

**Devotion for Week of November 6, 2022**  
**Rev. Jeanne Simpson**

I've been thinking about silence a lot lately. It's not something I'm particularly good at, and you all know it. I'm a chatterbox and always have been. Sometimes Jim tells me I'm creating "clutter," especially when I'm driving and commenting on this beautiful red tree here and that beautiful yellow tree there. I'm trying to be more mindful of the need for silence, and the healthy benefits of silence. When I'm silent, I can focus more – on the road, on what I'm studying, and on praying. I used to think that if there was silence in the room, that was a bad thing, and I would jump in to fix it. I still do that, way too many times. But I'm trying to fix that.

For thousands of years, believers have worried when God is silent and doesn't answer them – has God forgotten them? I'm reminded of the story of Elijah in 1 Kings 19. Elijah was discouraged because Jezebel and Ahaz were trying to kill him, so he went into a cave and spent the night. God came to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" And he told God about how he was constantly being persecuted and all the other prophets had been killed – he was the only one left. So God said, "Go out, and stand on the mountain before the Lord." The text says that "behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still, small voice. So it was, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice came to him, and said, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?'" Elijah repeated the same complaint he had stated to God earlier, and this time God told him what to do. The voice of God wasn't in the wind, or earthquake, or fire. It was in a still, small voice. Elijah just had to listen for it.

For 400 years after Malachi, there was silence from God's prophets, until the cry of a baby in a borrowed shed broke the stillness of the night, and then the people of God knew they were not alone anymore. As we approach Advent, let us remember that God always breaks the silence with reassurance and news of great joy.

*Jeanne*