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Sermon – Luke 1:39-45  
December 23, 2018

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O God, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

In January of this year I went home for my sister's wedding, just 4 Sundays in to my call here. On top of my duties as Matron of Honour, my family named me MC of the reception because I am most comfortable with public speaking. I made sure they heard me say that when I'm normally up in front of people, God is the focus, not me. But ok. So, I welcomed people, oriented them, invited them to have dinner, gave a lovely speech to my sister and brother-in-law. When I opened up the floor for any of the hundred people gathered to share well wishes or a fun story, the room was silent. And then I saw a little hand in the back of the room. It was my cousin's 8-year-old daughter, Logan. I waved her forward and handed her the microphone. She held it with confidence and said to me, "what should I say?" I knelt down next to her and thought about it for a minute and said, "well, you could say congratulations to the bride and groom." She nodded, and with a strong, confident voice into the microphone she said, "congratulations to the bride and groom!" As I watched her run back to her beaming mother, I said to the gathering, "is anyone as brave as she?" she, who said yes to an invitation, even though she didn't fully know what was happening; she who was excited about being asked; she who was not afraid to ask for help. I talked with her mom later that evening, who said, yes, this is very much in Logan's character – some authentic part of her resonated with the opportunity – a part of her that no doubt will grow and develop with time. I love young people – I love watching them grow, watching them discover parts of themselves that have just been waiting to respond to the world.

Mary and Elizabeth are in a unique situation, being cousins in different generations and yet pregnant at the same time through a blessing from God. Elizabeth has been a fixture in Mary's young life – perhaps with no children of her own, Elizabeth took special interest in her.

I wonder what it was like for Mary after saying yes to Gabriel . . . not quite excitement, but not anxiety either – maybe it is just the immensity of it all – the angel, the news . . . what would she tell her mother, her family? What would she tell Joseph? (that won't be an easy conversation) This is just too big to contain – who can I tell? She goes with haste to speak with Elizabeth – not only is Elizabeth the right person to tell, she is already part of the story – this moment is happening to both of them. Their greeting is a Holy Spirit moment . . . John leaps in Elizabeth's womb and the Holy Spirit fills Elizabeth in a moment of epiphany. Mary doesn't need to explain anything – Elizabeth already shares her joy and loves her not just as family . . . she knows her as the mother of God. In that holy, sacred space, Mary's heart overflows with all of the joy and praise she has been waiting to express. As she stands in resonance with Elizabeth's heart, it all flows out of her. Honour and humility that God would choose her, a young woman – no less extraordinary than any of her peers, yet something authentic in her resonates with the invitation – she is uniquely called to mother the one who will transform the world.

In that holy, sacred space, Mary expresses her experience of God's love – God loves personally, each of us uniquely; God is with us each day, supporting and encouraging, inspiring awe in us and reminding us that God is almighty with deep, deep grace. God turns power upside down, lifting up those on the margins and bringing down those who think they have more power than God. And God is always faithful – when God promises, God will deliver.

God promises a saviour; and yet God needs Mary to be the human through whom God's love can raise this child. God must work within humanity to become the one to transform humanity. So God has a mother to hold him, nurse him, give him boundaries, keep him safe, teach him the culture into which he is raised, encourages his gifts, teach him the faith. Mary will listen hard to God, as all parents do, to know how best to respond to him and what his life will bring. Thanks be to God for this life and God who says, I need you to do something you are uniquely gifted to do. I will be with you and you will be blessed.