



Raquette Lake Chapel Sunday Blast *December 10, 2023: The Second Sunday in Advent*

The Birth of Jesus Foretold - The Angel Gabriel visits Mary

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her. (Luke 1:26-38, NRSV)

What does the 2nd Advent candle stand for?

The second candle in Advent symbolizes faith and is called the "Bethlehem Candle." It reminds us of Mary and Joseph's faith on their arduous trip to the small city where Jesus was born. As we light the candle of faith this week, we give thanks for God's promise of love for us and all creation and pray for renewed faith this Advent season.



The Journey Begins With a Walk

What do we know about Mary, the woman central to the Advent story? Surprisingly, not much. The four Gospels paint different pictures of Mary. We do know this: Mary was a Jewish peasant girl in the small village of Nazareth. She undoubtedly possessed a solid faith in God as Gabriel testified: "Greetings, favored one. The Lord is with you." It took Mary's intense courage and **faith** to make the journey to Bethlehem.



The journey to the manger begins, not with passive waiting, but with a walk. Like Mary and Joseph, we begin our journey toward Christmas in Advent. Let us walk with the Holy Spirit, mindfully and intentionally and faithfully, with our hearts and minds open to all the possibilities this expectant season brings.



Prayer box: Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation and your angels to announce Jesus' birth: Give us grace to heed their messages and walk onward this Advent with **faith** in You, trusting in your grace as our guiding lantern. And Lord, bring healing for Liz and Maggie and bless their doctors, nurses, and caregivers; bring peace in the Middle East and Ukraine; comfort those suffering from natural disasters; bless all those who work for peace. We ask all these things in the name of Jesus, the source of our hope and the light of the world. Lord, hear our prayer! **Amen**