

Rev. Lynne Ogren  
December 20, 2020  
2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

Zion Lutheran Church, Lewistown, MT  
4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent, Year B  
Luke 1:26-55

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. Amen

Our two readings today connect King David to the arrival of Jesus Christ. In the first reading, God makes a promise to David that the angel in our gospel reading says will be fulfilled through Mary. We have heard Jesus called Son of David. And we learn in Mary's encounter with the angel that her soon-to-be husband, Joseph, was "of the house of David," meaning David's descendant.

King David wanted to build a temple, a house, for God to live in. That seemed almost funny to God, since God had been traveling with David's ancestors in a flimsy tabernacle, or tent, since their time in the wilderness after Moses lead them out of Egypt.

Of course, God was not confined to the tent. The point was that God had been mobile, living in and amongst the people, and did not need a solid structure. Instead, God turns the tables on David and says, "I will make YOU a house." The "house" of David would be his dynasty, and God promised that this house would be "established forever."

Unfortunately, there was a gap in that forever timeline. About 400 years after this promise was made, the nation of Israel had a civil war, splitting into the two nations of Israel and Judah, each of which were eventually overthrown by other nations and the remnants of God's people were taken into exile.

It was during that time that God's prophets announced that a Messiah, a Savior, would come from the "house and lineage of David" to re-establish God's kingdom. Of course, it was assumed that the Messiah would be like David, a mighty warrior, and that God would do what God had done with David and "cut off [the] enemies" of God's people. Over time, that new enemy became the Roman Empire.

What the people didn't think about was that this Messiah would need to be born and raised, before becoming the man who could lead God's people into freedom again. There were no more kings to father this someday-Savior. God needed to choose someone ordinary to take on the extraordinary role of parenting the Son of David.

The good news was that a man named Joseph came from the line of David and he was engaged to a young woman named Mary. I like to think that God had something to do with bringing together these two faithful people who could take on the important role of raising not just the Son of David, but the Son of God.

Jesus was not the kind of Savior the people expected. He did turn the world upside down, as Mary's song proclaims, but it was not in the ways people expected, or maybe even wanted.

We cannot know how things will turn out in our lives, either. At the beginning of this pandemic, we didn't know—and still don't, really—how this will all shake out. When we give birth to our children, to a new job, to a new relationship, or when we enter any new season of life, we have hopes and expectations, but we cannot know the twists and turns we will take along the way, or how God will bring changes for us and for others.

Like God's people down through the ages, we have the promises of God to hold onto. As God has journeyed with God's people, God promises to journey with us. As Mary found favor with God, God favors us with grace, too, as God's beloved children.

The temple in Jerusalem eventually came to be built by David's son, Solomon, but it was also destroyed—more than once. We tend to try to confine God to our plans and ways of thinking, too. But God has never been confined to a tent or a temple or any human construction of what we imagine to be possible.

God's home is among living, breathing people who are filled with potential and possibilities beyond our own imaginations. God came in the person of Jesus Christ to open the way of God's kingdom for the blessing of the whole world.

Mary's answer to the angel, "Let it be with me," can also be our answer to the callings God gives to us. Anything new, any uncertain path, any transition to a different place in life always comes with the promises that God goes with us, and that nothing is impossible for God.

With Mary, our response is to give praise to God, even when we don't know what is around the next corner. We have seen that God has the power to do great things through ordinary people, like Mary, like David, like you and me, so that we can say with confidence, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."

Thanks be to God. Amen