

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12

Psalm 85, Zephaniah 3:14–20

I remember, pregnant with my twin daughters, being awakened by a particularly vigorous round of kicking by one of them. Feeling her jab my ribs, I was struck that the two of them never knew a moment apart. Since conception, they had always been nestled snugly next to one another, tucked under my ribs, both hearing the steady beat of my heart. When one kicked, the other moved. When one hiccupped, the other bounced in rhythm.

Advent reminds me of this strange, uncomfortable, miraculous experience of three-bodies-in-one. It reminds me of Mary—a teenage mother, a promise from an angel, an unborn child nestled under her beating heart, kicking her ribs, embodied in her body.

Zephaniah wrote, “The Lord is in your midst.” (Zephaniah 3:17) During Advent we know ours is not a distant deity. Our God is as close as a baby waiting to be born is to his mother. Like those twins in my belly keeping me up at night, there is never a moment God is apart from us; he is in our midst. Emmanuel.

When our Savior was born, there was no celebration or exuberant singing. There was a barn, a manger, a swaddled baby, and lowly shepherds in the dead of night. Imagine this scene, not as a nativity pageant but as a strange backdrop for a mother to soothe her newborn infant and welcome her savior. As a mother quiets her baby with her love, so will the God in our midst quiet us with his love. Even in a world that offers no peace, schedules filled with busyness, and days where we often distance ourselves from God, he remains in our midst. While we wait amidst this strange backdrop, he promises to quiet us with his love.

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