

Why I love to say “Happy Holidays”

By [Carol Howard Merritt](#)

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It's almost Christmas. And do you know what that means? It's time for the majority religion in our country to trot out our annual imaginary martyrdoms.

For our progressive liturgical friends, they are upset because people want to sing about the birth of Christ *before* the birth of Christ.

I get it. I understand the beauty and depth of waiting in our culture of instant gratification. I know that Advent gives space for the blue Christmas that lingers ¼ inch below our holiday cheer.

But do we have to get grumpy about it? I mean, when else do people actually want to sing hymns any more? This one time out of the year when men, women, and children are itching to break out the hymnbook and we slap their hands. I'm kind of sad that we don't go Christmas caroling to our homebound friends. We wait until everyone is out of town to have any church carol sings. Plus, let's face it. It's worship planning nightmare. We have three good Advent hymns that we need to stretch out over four weeks, and countless Carols that we have one or maybe two Sundays to sing.

I will be mocked and punished in the comment section. My facebook page will fill with voices who declare that I'm not really Presbyterian. But I'm still holding strong on this one. I refuse to be Carol the carol control-freak. I just let people sing the hymns.

For our conservative friends, they host our annual “War on Christmas.” The soldiers in this war include people who punch [Salvation Army volunteers](#) because they say “Happy Holidays” instead of “Merry Christmas.”

That's right. Because that's just what little baby Jesus would want.

I've been looking at the etymology of the word “holiday” and it's beautiful. It, of course, comes from “holy day.” But it's more than that. It hearkens a hope of Sabbath. There is also a sense of wholeness and healing in the word. What could be a lovelier greeting?

So, as we anticipate the birth of Christ, I hope you have a chance to sing a few carols and have a very happy holiday.