



Open to God

*Metropolitan Community Church
of Northern Virginia - Advent 2020*

First Sunday - "Open Your Eyes - See"

Second Sunday - "Open Your Ears - Listen"

Third Sunday - "Open Your Heart - Feel"

Fourth Sunday - "Open Your Self - Serve"

Advent 4

Advent Candle of Love

Open Your Self – Serve

Rev. Emma Chattin

Preaching

December 20, 2020

First Reading ~ Luke 1:26-38

Six months later (after Elizabeth had conceived), the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a young woman named Mary; she was engaged to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. Upon arriving, the angel said to Mary, “Rejoice, highly favored one! God is with you! Blessed are you among women!”

Mary was deeply troubled by these words and wondered what the angel’s greeting meant. The angel went on to say to her, “Fear not, Mary. You have found favor with God. You’ll conceive and bear a son, and give him the name, Jesus (Yeshua) – ‘Deliverance’. His dignity will be great, and he will be called the Only Begotten of God. God will give Jesus the judgment seat of David, his ancestor, to rule over the house of Jacob forever, and his reign will never end.

Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I have never been with a man?”

The angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you – hence the offspring to be born shall be called the Holy One of God. Know, too, that Elizabeth, your kinswoman, has conceived a child in her old age; she who was thought to be infertile is now in her sixth month. Nothing is impossible with God.

Mary said, “I am a servant of God, let it be with me as you say.”

Second Reading ~ *adapted from Rev. A. Powell Davies*

For the truth is that in the end loyalty is never an attachment to something external so much as it is an allegiance to something inside yourself. That which commands you outwardly has first possessed you inwardly.

Third Reading ~ *from Nelson Mandela*

In judging our progress as individuals, we tend to concentrate on external factors such as one's social position, influence and popularity, wealth and standard of education... But internal factors may be even more crucial in assessing one's development as a human being: honesty, sincerity, simplicity, humility, purity, generosity, absence of vanity, readiness to serve others— qualities within the reach of every soul —are the foundation of one's spiritual life. Never forget that a saint is a sinner that keeps on trying.

Fourth Reading ~ *adapted from Father Alfred D'Souza*

For a long time it had seemed to me that my life was about to begin— real life. But there was always some obstacle in the way. Something to be got through first, some unfinished business, something to find, a goal to be gained, a debt to be paid. Then my life would begin. At last it dawned on me... these obstacles were my life.