

## “The Women of Advent – Mary”

Isaiah 7:10-14 & Luke 1:26-56

As we continue through this Advent Season, we have examined the roles of a few of the prominent women in the salvation history. We witnessed the faults and failings and faith of Eve.

We witnessed the laughter of Sarah. First, her laughter at the notion of having a child in her old age. Then her laughter of joy as Isaac is born.

Tonight, we turn our attention to Mary, the Mother of our Lord. The word of promise given to this young Hebrew girl would have been bewildering. Like the message of mercy to Eve, it seemed too good to be true. Like the miraculous circumstance of Sarah being with child when she is well past the age of childbearing, this virgin girl was carrying in her a child whose presence was totally a gift from God.

There are so many things we could say about the mother of our Lord. We could acknowledge her for her faithfulness in her response to the angel “I am the Lord’s servant. May it be to me as you have said.” We could credit her for her faithfulness in the face of the ridicule she was certain to receive. Being an unwed mother was not just a social faux pas, she would be unwelcome to her neighbors, and could be stoned to death under the Law. We could stand in awe of the lovely words of the Magnificat given to her to speak (or sing as the case may be).

But as we consider who Mary was in respect to the other women we have pondered this Advent season – we see Eve as the mother of all of

mankind. She carried within her the children of Adam and the promise of a Savior. And all of God's faithful worshiped the Lord who had mercifully promised forgiveness and salvation.

Sarah carried within her the son of Abraham and the promise of a Savior. And all of God's faithful worshiped the Lord who promised salvation.

Mary carried within her the Son of God – the fulfiller of the promise. And all of God's faithful except for Mary, Joseph, Zechariah, Elizabeth, and John the Baptist were oblivious to what was happening.

The faithful were going about their business, going to the temple in Jerusalem, offering their lambs of sacrifice for their sin, gathering in synagogues, and all the while (as Elizabeth and John the Baptist demonstrate) the place where God can be found is in the womb of Mary. She carries in her the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

For those nine months, the womb of Mary is the church – the place where God dwells. The promise made to Eve and Sarah is ultimately fulfilled in the child of Mary.

In these weeks leading up to the celebration of the birth of our Lord, we take on the historic role of being watchful, being hopeful, and preparing ourselves to receive Him who frees us from our sin.

With that in mind, we gather as the church – for our bodies are now where Christ dwells. Jesus tells His disciples "I am in you . . . Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." We gather as the church, confess our sin, and hear the promise of salvation as we come before the Lord's altar and have forgiveness and salvation pronounced in the words of absolution.

Salvation is ours. Eternal life is ours. Christ has come as the child of Mary. We wait in anticipation for Him to come again. Amen.