

**A Sermon by The Reverend Deacon Cecily Sawyer Harmon+**  
**St. Thomas's Parish, Newark Delaware, 19711**  
**Advent 4 Year B December 24,2017**

**2 Samuel 7:1-11,16; Psalm 89:1-4, Romans 16:25-27, Luke 1:26-35**

**May the Words of My Mouth and the Meditations of My Heart be  
Acceptable to you Lord Christ My Rock and My Redeemer.**

**The Angel Gabriel says these moving words of great revelations to a  
young teenage girl, who is a poor virgin and newly engaged.**

**“Greetings favored one, The Lord is With You.” She was shocked as  
any of us might be, questioning, her mind racing, what is this that I am  
hearing, I don't understand am I dreaming? The Angel Gabriel puts  
Mary at ease, and tells her do not be afraid Mary for you have found  
favor with God. You will bear a son, and call him Jesus. What does all  
this mean? She questions how can she bear a child because she is a  
virgin? The Angel Gabriel explains to Mary that the Holy Spirit will**

come upon her, and the power of the Highest will overshadow her and the child to be born will be holy, and will be called the son of God. He also told her that her cousin Elizabeth who was of old age and had been barren was now in her sixth month with child, for nothing is impossible with God.

Sweet, young, innocent Mary replied, "here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."

This audacious and bold acceptance of God's plan for Mary was not an easy one. It was a statement of her faithfulness, love and obedience to God's call to her. She did not know what tomorrow or the the days ahead would bring for her and her family.

There was of course the reality of stoning her to death and the ostracizing of her family. She was engaged to Joseph, but why would he take on the disgrace of being with Mary now that she is with child. Mary took upon herself these challenges by saying YES to her God, let it be with me according to your word. Mary's surrender to God's call

**to her was not done out of humble weakness or fear but from her deep strength, grace, and willingness to give herself to the sacred.**

**How willing and available are we to open the ears of our heart and hear our Lord's call to us? There are great needs and many places that we need to be the hands, eyes, and feet for our Lord.**

**In a world of injustice, pain, corruption war, and indifference we need the message of Good News, we need the surprises of God taking the lowest to bring joy and salvation to us through the birth of his son, Jesús the Christ.**

**Like Mary as people of God, as his beloved we are to fall into the uncertainty of God. We are called and if we are still and listen we will be aware of the divine so that we may follow in the way that Jesus has led.**

**To be amazed by God means that in Christ Jesus there is no work, no ministry, no person beyond our compassionate reach. Like Mary and**

**Joseph, we must risk stepping out in faith into uncertain future. God's surprise sets our hearts free our burdens are lifted and our fears fade.**

**This past week I saw an interview on one of the morning shows that stirred within me, a strong feeling of hope, love, and compassion. We are living in such a chaotic time that I often think what now has happen overnight, what nightmare will we awake to.**

**This morning it was the horrific Amtrak train accident. The train was going 80 miles an hour in a 30-mile curve and plunged onto Highway 5 in the state of Washington. By the Grace of God, no cars were struck on the highway and the train had less than 100 individuals on board. We do know that there were fatalities and many injured. All but one of the cars fell on the highway.**

**A young man, an Eagle Scout was on his way to work with his girlfriend when they came upon the accident. He said he had received some first responder training and had boots in his car. He put on his boots and ran to assist people out of the wreckage. He came upon a**

**man who was unable to move because his legs were pinned. The man was able to speak but in great pain. This young twenty something man is looking into the camera and sharing earnestly and humbly how he prayed to God to give him the courage to be present and to give comfort to this stranger, his brother in Christ as he held his hand. He said he did what he thought he would need to be comforted.**

**We do not know when or how we will be called like Mary as this young man was called as God bearers, to bring comfort, and hope where there is darkness.**

**What we as followers of the Most High acknowledge is that no matter the hardships or impossibilities life may bring, nothing is impossible for the one we serve and bear.**

**Amen.**