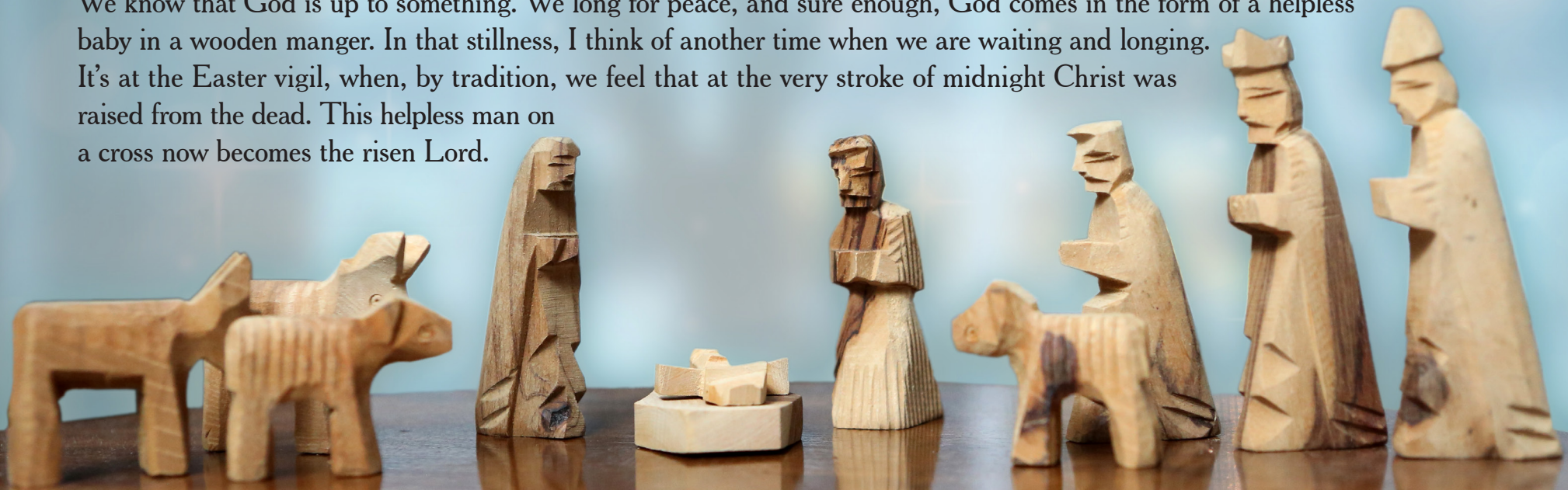


On Christmas Eve there always comes a time when everything is finally still. After all the preparations and Christmas pageants, after all of the rushing, it's wonderful just to settle into that stillness and have a chance to think about the *miracle of Advent and Christmas*.

For me that came after the 11 o'clock candlelight service and after going home. With my husband and children in bed, I could think and settle into that stillness and marvel at the miracle that had happened.

We know that God is up to something. We long for peace, and sure enough, God comes in the form of a helpless baby in a wooden manger. In that stillness, I think of another time when we are waiting and longing. It's at the Easter vigil, when, by tradition, we feel that at the very stroke of midnight Christ was raised from the dead. This helpless man on a cross now becomes the risen Lord.



I hope and pray, dear church, that in this season of Advent and Christmas you will find time for stillness, find time to sense the expectation and the longing, but also to celebrate the *miracle of God's love* that has come to us in the form of a tiny baby who grows to be a human being who gives his life for us, that we might have life.

Merry Christmas, dear church.

Elizabeth A. Eaton

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.