

Dec 8, 2024 – Advent 2 – Online – Mary’s Song

Luke 1:26-56

The Angel Gabriel – StF 187

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvOU9HowCuE&t=90s>

My soul gives glory

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R9J7zGSIUkY&t=24s>

Heaven shall not wait – StF 701

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FHMt3YJHbZE&t=66s>

Pre-service Music

God it was who said – StF 464

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ArWTCvLWp_o&t=139s

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel – StF 180

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VRDjVh2uCMw>

Tell out my soul – StF 186

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s6ji4y9Q-K0&t=83s>

==ORDER OF SERVICE==

Call to worship – Magnificat -- Luke 1:46-55 — **GMT20241130-093814 start to 3.11**

The Angel Gabriel – StF 187

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvOU9HowCuE&t=90s>

Luke 1:26-38 — **GMT20241130-093814 — 3.25 to 13.00**

Intro to monologue

Mary’s Song monologue — **GMT20241116-134724 — 2.54 to 11.44**

Intro to My soul gives glory **GMT20241130-093814 — 13.20 to 13.34**

My soul gives glory

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R9J7zGSIUkY&t=24s>

Intercessions — **GMT20241130-093814 — 13.42 to 21.05**

Lord’s Prayer

Benediction

Tell out my soul – StF 186

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s6ji4y9Q-K0&t=83s>

Last week, we spoke about Elizabeth and her waiting and her silence
And the companionship she was able to offer to her cousin Mary
Who also found herself in a confusing and unexpected position...
How is it that we are so often confused when God actually comes to us
Even though we've been *waiting* for God for so long?

[Naomi's 'wrong delivery' story about the photo stickers of a young girl
That she ordered for cupcakes – which came out as an unknown older man!
We're not always sure what we're going to get...]

I'm reminded of a story of a church I pastored many years ago.
Their numbers were decreasing as their age profile was increasing...
Like so many congregations, they knew they needed to do something different –
But what?

They set aside a time on Tuesday mornings to pray about it –
To pray that God would show them how they could be reaching out
And sharing God's love with others.

They indeed committed themselves to gathering every Tuesday morning for those prayers.
And their prayer group continued for many years –
Always on Tuesday, always with prayers for God to lead them.

While I was their minister, a small group of new persons did appear –
They lived locally, they were younger, they were eager to be involved!
But they were also living just down the street from the church
In a half-way house for persons who had been released from the mental hospital
But were not well enough to return to their own homes.
They came to Sunday services for several weeks
And then asked if the church could provide a bible study or prayer group for them.
The request went to the Tuesday morning prayer group
Who included the request in their Tuesday morning prayer list
And decided they would see what they could do.
They didn't really feel it would be appropriate for the newcomers to join that group
Because they were already well established and knew each other well...
Perhaps another group could be set up at another time.

One of the women from the Tuesday morning group agreed to speak with the newcomers
And see what they thought.

Well, the newcomers compared their schedules and replied
That Tuesday morning would be the best time for them –
But could the Prayer Meeting/Bible Study be held at their residence?

Well, that really wasn't going to work,
Because it conflicted with the already established Tuesday Morning Prayer Meeting
And the church folk didn't really feel comfortable going into the residence...

So they sent back word that the prayer meeting would have to happen at the church
But not on Tuesday morning.

Oh... the newcomers were disappointed, but sent a few more suggestions...
None of which worked.

Except for the one woman who had agreed to go and meet them –
And she indeed found another time to go and be with them.

But after a while, the newcomers realised they weren't really welcome.

So they stopped coming.

And the Tuesday morning Prayer Group was able to faithfully keep up

With their prayers on Tuesday morning that God would send them some new folk...

Need I say that the church closed a few years later?

Are we too convinced of our own schedules that we have no time for God's interruptions?

Listen with me to another monologue, this one entitled, 'Mary's Song'.

Mary's Song (Luke 1:26-56)

So, you've met Elizabeth, too?
What a treasure she is!
She's the best friend
The best cousin
A girl -- a woman
Could have!
Girl? Woman?
What am I these days?
Child of my mother?
Mother of a child to be?
Blessed?
Cursed?
Holy?
Defiled?
Submissive?
Rebellious?

Rebellious was the name my mother gave me.
Like Miriam of old,
Learning to submit to another
Has been hard work.

Submitting to the women's work
When the outside fields and pastures
Call my name so loudly:
Mary! Mary!
Consider the lilies of the field!
They don't sew or wash or cook!
Yet God cares for them!
Submitting to being engaged to Joseph --
A good man, to be sure,
But so much older.
They say I need someone older
To teach me life.
To teach me respectability.
Is that life?

Anyway, he is a good man.
He has not thrown me out
Like the others...
He knows...

He knows, I think,
How hard it was to submit to the angel.

It was a fearful time!
The angel said, "Peace" to me.

He said, "Blessing."
He said, "Don't be afraid!"
But what sense does that make?

I knew one day the Lord would bless my womb
And I would be a mother one day,
But not yet!
Not now! I am still a child!
Only engaged!
Not yet Wife...
Certainly not Mother
To a King...
To the Holy One...
How can this be?!?!
Lord, if that is You
In that angel disguise,
Lord, you must tell me:
How can this be?

How can Holiness
Be born of Rebellion?
Or is Holiness
ONLY born of Rebellion?
Rebellion against a way of living
That is so respectable
That it knows no Life...

How can virginity
Produce life?
Or is it that real life
Can only come from the purity
That one has protected as one's own?

There were so many questions that day,
So many risks and challenges
To all I knew and held dear;
So much turmoil,
That to rebel against the confusion
Was to submit.

And so I, Mary,
Rebellious One,
Conceived a Child
Of the most Holy One.

No longer rebellious Child,
I was With Child.
Suddenly my body contained another
So that I was Community with myself!

And yet, I was alone like never before.
How to explain to my mother?
My father? Joseph? Anyone?

The Holy One led me to Elizabeth,
Blessed Elizabeth,
God's promise to me
That I was not alone.

Elizabeth, whose knowing eyes,
Whose hearing heart
Grasped the full impact of my condition
In a single splendid moment,
And in doing so,
Calmed my heart,
My fears,
My racing pulse,
My pounding head,
My aching bones.

My child will know,
Her child will know,
The joy of Community,
Will they not?
Will they know as well
The strain of community?
Will they work to rebel
Against the rich and powerful
Who grind the little ones into the earth?

Will they rebel against
Hunger and cruelty
And sickness and despair?
Will they respect the lowly
And remember the soil from which we all come?

Ah, Jesus,
If I may call you that now,
Dear child inside me,
Will you know to submit
Only to the goodness of the Holy One
Who created us all?
Holy One, will you stand strong
When they try to make you respectable?

'My heart praises the Lord!
My soul, my spirit within me, is glad
Because of God my Saviour.
For he has remembered,
He has heard me,

His lowly rebellious servant!
From now on, all people will call me blessed
Because of the great things
The Mighty God has done for me.

His name is Holy from one generation to another.
He shows mercy to those who honour him.

He has stretched out his mighty arm
And scattered the proud
In the imaginations of their hearts.

He has brought down mighty kings from their thrones
and lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things
And sent the rich away with empty hands.

He has kept the promise he made to our ancestors
And has come to the help of his rebellious servant Israel.

He has remembered to show mercy to Abraham
And to all his descendants forever!

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel
Who has blessed his rebellious servant
And given us New Life.'

Blessed be the One who has not left me alone.

Lord God of our Advent Adventures,
We're reminded today that Advent is a time of listening hard
To what is happening around us
And where you, God, are in the midst of it all...
Mary's story reminds us to listen hard
To what part you might need us to play in your story –
Lord God of Mary and Elizabeth and Joseph and Zechariah
We're reminded that sometimes you call us to play a very small part
Which might seem small at the time, but is still essential.
It might be a phone call we make today –
Or a smile we give a stranger
Or an extra chore we do for someone who hasn't even asked...
Lord, bless our small parts –
Which equip us for playing ever greater role –
When we least expect it.

Lord God of all history,
We're reminded today that when you call us,
We become part of the huge sweep of history
That arches through the ages -- into goodness.
When we start to list all the reasons we can't submit to what you've asked
Keep prodding us on.
Keep reminding us how you have been with us in the small tasks
That have equipped us for the new task.
Lord, help us trust you...

Be with us, Lord God of all certainty,
When we struggle with doubts and fears.
Remind us, as you have reminded your people through all of history,
That we are not to succumb to fear.
That you are with us on each step of the journey.
Banish our fears. Help us keep our eyes on your faithfulness.

Lord God of blessings and curses,
Be with us when we rebel.
Help us consider whether our rebellion is about justice and peace
Or about simply getting our own way.
Help us know when to rebel and when to submit.

Lord God of companionship,
We thank you for those who have journeyed with us in the past –
Those who have showed us through their deeds, their words, and their attitudes
What is Good and Right and True.
We thank you for those who journey with us now,
Supporting us in seeking out the truth
And in persisting in what we know to be of You.
Help us keep our eyes and ears and hearts open as well
For those who need us to journey with and support them.
For the journey is richer when we travel together.
Lord's Prayer....