



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

December 9-15, 2019

Sermon by Rev. Kelley Lane

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Sermon Title: *Prophetic Voices: “Mary: Upside-Down World Order”*

Notes from sermon on 12/8:	Prayer requests:
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Family Focus Questions (before sermon):

What brings you joy? What is the difference between joy and happiness?

3 Questions for small groups (after sermon):

1. How has the annunciation affected you?
2. How has Christ's incarnation affected your faith?
3. In this season of Advent, how do you hear God speaking to you? How will you respond?

Monday, December 9: Read Luke 1:47-55

As we enter our third week of Advent and our sermon series “Prophetic Voices,” we may be surprised by the voice we hear today. If you ask the average churchgoer to make a list of the prophets, Mary's name would probably not make the list. We are more familiar with the names we will encounter later this week as being traditional “prophets,” for they wrote and had teaching ministries. Mary, on the other hand, is often credited more with quiet submission rather than a bold and active ministry that pointed people toward God's kingdom and God's will. In her sermon on Sunday, Rev. Kelley Lane will challenge this traditional view of Mary.

When we read Mary's exquisite “Magnificat” today, we can recognize her words as prophetic. She announces God's intention to turn everything upside down: God's kingdom, which the people of Israel have longed for and waited for, is coming into being. Mary has fully grasped the miracle of the Annunciation and used her own words to further clarify and glorify God's incredible gift...truly “magnifying the Lord.” Even more significant than Mary's words, however, are her actions. She submits to the danger and pain of childbirth and the shame of

an unwed pregnancy. Her “yes” to God is bold, active, and joyful. How can we, like Mary, use both our words and our bold “yesses” to God to help bring Christ into our world and offer his hope and deliverance to all?

Tuesday, December 10: Read Isaiah 35:1-4

There are many this time of year who are struggling with “weak hands” and “feeble knees.” Even more who have a “fearful heart.” Who do we know who is currently wandering through their own “wilderness” or experiencing a period of “dry land”? In this cold, dark season, it is easy for our neighbors and ourselves to become depressed, despondent, cynical, and isolated. How can we, like the prophets Isaiah or Mary, offer them light and hope? How can we find it ourselves? Can we help them see the “glory of the Lord” through rejoicing and singing (vs. 1-2)? Can we, like Mary, magnify the Lord through our words, deeds, and countenance? Can we point everyone to the hope of deliverance and justice that is coming...one that can turn the world upside down in the most glorious way?

Wednesday, December 11: Read Isaiah 35:5-10

This latter half of our Isaiah reading certainly describes a world turned upside down. If we break down each promise described in this scripture, we can recognize the hopes and needs we all have: physical health, a nurturing environment, personal safety, clear direction, reunion with loved ones, and eternal happiness. What are ways we can turn to Christ for these today? What are ways we can be Christ to others for these things? Let us take time today to inventory who in our immediate environment needs healing, nurturing, protection, direction, reconciliation, or just some joy in their day.

Thursday, December 12: Read Matthew 11:2-11

What made John the Baptist so special that Jesus said, “among those born of women no one has arisen greater”? Perhaps it was John’s unflinching faith in the coming Messiah, and the vitally important work he did in preparing the hearts and minds of those in his community to receive Christ. Even more impressive might be John’s willingness to step aside from his thriving ministry when Jesus arrives, continually pointing others to Christ’s greatness, not his own. We have so much to learn from John the Baptist, both in terms of faithfulness and humility. We know we are living in a broken world where bad things still happen and God’s kingdom is not yet fully realized. How can we prepare the way for Jesus’s healing and deliverance today, even as we wait to fully see it ourselves?

Friday, December 13: James 5:7-10

Just as a farmer cannot see his crops as they take root underground, we cannot see the roots of everything God is planting for us. Just as the farmer cannot harvest his crops until they are ready, we cannot reap the full harvest of our lives whenever we want; we must wait for the conditions to be right; mature. James urges us all to have patience – to refrain from “grumbling” – and to turn to the prophets for inspiration and direction. In this time of Advent, or “waiting,” we have much to take from James’ advice. Let us all wait with hope and joy, confident in the amazing groundwork God is laying in our lives and the incredible gifts they can bring.

Saturday, December 14: SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION: Luke 1:47a

“My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.”

Sunday, December 25: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of Common Confession: *God our Savior, we ask for your mercy. Though we have heard Mary’s song, we still seek security in pride and power and possessions. Though we know your story, we resist the cost of following you. We pass by those considered lowly in this world. We turn away from hungry people who still wait to be filled. Forgive us, we pray. Help us to work for the justice you intend. Make us messengers of the peace you bring. As we wait for you, turn our apathy into acts of love and service. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Emmanuel. Amen.*