



The Second Sunday of Advent
Nothing is Impossible: #morepeace

Prelude

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Gathering— Last week we witnessed Zechariah terrified and fearful when the other-worldly angel creature appeared to him at the altar of the temple. But today we hear Mary’s story and find her simply “perplexed” by her encounter with an angel. She is told she will have a son, who will be the Son of the Highest God and will have an everlasting throne. Why would such an incredible message come to a common girl just barely a woman? Then her reply to such a foretelling about her purpose in life was also simple: “Let it be so.” For nothing is impossible with God.

We Light Our Advent Wreath

Michelle Van Dyke

There are angels among us that may not meet the eye. There are messages of peace coming from a choir on high, but don’t just look up; for the way God works is to plant more peace right here on earth just like it was with Jesus’ birth.

Today, as we light this candle of peace, we commit our lives this Advent to bring more peace to this broken world. With this light we proclaim the message of the angels, “Do Not Be Afraid.”

Advent Wreath Prayer—Holy Living God, Blessed Jesus, Guiding Spirit, alight within us your flame of peace this day. Grant us openness to hear your message. Grant us courage to be your messengers in the world, creating more peace in the midst of fear. Amen.

A Time of Prayer—Gracious God, we give you thanks that you sent the Prince of Peace to reveal to us your ways. In this moment we give thanks for all the ways we have experienced his presence among us, in the words and actions that bring peace in the midst of fear. We pray that you might work through us to bring more peace into this world, divided by conflict, broken by war, longing for your light...

The Lord's Prayer (unison)—Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy

name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Special Music

Noel in the Style of Daquin, Vivian Thomas

We Hear God's Word

Luke 1:26-56 (adapted from The Voice Translation)

Narrator: Six months later in Nazareth, a city in the rural province of Galilee, the heavenly messenger Gabriel made another appearance. This time the messenger was sent by God to meet with a virgin named Mary, who was engaged to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David himself. The messenger entered her home.

Messenger: Greetings! You are favored, and the Lord is with you! Among all women on the earth, you have been blessed! *[Mary turns around and looks at the congregation with a "WHAT?!" gesture and look on her face.]*

Narrator: The heavenly messenger's words baffled Mary, and she wondered what type of greeting this was.

Messenger: Mary, don't be afraid. You have found favor with God. Listen, you are going to become pregnant. You will have a son, and you must name Him "Savior," *or* Jesus. Jesus will become the greatest among humankind. He will be known as the Son of the Highest God. God will give Him the throne of His ancestor David, and He will reign over the covenant family of Jacob forever.

Mary: Uh... look, I'm engaged and all but I am still a virgin. How can this be possible?

Messenger: The Holy Spirit will come upon you. The Most High will overshadow you. That's why this holy child will be known, as not just your son, but also as the Son of God. It sounds impossible, but listen—you know your relative Elizabeth has been unable to bear children and is now far too old to be a mother. Yet she has become pregnant, as God willed it. Yes, in three months, she will have a son. So the impossible is possible with God.

Mary: Here I am, the Lord's humble servant. As you have said, let it be done to me.

Narrator: And the heavenly messenger was gone. *[Elizabeth moves towards Mary.]* Mary immediately got up and hurried to the hill country, in the province of Judah, where her cousins Zachariah and Elizabeth lived. When Mary entered their

home and greeted Elizabeth, who felt her baby leap in her womb, Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Elizabeth *[excited]*: You are blessed, Mary, blessed among all women, and the child you bear is blessed! And blessed I am as well, that the mother of my Lord has come to me! As soon as I heard your voice greet me, my baby leaped for joy within me. How fortunate you are, Mary, for you believed that what the Lord told you would be fulfilled.

Narrator: And Mary's response was to lift up her voice in praise.

Scripture Song

Surely the Presence, #131

*Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place
I can feel God's mighty power and God's grace.
I can hear the brush of angel's wings,
I see glory on each face;
Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.*

Meditation

#MorePeace

Hymn

What Child Is This, #184

We Gather at the Table

Set Your Place at the Table—Whatever you have on hand to celebrate communion will work just fine, because this ancient ritual is not about what we use for this meal or where we partake of it. Instead, it is about the act of remembrance. So, gather around the table, prepare your place, and remember that Christ is in our midst.

Our Invitation—Christ calls us to the table this day to experience more hope, more peace, more joy, and more love. Surely, the presence of the Lord is in this place. Find your place at the table for all who long to know God's mercy and grace are welcome here.

Our Confession—God, we give you thanks that you sent Jesus Christ into this world to live among us and meet us in our brokenness. We confess that there are times when we fail to live out the love Jesus calls us to. We turn our backs on our neighbors, on the hungry and the lowly. We let the noise of this life get in the way of us listening to your voice. In this Advent season, as we prepare to welcome the Christ-child into our hearts, help us prepare our hearts by living out more hope, more peace, more joy, and more love. Amen.

Assurance of Grace—God so loved the world that God sent the very embodiment of that love into the world as a tiny baby born in a manger. Through Christ we know the fullness of God’s forgiveness and grace. Know this day that your sins are forgiven. Thanks be to God. Amen.

The Words of Institution— On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: “Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: “Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” And so, we remember...we offer ourselves...we proclaim God’s love...

Blessing Our Meal— Touch us, O Spirit, with your transforming power. Open us to your promise of resurrection from fear and death. In partaking of these elements, let us become your messengers of hope and peace for an anxious world in all that we say and do. Bless this meal that it might strengthen us and sustain us for your purposes. Amen.

We Share the Bread and the Cup – As you eat the bread, remember, “This is the body of Christ broken for you.” Take and eat. As you drink the cup, remember, “This is the blood of Christ shed for you and the forgiveness of sins.” Take and drink.

We Give Thanks—Almighty God, we give you thanks for the gift of our Savior’s presence in the simplicity and splendor of this holy meal. Unite us with all who are fed by Christ’s body and blood that we may faithfully proclaim the good news of your love and that your universal church may be a rainbow of hope in an uncertain world; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.`

We Respond to God's Word with Our Giving

Invitation—We know that with God wondrous things are possible. We bring our gifts this day knowing that God can do extraordinary things with them. May the gifts of our resources, our time, and our talent that we bring today be a sign of our commitment to bring more peace into this world.

December Benevolence—Christmas Fund

Doxology

We Give Thanks—God of peace and possibility, we offer these gifts so that they may be transformed into your good news for the sake of the world.
Amen.

Hymn

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear, #191

Benediction—As you go forth into the world this week, find ways to carry the message of peace to those you meet. Carry in your hearts the message the angels proclaimed: Do not be afraid! Do not be afraid! Do not be afraid! Amen.

Postlude

Carol of the Bells