrated Bread. A period of silence is kept.

L: Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us:
C: Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

Communion Distribution “In Remembrance” by Buryl Red, arr. Kile Flute Choir
Prayer after Communion L: Let us pray
C: Eternal God, Heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The celebrant offers a blessing.

Dismissal
L: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude “Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming” Michael Praetorius, arr. Pearce

Flute Choir, Dir. Emily Anderson

CAMPUS MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONCERT! - The best way to spread Christmas Cheer is singing loud for all to hear! The Sioux Falls Arena will be hosting "The Story Tour" on December 3rd, at 7:00! The Story Tour features Casting Crowns lead singer/songwriter Mark Hall, Jeremy Camp, Natalie Grant, Matthew West, Nichole Nordeman, Selah, and Rawrsvnt. The Story Tour is a night full of performances of Christmas carols and a musical journey from Genesis to Revelations! Come take a break from the stresses of approaching finals and enjoy a night filled with music, worship, and inspiring speakers! Contact Ali Ramsley apramsley11@ole.augie.edu for more information!

COLLEGE RETREAT AT NESODAK - Love camp? Looking for an opportunity to get away? Come to NeSoDak Bible Camp for a retreat designed just for college students, January 19-20. Cost is only $30. Contact Brooke DeJong (bmdejong09@ole.augie.edu) or Jenna Frink (jlfrink12@ole.augie.edu) for more information. Deadline is January 11.

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CHAPEL SCHEDULE
Fri., 30th - Morning Worship, 10 am - Thad Titze, Sr. Spkr.; Assoc, Mtg.
Sun., 2nd - Morning Worship, 11 am - Pr. Ann
Mon., 3rd - Taize Prayer, 10 am
Tues., 4th - Catholic Mass, 10 am
Wed., 5th - Holy Communion, 10 am - Scott Parsons, Art
Holy Communion

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