

GRACE CHURCH, SCARBOROUGH



THE *WORD* BECAME FLESH
AND MADE HIS HOME AMONG US

- JOHN 1:14

MARY'S VOCATION

And Mary said to the Angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." *Luke 1:26-38.*

December 7, 2023

CHRISTMAS PASTORAL LETTER

Dear Friends in Christ,

Here is a brief reflection, meditation, as we can imagine Mary's awareness of her vocation, or being called by God.

The conversation between the Angel Gabriel and Mary, as recorded in Luke's gospel (*Luke 1:26-38*) remains a vital text for us to meditate, imagine, and believe God's intention to dwell on Earth, through the birth of Jesus by his mother Mary. We confess this mystery of God's favour or grace towards Mary, saying, "**He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary.**"

Let us all reflect and meditate on this Christmas narrative, in which we become aware of Mary's vocation. Through God's messenger Gabriel, Mary listened and responded to more than she could understand, saying, "how can this be since I am a virgin." *Luke 1:34b.*

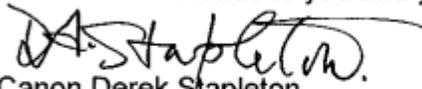
Mary imagined herself being "conceived by the Holy Spirit." She responded from her heart. According to St. Paul such a faith response happens when, "**With the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you.**" I invite us to discern this vital quality of faith which is giving our heart to the One who knows and calls us. We are aware that Mary committed herself to God who knew her, and engaged her to participate in God's plan of salvation.

Our vocation:

As we observe the seasons of Advent and Christmas, the Word of God comes to us as we listen faithfully to discern whose we are and what God in Christ wants us to become. Allowing the Holy Spirit to awaken in us our call to be servants and disciples of Christ, we are always in a state of becoming.

Being mindful of the Advent season, we listen to the "voice" of John the Baptist preparing us for the coming of Christ. With the Holy Spirit as our Resource, we open our lives for Christ to indwell us, and in His newness of life, we live generous lives. We are disciples of Christ who are blessed by God's Gift who keeps on giving.

A blessed Christmas to you and yours.


Canon Derek Stapleton,
Interim Priest-in-Charge