

A Reflection For Today

HopeForNiagara.org



By: Rev. Wendy Depew Partelow

Rev. Wendy Depew Partelow is a retired pastor and serves on the American Baptist Churches of New York State Board of Missions.

Waiting

I have often pondered this part of the Noah story, because we tend to remember that the animals were gathered “two by two” (Genesis 7:9), and that it rained for “forty days and forty nights,” (Genesis 7:12). We remember the sign of God’s everlasting covenant: “the bow...in the clouds.” (Genesis 9:14) But do we remember the time between when it rained and the establishing of the covenant, the time of patiently waiting on God?



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So, it rained for forty days and nights, which must have been challenging with all those animals in the ark. And you are cooped up with your family, your kids, and their wives; and you are all in this together. There must have been disagreements, arguments, and differences of opinion about how to proceed. But Noah was faithful and patient, waiting for God to speak and obedient to God’s word.

Even after it rained for forty days and nights, “the waters actually swelled on the earth for 150 days!!!” (Genesis 7:24) But God remembered Noah... I like that the chapter begins this way, because at some point Noah must have wondered if God had simply forgotten about them. Wouldn’t you? After a deluge of rain for forty days and then the waters continuing to rise for another 150?!

But then, just as they may have totally given up on God, they feel a breeze. It is like the breath of God at the beginning of creation, sweeping over the face of the

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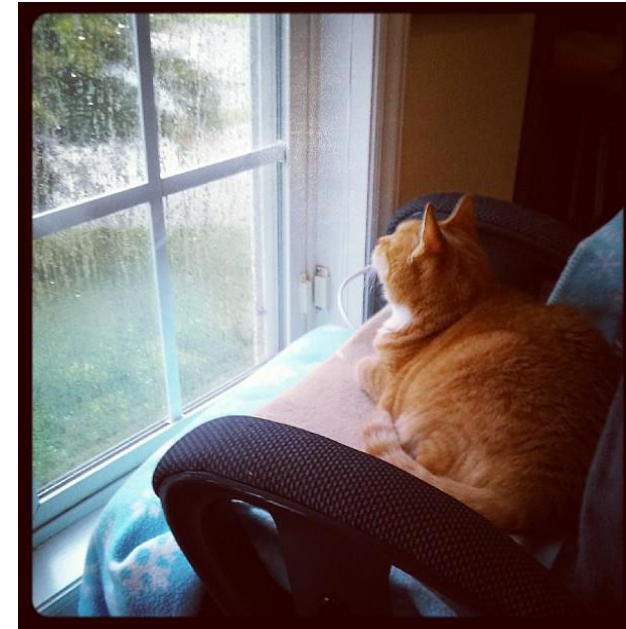


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But then, just as they may have totally given up on God, they feel a breeze. It is like the breath of God at the beginning of creation, sweeping over the face of the waters (Gen. 1:2) , and the waters gradually receded from the earth. Then in the

seventh month on the seventeenth day of the month - fully six months after the rain started - they land on the mountains of Ararat. Then they have to wait three more months before the tops of the mountains begin to appear! But wait there's more, because it is another couple of months before it is evident to Noah that the waters have dried up from the earth.

When Noah entered the ark, Noah was 600 years and 2 months old. Noah was 601 years and 1 month old by the time he saw that the earth had dried up. Then and only then did Noah uncover the ark and let in the fresh air and sunshine. But even then, Noah does not come out of the ark. It will be two more months before God says to Noah, "Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you." (Gen. 8:16) And send out the animals to be fruitful and multiply.

Noah waits for God's word. No matter how hard it gets, or how much he wants to move forward with his life, or how much the other people in the ark nag him to get on with life - Noah waits on God.

Noah is a good example for us of waiting. We see the world and all of the good and bad that still exists here, and we get impatient. We want to do something but we're not sure what will help. Yet with each season of Advent comes a new season of hopefulness in waiting and trusting that God is, indeed, in control.

The Psalmist cries: "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side...the flood would have swept us away, the torrent would have gone over us [and we would have been consumed by the raging waters.]...Blessed be the Lord...Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth." (from Psalm 124) We hope in God, and wait with patience for the revealing of the Son of God. Amen.

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November 28, 2022

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