          

The only way to deal with fear is to face it. Avoiding our fears only prevents us from moving forward—it makes us anxious. We are told to be gentle with ourselves and do only what feels safe to us!  All we need to do is sit quietly and observe the present moment. If fear or anxiety arises, recognize it. If we can, be curious. This seems like a lot to ask of someone who is surprised by a situation and possibly afraid of what is going to happen.  How would you feel in a situation like Mary finds herself this Sunday?

We are going to read about the journey of Mary of Nazareth from the Annunciation by the angel (something that would scare a lot of people); Mary’s consent to God’s calling; to the Visitation with Elizabeth and Mary’s prophetic song, the Magnificat. Mary was a humble young woman who wanted nothing more than to give all praise and glory to God. She did not want to be noticed. She did not want to be recognized. She was all about being humble and giving all glory to God.

The portrait that emerges is far from the static and meek picture of Mary that dominates popular imagination. Instead, we find in Mary a woman who, like many women today, experiences fear related to her calling, and who finds strength and empowerment in her relationship with other women.

With this kind of support, I can imagine that even if she had known all she would suffer as Jesus’ mother, Mary would still have given the same response. Are you, like Mary, available to be used by God?

I am looking forward to this coming Sunday’s worship.   Let’s learn something about the strength of this young woman Mary; let’s see how she deals with her fear when she hears what God is asking of her; and let’s see how her first reaction after accepting her “mission” is to go to her cousin Elizabeth to offer her support and encourage .

The most valuable gift you can give others is the gift of your time. genuine presence and encouragement.   That is the gift Mary gave to Elizabeth, that is the gift we can give to each other.

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**December 20, 2020
A Sunday Service for Summerland and Westbank United Churches
Judi Ritcey, LLWL – Presiding
Judi Ritcey – PowerPoint – Summerland United**

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**GATHERING TIME                     9:45AM**

**INTRODUCTION & TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**BELL RINGING**

**WORDS OF WELCOME -   Kathy Post –**Westbank United

*A warm welcome to our friends from Summerland and Westbank United Churches who are with us today and to all those joining us from other locations. If there are any visitors today from other congregations or other places, we welcome you and thank you for joining us this morning. If you are comfortable, please unmute yourself and tell us where or what congregation you are from.  Please remember to re-mute yourself.*

**MOMENT OF SILENCE TO VIEW THE CONGREGATION**

**ADVENT CANDLE**

**Prayer:** God, thank you for loving us, and for sending us Jesus to teach us about your love. Help us to remember that your love will never come to an end. Strengthen us to love others as you love us. Amen.

**LIGHTING OUR SUNDAY CANDLE**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

God has called us to be together, in this place, at this time.

**We come with our whole selves to worship our God who has created and is creating.**

We are called to wait for the coming of the Christ child.

**We ready our hearts to receive the gift of love during this Advent time of waiting.**

The Spirit moves among us, inviting us into a deeper connection with the Divine.

**May the Spirit’s power move through our worship today.**

**WE SING TOGETHER   God of All Places – VU 4**

**OPENING PRAYER**

Loving, Creating God,

You break into these short winter days with your words of hope, your words of warning,

your words of birth.

Come, Lord Jesus, into our waiting hearts with your promise of new life, your presence of comfort, your words of hope.

Like Mary, may we be willing to receive you.

Like Joseph, may we be ready to accept you.

Like Christ, may we be willing to rejoice in the fulfillment of our destiny

as your own dear life, born this day,

as we serve you, in prayer and praise.

**WE SING TOGETHER**All the Earth Is Waiting – VU5

**SCRIPTURE READING             Reed MacWilliam –**Summerland United Luke 1: 26-56
The Inclusive Bible

**REFLECTION**

**HYMN OF MEDITATION**Holy Mary, Gentle Woman

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE                Rev. Paul James**, Summerland United

**THE LORD’S PRAYER -                        Traditional**

**OFFERING**

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Loving God, we dedicate these gifts of money and discipleship to your purposes in this world, re-gifting to you gifts you have given to us in order to further your dream of love. We also would dedicate all the other giving that we do at this time of year: gifts to family and friends, but also responses to at least some of all those letters that come, asking for support to alleviate hunger, to assist in refugee sponsorship, to care for the environment, to aid democracy, to help in recovery from natural disasters, and more. Our gifts, as we are able to give them, may seem small and even diluted among the many needs, but we ask you, Gracious God, may each gift, no matter the size, engender warmth and hope. Amen.

**WE SING TOGETHER –**What Can I Do - MV 191

**BLESSING:                         Judi**

 **WE SING TOGETHER    Turning of the World.   Strathdee**

**BREAK OUT ROOMS**

Worship with Summerland and Westbank United Churches

December 20, 2020 09:45 AM Vancouver

\_\_**Join Zoom Meeting**
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83971543383>

**Meeting ID: 839 7154 3383
Passcode: 487991**

Dial by your location

        +1 778 907 2071 Canada
Meeting ID: 839 7154 3383

**Passcode: 487991**

**Summerland United Church website also provides access to our weekly Zoom church service.
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**Scripture :**

26Six months later, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, 27to a young woman named Mary; she was engaged to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. 28Upon arriving, the angel said to Mary, “Rejoice, highly favored one! God is with you! Blessed are you among women!”

29Mary was deeply troubled by these words and wondered what the angel’s greeting meant. 30the angel went on to say to her, “Don’t be afraid, Mary, You have found favor with God. 31You’ll conceive and bear a son, and give him the name Jesus – ‘Deliverance.” 32His dignity will be great, and he will be called the Only Begotten of God. God will give Jesus the judgment seat of David, his ancestor, 33to rule over the house of Jacob forever, and his reign will never end.”

34Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I have never been with a man?”

35The angel answered her ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you – hence the offspring to be born will be called the Holy One of God, 36Know too that Elizabeth, your kinswoman, has conceived a child in her old age; she who was thought to be infertile is now in her sixth month. 37Nothing is impossible with God.”

38Mary said, ‘I am the servant of God. Let it be done to me as you say.” With that, the angel left her.

39Within a few days Mary set out and hurried to the hill country to a town of Judah, 40where she entered Zechariah’s house and greeted Elizabeth.

41As soon as Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the child leaped in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. 42In a loud voice she exclaimed, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! 43But why am I so favored, that the mother of the Messiah should come to me? 44The moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leaped for joy. 45Blessed is she who believed  that what our God said to her would be accomplished!”

46Mary said:

“My soul proclaims your greatness, O God, 47and my spirit rejoices in you, my Savior.

48for you have looked with favor upon your lowly servant, and from this day forward all generations will call me blessed.

49For you, the Almighty, have done great things for me, and holy is your Name.

50Your mercy reaches from age to age for those who fear you.

51You have shown strength with your arm; you have scattered the proud in their conceit;

52you have deposed the mighty from their thrones and raised the lowly to high places.

53You have filled the hungry with good things, while you have sent the rich away empty.

54You have come to the aid of Israel your servant, mindful of your mercy –

55the promise you made to our ancestors – to Sarah and Abraham and their descendants forever.:

56Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then returned home.

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**Notices:**

Pastoral Care is provided by Paul James. You can reach Paul by email: p.w.james58@gmail.com or by texting him at (250) 488-4856

Paul is there for you to reach out to. Sometimes we just need someone to listen and hear us.

