

**Davidson College Presbyterian Church**  
**Davidson, North Carolina**  
**Robert Alexander**  
**Advent through the Eyes of Mary**  
**Luke 1:46b-55**  
**December 10, 2017**

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Can any of us imagine what it was like for Mary? There she was, a young teenager – maybe 14 or 15 – with the knowledge that she was carrying a child that was given to her by God who would be called Son of the Most High and who would reign on David's throne, the throne promised to God's Messiah, God's anointed one who was to bring salvation to God's people. Was she scared, confused, excited? Did she think she was going crazy?

The angel had said something about her relative Elizabeth. So off to Elizabeth's house Mary went, where she found a woman of considerable age, one who had been barren and unable to have children now six months pregnant with Jesus' cousin, John. And Elizabeth blessed Mary for believing and for saying "YES!" to God Most High and for being part of God's plan to usher in a new age.

The Holy Spirit was on the move. Angels – messengers of God – were being dispatched to share the good news of God's plan, to enlist willing participants, and to warn those who had no interest in God's ways to either come on board or get out of the way...for the Advent of the Lord was upon them.

According to the gospel writer Luke – as this was becoming clear to Mary – she spoke out – uttering her first words since her "Here I Am" spoken to the angel Gabriel.

"My soul magnifies the Lord!" She said. She was filled up to overflowing with the Good News of what was happening. The Most High God – God of her people Israel and God of Heaven and Earth – was on the move! The word "magnify" can mean to exalt or extol, to praise and lift up. It can mean to amplify or to enlarge. And Mary does all these things as she speaks words about the God who has seen her in her lowly estate and who has chosen her to be a part of God's plan to bring about salvation, transformation, and the realization of God's promise.

Mary spoke as a prophetess about the God who will turn things upside down or rather right side up – righting the wrongs of the world by the insistence that the hungry would be filled with good things, that the lowly would be lifted up, that the proud would be scattered, the powerful brought low, and the rich sent away empty. She spoke of the One who had noticed her and who will pay attention to others of low estate who have lived in humility and poverty of spirit. The Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them, she sang. Other words from the Beatitudes found in Matthew apply here. Those who have mourned will be comforted, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be filled, the merciful will be shown mercy, the pure in heart will see God just as God has seen them! And all this in accordance with God's promise, spoken over the centuries and generations. A promise that the people had forgotten. A promise they had lost. A promise that had been hidden by the human hunger and greed for power, and money, and influence. A promise that had been drowned out by the noise of self-indulgence, self-promotion, and self-aggrandizement.

But Mary magnified the Lord rather than self. One writer states that her words are “a battle cry, bold and defiant as she sings for the weak and the lowly, the poor and the hungry. Every hurting son is now her son; every hungry daughter is now her daughter. She carries them in her own body.”<sup>i</sup>

As we celebrate this Advent season there are some questions we might ask ourselves. Do we have room in our ears, our eyes, and our hearts to remember the promise of God long forgotten by the world? Do we have room in our lives to let go of our self-promotion and to magnify the Lord and the Lord’s vision, dream, and purpose for humanity and all creation? Do we have time and energy to join Mary in the battle cry that sides with the poor and the oppressed and the marginalized and speaks a word of hope and love and mercy to those who have been forgotten? Can you and I use whatever voice, whatever power, whatever privilege, whatever resources we may have to remind the world of God’s Good News promise, God’s mercy, and God’s love?

The Song of Mary – the Magnificat – is an invitation to all of us to do just that. May it be so.  
**To God be the Glory! Amen.**

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<sup>i</sup> MaryAnn McKibben Dana, “Preaching the Advent Texts” in Journal for Preachers, Advent 2012.