The Potter’s Work Continues

By: Courtney Hill Gulbro

Read: Isaiah 64: 8

*Yet, O Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter;*

*we are all the work of your hand.*

I was seven and thought Christmas morning would never come. We cut the cedar Christmas tree from a friend’s farm in early December and decorated it with familiar ornaments. In the White Christmas performance at church I wore my white robe and garland halo, barely able to contain my excitement as we sang carols and told of the birth of Jesus. On Christmas Eve my sisters and I nestled on the sofa as Daddy read a favorite Christmas story before Mama hurried us off to bed. It was almost time! But at daylight on Christmas morning there was more waiting. We girls stayed in our rooms until Daddy set up the 8mm camera on a tripod in the living room and arranged the bright lights just right, then by age we dutifully lined up in the front hall. My older sister was first. Next in line I squirmed, eager for my turn to go in and see what Santa had brought, and for the day’s festivities to commence. My younger sister had the longest wait, but soon we were all there, toys in motion, wrapping paper piled around us. My parents and grandparents sipped coffee and watched our organized chaos, then reminded us of the reason for it all.

Growing up there was so much to wait for – summer breaks, or my birthday, or getting my driver’s license. In school I couldn’t wait to read the next book or learn how to do long division. Then I couldn’t wait to graduate and move on to the next step. I was being formed, clay in the hands of the Potter who was using the people in my life and the mistakes and triumphs of my day-to-day endeavors to shape me.

In some ways the basic me was formed years ago, but our heavenly Father is still molding me even as I move beyond middle age. Now I’m eager to learn how to experience God’s presence more deeply. I prayerfully read the works of spiritual scholars and listen to guided meditative ponderings of Scripture. I engage with my Sunday School class as we discuss models of Christian life. These are all part of God’s handiwork as he continues to form my inner, spiritual self. I am still clay.

During Advent in the time of pandemic we have new opportunities to be shaped in His likeness. I long for traditional family gatherings, but they will not be safe for us this Christmas. This most unusual year will likely bring new ways to be together and celebrate, new ways to experience the joy of Christ’s birth, new ways to understand His love. I hope for patience and openness to His continued work.

*Prayer*: Heavenly Father thank you for loving us into being. Help us continue to grow through the work of Your hands.