

**"Gabriel, the Virgin and Me"**  
**Luke 1:26-38**

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church  
Emmett, Idaho

13 December Anno Domini 2000  
2nd Wednesday in Advent  
Pastor Michael L. McCoy

*Dear Baptized,*

*"The LORD Himself will give you a sign:  
Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son,  
and shall call His name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).*

Isaiah the Mighty Seer of old received this special revelation from the LORD and the prophet wrote down this Good News 700 years before the Word was fulfilled in the womb of a Jewish maiden. The Holy One of Israel would be coming into this cursed ground — this land plagued by man's Transgression whose only inheritance was a date with destruction. Immanuel, God with us, is terrifying until you hear that it His advent is as the Savior, *"for God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:17)*. In this land of gloom, a world darkened due to man's Sin — both in Isaiah's day and in our time — the message of the virgin conceiving the Son of God is stunning and comforting.

Almost 800 years after the Jewish prophet wrote of the immaculate conception of the Son of God, a Greek physician who had carefully investigated everything from the beginning, penned an orderly account of the Gospel. Luke the Evangelist did so in order that Theophilus and other God-lovers like you, dear people, might *"know the certainty of those things in which you were catechized" (Luke 1:4)*. Part of what St. Luke wrote is the visitation of the angel to the Jewish maiden with the announcement that she would be the Mother of God. Please listen to Luke 1:26-38 as we consider:

*... Gabriel, the Virgin and Me*

*Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, 'Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!' But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, 'Fear not, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the LORD God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His Kingdom there will be no end.' Then Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I do not know a man?' And the angel answered and said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come*

*upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One Who is to be born will be called the Son of God. Now indeed, Elizabeth your kinswoman has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible.' Then Mary said, 'Behold the maidservant of the LORD! Let it be to me according to your word.' And the angel departed from her."*

Thus far the Word of the LORD our God.

"Gabriel, the Virgin and Me." The LORD God is, as we confess, the Creator of all things visible and invisible. Gabriel is included in the good creation of the LORD God and is (present tense) one of God's holy angels who was created in the beginning. Gabriel has served His Creator from that time and does so today. This angel, whose name means "mighty man of God" or "God is my hero," appeared to the Old Testament prophet Daniel. Both of the angel's appearances to Daniel were for the purposes of conveying a message — one time to interpret a vision so that Daniel would understand what it meant (Daniel 8:15-16) and another time Gabriel flew swiftly to instruct Daniel and say to him, *"I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved"* (Daniel 9:22). Neither this messenger angel nor his word is not to be doubted. Four hundred years after catechizing Daniel, Gabriel appears to an old man named Zachariah who *"was serving as priest before God"* (Luke 1:6) and the angel of the LORD tells this descendant of Aaron that he and his wife, Elizabeth, will have a son. And when Zachariah said to the angel, *"How shall I know this? For I am an old man and my wife is advanced in years"* (Luke 1:18), the angel answered with firmness and fact, *"I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings. But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time"* (Luke 1:19-20).

"Gabriel, the Virgin and Me." Now gaze upon the landscape of the promised land scanning north from Jerusalem and fix your eyes upon a region called Galilee. Halfway between the inland Sea of Galilee and the Mediterranean Sea is a little town called Nazareth. One of the inhabitants of that place is a Jewish maiden, a pious woman probably still a teenager. Six months after the angel announced the impending birth of John the Baptizer, this daughter of Zion expected a life that was no different than many of her kinsfolk — she anticipated being married to a man who happened to be a carpenter. Indeed, this humble woman was *"a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary"* (Luke 1:27).

"Gabriel, the Virgin and Me." Who is the "me"? Well, it is not "me" your pastor speaking to you. It is "me" namely "you". So also it is "me" and not "I." This is because in matters concerning the Good News we are not subjects of verbs but objects of verbs. It is not, *"I have decided to follow Jesus"* but *"Jesus chose me."* In the Gospel it is false doctrine to say, *"I have wrought my salvation."* Orthodox doctrine confesses that Jesus *"has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious Blood and with His innocent suffering and death."* Me is the one sitting in the pew here this evening and hearing the Word.

"Gabriel, the Virgin and Me."

Gabriel, angel of the LORD and messenger of God,  
The Virgin, betrothed to Joseph and maidservant of the LORD,  
And Me? A descendant of the first Adam and a son of God.

Gabriel, the angel who stands in the Presence of God,  
Mary, the virgin who awaits the Presence of God,  
And Me? One who has entered into the Presence of the LORD.  
*"Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent  
by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth."*

Gabriel, the angel comes from heaven above to earth  
to bring Good News to a Nazareth home.  
The Virgin, goes about her vocation at that same home  
anticipating life with her beloved Joseph.  
And Me? What mercy and grace to be able to hear  
these Glad Tidings of great joy that the angel brings.

Gabriel, the messenger honored to tell the Good News,  
Mary, Isaiah's virgin hears the greeting of the angel of the LORD.  
And Me? Listen, oh soul, to the first Word of the angel ... *"Rejoice!"*  
*"Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you;  
blessed are you among women!"*

The angel, troubled earlier at Zachariah's unbelief,  
tells Mary, *"blessed are you among women!"*  
Mary, troubled now at Gabriel's greeting,  
*"considered what manner of greeting this was."*  
And Me? *"Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you"* too,  
though not in the way He would be with Mary.

Gabriel, Daniel's catechist, notes the troubles of the betrothed,  
The Virgin, the blessed woman, waits in silence to hear the Word,  
And Me? Listen, oh soul, to the second Word of the angel ... *"Fear not!"*  
*"Fear not, Mary, for you have found favor with God.  
And behold, you will conceive in your womb  
and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus.  
He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest;  
and the LORD God will give Him the throne of His father David.  
And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever,  
and of His Kingdom there will be no end."*

Gabriel, God's assigned angel has brought forth the Good News  
and delivered it to one woman in the world,  
Mary, Galilee's elect maiden will bring forth the Good News  
and deliver Him in the world in nine months.  
And Me? *"You have found favor with God!"*  
Chosen by God from eternity and born from above in time

Gabriel leaves the Temple of the LORD in eternity,  
the place where God dwells to speak the Word.  
Mary hears that her womb will be the temple of God for a time,  
the place where the LORD will dwell within her as she delivers the Word.

And Me? You have heard the Word and you are baptized! You may say,  
*"It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20).*  
And Me? You are absolved and sanctified! *"Do you not know that your body  
is the temple of the Holy Spirit, Who is in you?" (1 Cor. 6:19).*  
And Me? Oh soul, the Christ of God is within as you arise from His Table,  
bearing the Incarnate Son of God  
Who gave His Body and shed His Blood for you.  
And Me? Oh blessed vessel, hear the Word of Truth from Mary's Son,  
*"I and the Father are One" (John 10:30).*

Gabriel declares, for the first time in the history of the world,  
the name of Eve's anticipated Seed, *"you shall call His name Jesus."*  
Mary hears, for the first time in the life of the world,  
the name of the promised Messiah, the Christ of God, *"Jesus."*  
And Me? *"There is no other name under heaven  
given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).*

The angel proclaims that Mary's Son will be the Son of the Most High,  
The virgin asks the LORD's messenger *"how this can be?"*  
And Me? I hearken to Gabriel's answer which is God's Answer:  
*The Holy Spirit will come upon you,  
and the power of the Most High will overshadow you;  
therefore, also, that Holy One Who is to be born  
will be called the Son of God.*

Gabriel, himself sent from above,  
has proclaimed what no angel could conceive,  
Mary, herself conceived in sin,  
will conceive the Holy One without sin.  
And Me, myself whose nature is sinful, —  
oh my soul, behold God's promise conceived in eternity.

Gabriel listens to the virgin and waits for her response to this Good News,  
Mary replies to the angel and confesses her faith to this promise,  
And Me, I hearken to Mary's answer which is God's Answer:  
*"Behold the maidservant of the Lord!"*  
And Me, I hearken to Mary's word which is God's Word.  
*"Let it be to me according to your Word."*

Gabriel the angel, having heard Mary's word,  
and readying himself for upcoming Incarnational announcements,  
*"departed from her."*

Mary the virgin, having conceived God's Word,  
and preparing herself for the Birth of the Word made flesh,  
departed for the hill country.

And Me the one born from above, having heard the Word of God,  
and now preparing for the present time and for eternity,  
may depart in peace according to His Word. Amen.