

Annunciation – St. Luke 1:26-38

March 25, 2026 | Saude, Jerico, & Redeemer Lutheran Churches

## *Witnesses of Christ's Passion: Mary*

**In Nomine Iesu**

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### **St. Luke 1:26-38**

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a Son, and you shall call His name 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 father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the Child to be born will be called holy – the Son of God. / And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her. <sup>(ESV)</sup>

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We beseech You, O Lord, pour forth Your grace into our hearts; that, as we have known the incarnation of Your Son, Jesus Christ, by the message of the angel, so by His cross and Passion we may be brought into the glory of His resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever. Amen. (*Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary*, p. 153)

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In Christ Jesus, who is true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true Man, born of the Virgin Mary – our Savior and our Lord, dear fellow redeemed:

Like all faithful Jews, Mary looked forward to the coming of the Messiah promised so long before by the LORD God. She may have even wondered what sort of woman it would be who would bear that Seed, the One who would crush Satan's head (Gen. 3:15). But she would never have imagined it would be her. Who was she? Nothing but a poor woman betrothed to a poor man from a poor town.

But God does not see as man sees. 1 Corinthians 1 says, "*God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God*" (vv. 28-29). He sent His holy angel Gabriel with a history-altering message for lowly Mary. She was chosen to be the mother of the Christ-Child.

The angel's appearance and greeting frightened and troubled Mary. He told her that she was highly favored, and that the Lord was with her. As she tried to process the angel's words, he addressed her personally: "*Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.*" Not only did

the angel speak words of blessing, but he even knew her name! There was nothing about Mary that God did not know.

In His plan to send His Son to redeem the world, He had chosen Mary to give birth to the Christ. Just as He prepared John the Baptizer to be the forerunner of Jesus, He chose Mary to be Jesus' mother. He did not choose Mary because she was perfect. Some say that Mary was conceived without sin – an “immaculate conception” – that she lived a life without sin, and that is how her Son Jesus was without sin. But the angel clearly stated how her Child would be holy: *“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the Child to be born will be called holy – the Son of God.”*

Mary was not chosen because she was better than everyone else. She was chosen because God is gracious. She agreed. In her song, called the Magnificat, she sang, *“For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. For He who is mighty has done great things for me, And holy is His name”* (Luk. 1:48-49, NKJV).

Mary must have felt unqualified for the task God had given her, but she trusted that if He chose her to do it, then He would give her the strength for it: *“Behold, I am the servant of the Lord,”* she said to the angel; *“let it be to me according to your word.”* This is the very day that the Christ was conceived in Mary's womb. The Holy Spirit worked through the message of the angel both to give Mary the faith she needed and to conceive the Child within her.

Traditionally the date of the angel's announcement to Mary and the incarnation of Jesus is March 25. This day was selected in the early church because the early Christians thought it coincided with the date of Jesus' death. Back in 2016 just after I got here, Good Friday fell on this day – March 25 – so we heard at that time about both His incarnation and His death.

It is fitting that the incarnation date for Jesus falls during the season of Lent. This is the season that shows us why God took on flesh, why the Christ was born of Mary. He came to offer up His holy life in payment for all our sin. That Child of Mary lived a perfectly holy life from womb to tomb by fully keeping and never deviating from the righteous commands of God. And He freely poured out His precious blood to cleanse us from every sin.

The name given to this Child indicated what He would do. The angel said, *“you shall call His name Jesus.”* The angel who appeared to Joseph said the same thing: *“you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins”* (Mat. 1:21). That's what the name Jesus means: “the Lord is salvation,” or “the Lord saves.” God sent His only-begotten Son to save.

All of this is difficult to comprehend. There are many questions we might ask: Why this point in history? Why did the Savior have to be born; why couldn't He just appear? Why Mary? What if Mary had said “no”? Perhaps the last question has never crossed your mind. Why wouldn't Mary want the honor of bearing the Christ-Child? For one thing, maybe she wouldn't want the awesome responsibility of being the mother of the world's Savior. Or maybe she would hesitate because this didn't fit *her* plan. This is not how she pictured her future.

There are probably a good number of things in your life that have not gone according to your plan. Perhaps you are not living the dream you had in your younger years about what you would

do and where you would go. Does this cause you disappointment, frustration, regret? Maybe you remember wonderful opportunities that passed you by, and you can't help but imagine how much better or more successful your life would be today.

A longing for the past or dreaming about the life you might have had are tools that the devil uses to distract you from the responsibilities and blessings of today. Mary might have dreamed about a quiet home in Nazareth with several kids and a simple life. Instead, God called her to do what neither she nor anyone else could be qualified for, but that He gave her the grace and strength to do. She didn't always understand why Jesus had to do what He did, and she suffered terribly as she watched Him dying on the cross. But in the end, she learned what it was all for – her salvation and the salvation of the world.

God has in the same way called you to the good work you are currently doing: loving and serving those closest to you, working diligently and honestly, stewarding the gifts He has given you to manage. You can't see the big picture of what lives are being impacted by your life, but you can trust that God's will is being done as He works through you. Mary's statement is a wonderful expression of faith that you can adopt as your own: *"Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word."*

God knows how to bless you. That's what He was doing by sending His Son to be born of a virgin. The fact that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and had no biological father meant that He could be your Savior. As true Man, He was required to keep God's holy Law and was able to suffer pain and death. As true God, His perfect keeping of the Law and His sacrificial death counted for all sinners of all time. He now declares you right with Him because of what He did for you, no matter how much or how often you have failed in your responsibilities. All of those failures are forgiven, blotted out by His precious blood.

The day the angel visited Mary changed not just her and Joseph's life, but all of our lives. That day was the day that light entered the darkness, heaven came to earth, and God became Man. On that day – this day –, God's promise was fulfilled, His promise to send a Savior to redeem you and me and all sinners.

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her King;  
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room  
And heav'n and nature sing. (*Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary #138, v. 1*)

*Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, forevermore. Amen.*

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