

Fourth Sunday in Advent:
Sermon Text: Luke 1:26-38
Date preached: December 21, 2008
Note: 2 baptisms

Come, Lord Jesus and be our guest. Grant us bold and trusting faith, that we might be instruments and bearers of your love. Amen

What have we expected to happen this Advent season? Did we even enter the season of Advent with any expectations? Have we entered the season of Advent with the thinking that nothing will be too different at the conclusion of this Advent and Christmas season?

I must admit there were some small things that I did expect. I expected to receive Christmas cards. I expected to take Jordan to see Santa at least once. I expected to take part in the traditions of St. Paul's that while they are familiar to you, in some cases would be new to Amy, Jordan and me.

I can't say that I entered this Advent season with any grandiose expectations. At the same time however, what if something extraordinary did take place? What if we entered the Advent season expecting God to do something big?

As the Angel told Mary, "For nothing will be impossible with God." If nothing is impossible with God, than fellow brothers and sisters in Christ get ready for great things to happen.

Get ready for a young woman to indeed bear a son. We are, after all, about to gather and celebrate a miracle. How many of us would expect to see God in a manger, born of a couple seemingly too young for such an awesome responsibility? Or, how about the older couple who appear to be beyond child bearing years only to discover, that they will have a son.

But Pastor, those things happened long ago. There haven't been any virgin births since Jesus. True. But there have been births. And while it seems that it is easy to get pregnant, for many couples that is not the case. Some couples are told it is impossible, only to discover that at a time least expected, they did have a child.

For nothing will be impossible with God. Expect God to claim children as his own, even when those children have no idea what is happening. They feel water dripping off their head. They see smiling people staring at them.

In that moment, something special happened. By water and the Word, God claimed them as his own and adopted them into the great cloud of witnesses, such as happened for Kendall and Gianna.

Only God can take us and make us his own using such simple means as water. We can wash and scrub ourselves until our skin peels off and still not be made clean from our sin; yet with one Word of God we are forgiven.

For nothing will be impossible with God. Do we believe that God means us? Are we quick to answer God's call upon us or do we look for excuses ranging from I'm not good enough, or I can't do it as well as so and so did.

As faithful disciples of Christ, we, too, have been called to do new and exciting things. God has blessed us with unique gifts and talents, and God has placed us in opportunities to use and share the gifts. We may wonder at times whether we have the right "stuff" to do what we are called to do be it grand or very simple.

Can I start a new career? Can I really be a good parent? Can I find a new job in this difficult economy? Will I be able to get by living on 90 percent of what God has given me as I tithe the 10 percent God asks us to return to him? And what would I say if one of the confirmation students or new members asked me to be their sponsor. The task often seems impossible. We know ourselves only too well our weaknesses, our failings, our lack of experience.

For nothing will be impossible with God. God is so amazing that his own Son can at the same time sit at his right hand and be present among us as we gather to receive his body and blood.

Expect God to do great things. Expect God to do great things in our lives, from reconciling broken relationships to bringing hope in a helpless situation. Expect God to do great things through you. Mary and Elizabeth, while remembered in scripture are no different than us.

With the help of the Holy Spirit they were able to accept the Lord's calling upon their lives and say something to the affect, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."

Here you are servants of the Lord. Expect God to do great things among us through ordinary means.