

Gifts already received

By [Christine Chakoian](#)

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Patience is not one of my virtues, as those closest to me know. I want answers now, clarity now, unresolved issues settled now, anxiety lifted now. Waiting "with patience" in our eschatological hope, as Paul [directs us elsewhere](#), is not my strong suit.

My impatience is exacerbated by the pressures of time, and few times are as frenetic as the start of Advent. The demands of decorating the house and preparing Christmas Eve services, buying presents and attending numerous special events, sending cards and making special visits to the homebound...they become impossible. I feel desperately inadequate to do the basic things expected of me, a feeling that in turn threatens to distract me from the real point of the season.

The turnover between Thanksgiving and Advent is intense. But I've found that the more fully I'm able to celebrate Thanksgiving's gratitude for abundance, the more likely I am to focus clearly on the Christmas hope of Christ's coming. So, although it's a fluke of our secular calendar, the confluence of both holidays together is richer than either of them is on its own.

So maybe I shouldn't worry that the first Sunday of Advent finds my home in a colossal mess, with Thanksgiving gourds and pumpkins still sitting out while Christmas decorations are hauled up from the basement. One wreath on the door comes down and another goes up; the orange and brown tablecloth gets pulled off and the red and green one spread out. It looks confused and chaotic. Maybe I should think of it this way instead: as a reminder that I have already received every gift from God that I need, as I wait for the revealing of the Lord Jesus Christ.