

Willow Springs Worship, Sunday, December 17, 2023. 9:30 am

Simulcast on Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4743450556>

Meeting ID: 474 345 0556 Dial by your location +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Hosted by Elaine Good

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT How will we know . . . what's next?

One of the markers of a maturing faith is the willingness to sit with questions, often for a long time, sometimes for a lifetime. Even without answers, living with our questions is part of what shapes us as people of God. How do we find hope and joy in the questions of faith that may lead not to answers, but to more questions?

Welcome and Call to worship – Esther Johnson

Leader: My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior!

High voices: For the Mighty One has done great things for me,

Low voices: and holy is God's name.

Leader: God has brought down the powerful and lifted up the lowly.

People: What will God do next?

(*pause*) Lighting of the Advent Candles

All: Together we wonder.

Songs - Marilyn Eigsti

Children's time – Connie Kauffman

Scriptures – Luke 1:26-38, 46-55

Sermon - Invitation - Beyond the Fear? Journey with Joy!

Songs

Sharing/Pastoral prayer After prayer times "Lord, in your mercy" respond with "hear our prayer."

Song

Announcements:

We pass the globe banks as a reminder of all of us doing our part in world hunger. The 50 Cent offering will be shared with the Bureau County Food Pantry and Mennonite Central Committee. Children can drop coins in the globe bank as they walk to the Children's time. Adults can place their offering in the bank before or after the worship service.

Our church building desperately needs a new roof sooner than later. A contract has been signed for a new steel, hidden fastener roof to last for decades to come! If you would like to give some lead gifts to the project, please talk to Phil. We willing to send out letters sharing about an opportunity to give to many previously connected to Willow Springs as well. Do you have persons to suggest?

CALENDAR

Dec. 17 Third Sunday of Advent

Dec. 20 Elders' Meeting

Dec. 24 Fourth Sunday of Advent

Dec. 25 Christmas Day

Dec. 31 Candlelight Communion Service, 7:30 pm

Sending:

Leader: Together we wonder.

People: How will we know what's next?

Leader: Go and hold fast to what is good, rejoice always,
make straight the way of the Lord to journey with joy.

Online giving option: <https://tinyurl.com/donateWSMC>

Luke 1:26-38

The Birth of Jesus Foretold

²⁶In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

²⁹Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

³⁴"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

³⁵The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. ³⁶Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. ³⁷For no word from God will ever fail."

³⁸"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

Luke 1:46-55

Mary's Song

⁴⁶And Mary said:

"My soul glorifies the Lord

⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸ for he has been mindful

of the humble state of his servant.

From now on all generations will call me blessed,

⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me—

holy is his name.

⁵⁰ His mercy extends to those who fear him,

from generation to generation.

⁵¹ He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;

he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.

⁵² He has brought down rulers from their thrones

but has lifted up the humble.

⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things

but has sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel,
remembering to be merciful
⁵⁵ to Abraham and his descendants forever,
just as he promised our ancestors.”

The Angel taught Mary:

1. The baby would be named Jesus. Jesus come from the Hebrew "Yehoshuah," or "Yeshua" or Joshua which has meanings that "Yahweh is salvation" or "Yahweh saves" or "Yahweh will save." So there is deep meaning in the Name “Jesus.”
2. This baby would be a great person.
3. This baby would be called the Son of the Most High.
4. This baby would carry on in the Golden Age tradition of King David's line.
5. This baby would eventually reign over the People of God forever!

We wait in Hope.
We prepare in Peace.
We journey with Joy.