

# Living Stories Sermon for Grace, Justice & Hope

## LUKE 1:39-55: THE VISITATION AND THE SONG OF MARY

First, view the original telling of this story on Advent 4, Year C (December 22, 2024), at [this link](#). Then, follow the instructions below to share this Living Stories sermon in your local faith community.

### Instructions

1. Gather & print materials (details below).
  - a. Both script & images can be printed two per page.
2. Practice the story script.
  - a. [Brackets indicate the exegetical introduction].
  - b. *Italics indicate stage directions*.
  - c. Normal text indicates the scripture reading according to the CEB translation.
3. Choose your prepared wonderings (around 6 is good, ending with wondering about the Good News).
4. If you can, reach out for the most up-to-date Living Stories training materials and more free Living Stories Sermons scripts: [peterlevenstrong@saintgregorys.org](mailto:peterlevenstrong@saintgregorys.org).
5. You're good to go! May the Holy Spirit surprise you with bountiful grace during the co-creation of your communal sermon.

**Materials** (Digital materials, including scripts, images, and coloring pages, are copyright St. Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church, and are free for you to use. Links to physical materials are suggestions, should you need to purchase additional materials.)

- [Underlay](#)
- [House](#)
- [3 adult figures](#)
- [Digital content](#) (Coloring pages, LSS Preacher Notes, and 3 story graphics to print on cardstock) Put the coloring pages with crayons on clipboards for whoever wants one, and have holders or easels ready for the printed images for your use during the sermon.

### Story

*Place the underlay. Place the home on top and Elizabeth and Zechariah in the center of the home. Place Mary on the bottom left.*

Today, we are jumping back in time from Luke 3, where we were last week, to the first chapter of Luke's Gospel. Today's story takes us back to before John the Baptist was proclaiming his ministry of repentance and baptism in the wilderness to a time when he was still an unborn child in the womb of his mother, Elizabeth. Zechariah, Elizabeth's husband, was unable to speak from the time the Angel Gabriel appeared to him and told him he and his wife Elizabeth would conceive and bear a son in their old age until the circumcision and naming of their son John eight days after his birth.

*Mary moves to Elizabeth's house.*

Mary got up and hurried to a city in the Judean highlands. *Zechariah opens the door and greets Mary outside. Mary enters and goes to Elizabeth.* She entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. *Elizabeth reels from the baby's jump.* When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. With a loud voice, she blurted out, "God has blessed you above all women and he has blessed the child you carry. Why do I have this honor that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy. Happy is she who believed that the Lord would fulfill the promises he made to her."

Mary said, "With all my heart, I glorify the Lord! In the depths of who I am, I rejoice in God, my savior. He has looked with favor on the low status of his servant. *Place the first easel and image.* Look! From now on, everyone will consider me highly favored because the mighty one has done great things for me. Holy is his name. He shows mercy to everyone, from one generation to the next, who honors him as God. He has shown strength with his arm. *Place the second easel and image.* He has scattered those with arrogant thoughts and proud inclinations. He has pulled the powerful down from their thrones and lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty-handed. *Place the third easel and image.* He has come to the aid of his servant Israel, remembering his mercy, just as he promised to our ancestors, to Abraham and to Abraham's descendants forever."

### Wonderings

- Elizabeth calls Mary "blessed among women" and celebrates her faith and courage. I wonder what it would look like for us to celebrate and affirm the courage of women in our own communities.
- Mary sings of God pulling the powerful from their thrones and lifting up the lowly. I wonder what this might mean for those experiencing injustice or oppression today.
- Mary's *Magnificat* speaks of God filling the hungry with good things and sending the rich away empty. I wonder how this vision of justice and abundance could guide our work for the safety and dignity of all people.
- Zechariah is silent in this story, while Mary and Elizabeth are full of prophetic words and actions. I wonder what this says about the unique ways women bear witness to God's justice and hope.
- Mary's journey to Elizabeth's home is one of seeking connection and support in a time of uncertainty. I wonder how we can create spaces of sanctuary and solidarity for those in need of safety and care.
- The *Magnificat* declares God's faithfulness to the promises made to Abraham and his descendants. I wonder how we see God's faithfulness in the stories of women who have resisted injustice and worked for change.