

Wednesday Worship
16th December 2020
Advent 3—Choosing God's Way

The candle is lit (A few moments of silence)

Luke 1.30-33

The angel said to [Mary], 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.'

There were safer places, more comfortable places,
palaces and wealthy places.
Yet you chose a daughter of the soil,
who would have otherwise lived a good and honest life,
grown and harvested crops,
cooked and washed and cared for others,
and been forgotten, to be your temporary home,
to be exalted for all time.

All **My soul glorifies the Lord
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
for he has been mindful
of the humble state of his servant.
From now on all generations will call me blessed.**

When does an ordinary life become extraordinary?
A mundane day become revolutionary?
A moment in time change history?
When God enters in, forgives sin,
allows us to begin again.

All **'May it be to me as you say'.**

Music: The Angel Gabriel from heaven came

Annunciation - Denise Levertov

We know the scene: the room, variously furnished,
almost always a lectern, a book; always
the tall lily.
Arrived on solemn grandeur of great wings,
the angelic ambassador, standing or hovering,
whom she acknowledges, a guest.
But we are told of meek obedience. No one mentions
courage.

The engendering Spirit
did not enter her without consent.
God waited.
She was free
to accept or to refuse, choice
integral to humanness.
Aren't there annunciations
of one sort or another
in most lives?
Some unwillingly
undertake great destinies,
enact them in sullen pride,
uncomprehending.
More often
those moments
when roads of light and storm
open from darkness in a man or woman,
are turned away from
in dread, in a wave of weakness, in despair
and with relief.
Ordinary lives continue.
God does not smite them.
But the gates close, the pathway vanishes.

She had been a child who played, ate, slept
like any other child—but unlike others,
wept only for pity, laughed
in joy not triumph.
Compassion and intelligence
fused in her, indivisible.
Called to a destiny more momentous
than any in all of Time,
she did not quail,
only asked
a simple, 'How can this be?'
and gravely, courteously,
took to heart the angel's reply,
the astounding ministry she was offered:
to bear in her womb
Infinite weight and lightness; to carry
in hidden, finite inwardness,
nine months of Eternity; to contain
in slender vase of being,
the sum of power—
in narrow flesh,
the sum of light.
Then bring to birth,
push out into air, a Man-child
needing, like any other,
milk and love—

but who was God.
This was the moment no one speaks of,
when she could still refuse.
A breath unbreathed,
Spirit,
suspended,
waiting.
She did not cry, 'I cannot. I am not worthy,'
Nor, 'I have not the strength.'
She did not submit with gritted teeth,
raging, coerced.
Bravest of all humans,
consent illumined her.
The room filled with its light,
the lily glowed in it,
and the iridescent wings.
Consent,
courage unparalleled,
opened her utterly.

Luke 1.35-38

'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God.'

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered.

"May it be to me as you have said."

(A moment of silence)

Come, Christ, come:

All **Come with your word.**

Come, Sophia, come:

All **Come with your wisdom.**

Come, Christa, come:

All **Come with your embrace.**

Come, Jesus, come:

All **Come with your playfulness.**

Come, Mary, come:

All **Inspire us with your Yes.**

O come, Thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heavenly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.

All **Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come again and with us ever dwell**

Isaiah 51.1-8

Listen to me, you that pursue righteousness, you that seek the Lord. Look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug. Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for he was but one when I called him, but I blessed him and made him many. For the Lord will comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places, and will make her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song. Listen to me, my people, and give heed to me, my nation; for a teaching will go out from me, and my justice for a light to the peoples. I will bring near my deliverance swiftly, my salvation has gone out and my arms will rule the peoples; the coastlands wait for me, and for my arm they hope. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and those who live on it will die like gnats; but my salvation will be for ever, and my deliverance will never be ended. Listen to me, you who know righteousness, you people who have my teaching in your hearts; do not fear the reproach of others, and do not be dismayed when they revile you. For the moth will eat them up like a garment, and the worm will eat them like wool; but my deliverance will be for ever, and my salvation to all generations.

Music: For Mary, Mother of our Lord

Intercessions

O Lord, may we be ready for your coming to us.
In our daily living let us be inspired by the example of Mary
to seek to do your will and help to bring in your kingdom.

Through the working of the Church,
through obedience to you, through reaching out in mission,
through the proclaiming of the Gospel,
your kingdom come:
All **your will be done.**

Though our striving for peace,
through our caring for the poor, through our desire for justice,
through the ways we seek to improve your world,
your kingdom come:
All **your will be done.**

Through our love in our homes,
through our honesty and sensitivity,
through our relationships and friends,
through our hopes and ambitions,
your kingdom come:
All **your will be done.**

Through the healing of the ill, through looking after the lonely,
through our compassion and care,
your kingdom come:
All **your will be done.**

We remember especially today, in a moment of quiet,
all who have asked for our prayers
or who are in trouble or danger.
We ask that we may share with them
in the fullness of your kingdom:
your kingdom come:

All **your will be done.**

Music: Hills of the North, rejoice

May God the Father bless us;
may Christ take care of us;
the Holy Spirit Ghost enlighten us all the days of our life.
The Lord be our defender and keeper of body and soul,
both now and for ever, to the ages of ages.

All **Amen.**