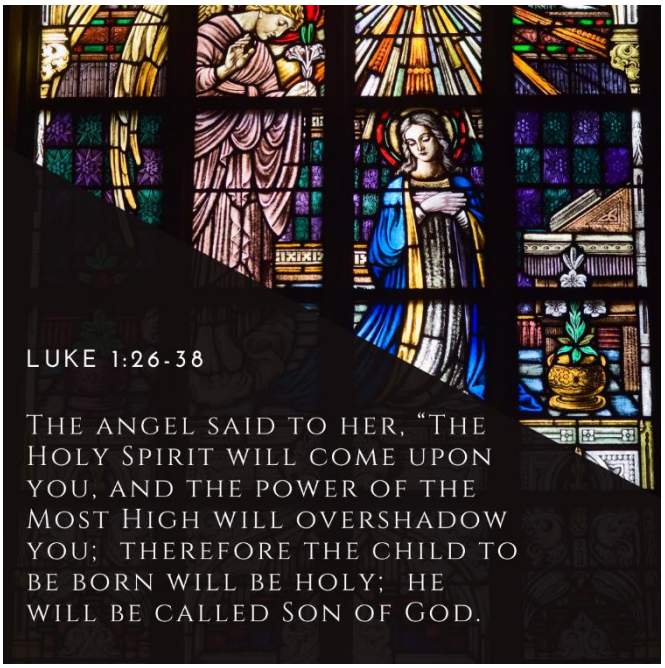
March 22, 2021 Lenten Devotional
Luke 1:26-38 – “The Annunciation”
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In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. And he came to her and said, ‘Greetings, favoured 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 favour 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 for ever, 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

Reflection

Married or not, I can imagine that being a pregnant, working-class woman in Nazareth at this time would not have been an easy life. My best guess is that Mary’s days were consumed with tasks like mending and washing clothes, stoking the fire while cooking meals, trekking to the well, cleaning the fish that the men brought back to shore, and perhaps feeding the family chickens and milking a goat or two.

I'd also guess that along with back pain and fatigue, Mary’s pregnancy came with scorn, judgment, and her own dose of social distancing. Certainly, this visit from the angel Gabriel was not followed by a solely joyful time for Mary and her family. And yet, one great joy of the Annunciation- for Mary and for us- is that our God is a God of transformation. In this story, God transforms your average, small town girl into the Mother of Divine Grace, and in doing so, calls her to confront the oppressive, societal realities of unwed women in 1st century Palestine.

Now here *we* are, in 21st century America; where pervasive illness, white supremacy, political unrest, and income inequalities are our oppressive, societal realities and where people are crying out in the streets for transformation. Like Mary, God is moving us away from who the world tells we are and towards who God calls us to be. However, unlike Mary, we don’t have to ponder so much because *our* path of resistance and reconstruction has already been laid. More beautiful yet, as we journey on this path, God is with us, too.