

**Ephraim Moravian Church**  
**Fourth Sunday of Advent**  
December 20, 2020 at 10.00 a.m.

**Order of Service**

Welcome & Announcements

**“Fall Softly Snow” - by Jim Ed Brown and Helen Cornelius**

Lighting of the Fourth Candle of Advent – *The Bristol Family*

**Hymn #300: “Faithful Christians, One and All”**

Faithful Christians, one and all, join in jubilation.  
Pause in wonder to recall Jesus’ incarnation.  
Praise the peerless grace of God for his promise to us  
That, fulfilled in his dear Son, prompts our Alleluias!

What the Trinity once sealed deep in secret meeting  
Was by Gabriel revealed in angelic greeting:  
“Lowly maid from Galilee, blessed above all others,  
God has chosen you to be the Messiah’s mother!”

Magnify the Lord with me, ev’ry generation  
For the year of jubilee dawns for every nation  
Christ the Prince of Peace is here, no one dare ignore him  
Welcome this, God’s gift most dear, eager to adore him!

Prayers of the Church

Congregational Sung Response (to the tune of ‘Away in a Manger’)

*Our Father in heaven, all praise to your name!*  
*Your kingdom among us, your will done the same!*  
*By mortals and angels; Come Lord, reign alone!*  
*Oh, hear us and bless us from heaven’s high throne. Amen.*

Scripture Lessons:    2 Samuel 7: 1-11, 16  
                                Romans 16: 25-27  
                                Luke 1: 26-38

**“Today” - by John Denver**

Reflection

Sermon

**“Christ the Light” – by Harriet H. Pierson & D. B. Towner**

Benediction

**“Sortie” – by Louis Alphonse James Alfred Lefébure-Wély**

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### **Reflection for Today**

The words in today’s Gospel (Luke 1: 26-38) are veiled in mystery, yet unambiguous. They are hauntingly lyrical, yet earthy, even pithy. But in 2020, “No word was ever as effective as the rightly timed pause.” - (*Mark Twain*) Mary, after asking Gabriel to explain practicalities, had a doozy of a silent moment before saying, “O.K. Let’s roll.”

In that breath of silence, Mary chose to embark on an unknown spiritual journey rather than decline God’s invitation. Some theologians emphasize Mary’s obedience to God’s authority, perhaps aided by Gabriel’s extraordinary appearance. But when she responded, “May it be done,” Mary was expressing something more complicated than obedience. She was answering with active trust, faith. Mary willingly consented to the Incarnation. Because of her informed faith, she knew the agreement with God was not one-sided. She knew that God promised to “be with you wherever you go.” (after 2 Samuel: 9) Their *covenant* was a relationship based on mutual commitments.

This moment in time, this Christmas season, feels like a breath of silence, too. Our world seems paused, waiting. Will we say yes to God’s call now, however things unfold later? Will we cultivate the spiritual landscape we find ourselves in today, or give in to bitter inertia and wait for better times? WWMD?

After her “Let’s roll” answer, Mary didn’t sit down and wait for something to happen. She hurried to her cousin Elizabeth for counsel, and upon arrival she sang a prayer of praise, the Magnificat. She lived with her worries but had enough love and determination to help her friend, staying with the older woman until Elizabeth’s baby, John, was safely born.

Like Mary, we are asked to be servants of the Lord. This Christmas, can we answer with our own *‘fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum’* – *‘Let it be done according to your word.’*

*Rev. Dawn Volpe, Pastor*  
*Colin Welford, Music Director*  
*Molly Rhode & Chase Stoeger, Guest Musicians*



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