



One Page Sermon

By Rev. Robb McCoy

December 1, 2024

You are a blessing

Recap of sermon from December 1, 2024

Scripture: Luke 1:26-38, Isaiah 43:1-7

“You are a blessing,” is not usually the first message people hear from church. Instead, they hear “you’re not enough,” “you are broken,” or “you’re a sinner.” In fact, “You are a blessing,” is not a common message from our culture either. Consumerism and commercialism is driven by the notion that you aren’t enough, that you don’t have enough, and that the only way to be satisfied in life is to get more. We are constantly bombarded with messages that we have gaping holes in our lives that need to be filled with money, materials, or status. Our whole economy and society is built on the idea that you are not enough. The Christian message should be counter-cultural.

The Good News is that you are a blessing. You are enough. This is the message God gives us in creation. When all is complete with Creation, we are called “good,” indeed, “very good.” When Mary is visited by God’s messenger, the message is not “get your act together,” or “get yourself right so that you can have this baby.” It is “Rejoice favored one.”

There is nothing about Mary that suggests that she should be favored by God. She is from Nazareth in Galilee, and while these places have romantic meaning attached to them now, there was nothing romantic about being from Galilee or Nazareth. Nazareth was a tiny town. Some scholars say it was about 100 people. It was a one well, one bath town miles from the most populous part of Galilee—the sea.

Galilee itself was known as “Galilee of the Gentiles.” It was technically a land of the Jewish people, but it was not a part of Judea. The heart of Jewish life was Judea, and Galilee was a backwater, strange place. The Jewish people of Galilee and Judea had about as much in common as the Illinoisans from Chicagoland and Marion. There was distrust, even violence that erupted between these two groups of people.

Mary was young, betrothed, and probably poor (no one in Nazareth would have been wealthy). There was nothing about her that society would have deemed “highly favored.”

Yet her story begins with blessing. The Christmas story begins with the angel declaring that she is blessed. Once her exchange with the angel is over, she rushes to her older relative’s house. There, Elizabeth greets her with even more joy.



“Favored One,” by Lauren Wright Pittman. Used with permission of Sanctified Art.

Elizabeth looks at Mary and declares “God has blessed you above all women.”

Mary acts with courage and faith, but at least part of her courage and faith comes from the affirmation she receives from Elizabeth. Mary’s journey begins with the reminder that she is blessed. These are the words for her beginning. They are the words for our beginning as well.

Our Advent journey, like Mary’s, begins with a reminder that you are blessed. Even if there is nothing outwardly blessed about you. Even if you don’t feel highly favored in this moment. Even if your path to this moment was littered with mistakes and failures. Right now, in this moment, you are blessed.

These words for the beginning come at a time when something special is happening at Two Rivers Church. Something is beginning. Something that involves people young and old. It is something that includes recent immigrants and from-birth citizens. It is beginning with English, with Swahili, with Kirundi, with Karen.

Something is happening at Two Rivers Church that is built on 190 years of history, but it also brand new. It is multi-cultural, multi-lingual, multi-generational, and it is good. Indeed, it is very good. You are a blessing, let’s start our journey here.

**Next Week: Second Sunday of Advent
Ruth 1**