The first Advent would have looked altogether different if ordinary Mary did not discover the capacity to embrace, affirm, and accept an extraordinary dream. Luke details what happened when a teen from the country was invited to participate fulfilling prophetic pronouncement and giving birth to our Savior!

I had dreams—regular dreams.

My father had just arranged my betrothal to Joseph.

I dreamed of what life may be like for us.
I could imagine-- the smell of his shop and how he’d come home after his work.
I imagined my life as a mother and a wife.
I knew what life was going to look like. As much as I could...
I was feeling prepared for what was to come.

And then Gabriel came.
An angel!
An angel stood and spoke to me one day.
“Greetings! Favored One – the Lord is with you!”
An angel— greeted me!

And gave me a new name!

Favored One!

I was shocked- surprised...completely overwhelmed...

How often has an angel greeted you?
And he said “The Lord is with you!”

Now- right now in this moment—**not some day in the future**—not when I go to the temple to pray- but here **now** in this moment the Lord is with me!

From then on my life changed.

The angel gave brought an annunciation—and announcement that changed my life forever.

Have you ever had an announcement that changed your life?

This announcement- it was a radical departure from what I had planned—from all I had known!

God dreamed a bigger dream for me -- than I could have ever imagined.

God **scattered** my imagination--- and brought a possibility that I couldn’t have prepared for.

The angel told me **not to be afraid**—and again said “I had found favor with God.” And that I would conceive a bear a son and name him Jesus. He would be great and the reign of his kingdom would have no end!

I later learned that my cousin- Elizabeth would also have a son—her husband Zechariah had also received a visit from the angel. Zechariah- did not understand and said, “How will I know that this is so?”

I’m not sure he didn’t so much not **believe** as he just **wanted to know what he didn’t know**...

****wanted to know what he didn’t know****.... I guess many of us feel that way at some time....

But because of this - the angel said that Zechariah would be mute until these things came to pass.
He lost voice for the whole time Elizabeth was pregnant until the time came that she gave birth to John. Elizabeth gave birth to John who would prepare the way for Jesus.

Zechariah—he was mute so that he could give birth to something else---he just was not ready to give birth to mystery—to God’s presence—to the dream God was fulfilling—he had to be able to say yes without knowing exactly how God does what God does.

It wasn’t that I did not believe—I didn’t need to know how God would do this...

I wondered ‘How can this be?”

I didn’t so much seek knowledge and information—as I just pondered ....

How does God do what God does?

I was more in awe than I was wanting knowledge.... I just felt in awe—wow!

How ??!! How can this be? How can this happen to me?

How can God choose me?

How can God do all God does?

Are you ever just in awe of this?

The angel said that the Holy Spirit would come upon me and the POWER of the Most High would overshadow me.

This child to be born would be Holy!

He would indeed by the Son of God. And I—Mary—I would be the mother of God. Later the church would call me the Theotokos—which means “mother of God.”
How -- how could I give birth to the Son of God? How could I be the one who could give birth to the dream that would come alive to save the world?

The angel said—“nothing is impossible with God”

Some people never dream impossible dreams—perhaps because we get too comfortable, complacent, perhaps we are crippled by a lack of imagination and a refusal to be released to the power of God’s possibilities!

We become paralyzed by what we have prepared for—when perhaps we could be derailed out of our dream—for a bigger dream --- a God-sized dream!

I am so thankful Gabriel came and announced to me and awakened me to the dream God wanted me to give birth to!

God’s dream – was so big! It would bring change... it wasn’t the dream I had prepared for... but it was better

Rather than lose my voice like, Zechariah—I felt that for the first time ever---

I found it!

I found my voice!

I responded to this dream!
I said yes!

Yes—I would give birth to a dream that could change the world!

God was inviting me to be part of something great!

God cannot be contained!

And yet—I would give birth .... To God..... give birth- to sharing God with the world!

The Incarnation of God—in Jesus Christ – Emmanuel- God with us.

God was coming to the world-and I was going to give birth to this gift for all the world!
How could I say no to that?
    And yet..... I could have...
But when the mystery of God’s love breaks through – do I run from it?
Do I ask for explanations and plans...
Or do I just say yes?
I don’t need to know everything God dreams—
I just need to keep saying yes to the new things God was going to do!
Perhaps that is why God chose me--- yes- I’m young, unmarried, a virgin, uninformed, I do not have all the answers---
And... maybe that is okay.
Maybe it’s okay for me not to be the one with all the answers.
Maybe it’s okay for me to not be the one who plans what my own dreams will be... perhaps I just need to listen to God’s dreams for me.

I felt comfort when the angel said, “Do not be afraid.”
And I felt assurance when the angel said, “You have found favor with God.”
And I even felt prepared to know there was a plan--- “You are going to conceive and give birth to God’s son.”
May have not been the plan I had figured out...—but God’s plan .
People always wonder – they ask me, “Mary, did you know?
Did I know that my baby boy would one day save the world?
Did I know?
I may be a young virgin- but I knew what I was saying yes to.
I was Saying yes to-- Giving birth to a dream that will change the world.
It was a dream my people had yearned for.

But it was not just for my people—I knew that even before the wise men came bringing their gifts!

My son was not only the dream for my people—but for all people!

The news of his birth was good news for ALL people – everywhere!

This dream would shape my destiny forever – but my Son would also change the destiny of all who would say yes to the dream he offered.

That day... I said yes to a new identity – as God’s favored one

Favored—did that mean God loved me more than others?

No—favor meant grace—I had been given grace.

It wasn’t because I was particularly special—or good enough for God to come.

Favored—was Graced—I had been graced by God.

That was my new identity—given grace.

And Awakened to a new reality

God used me to give birth to the dream of Christ—who brought grace for all the world!

**You** – you are Favored!

All of you!

I gave birth to grace=== for all the world!

You are favored!

All of you! The grace of Jesus Christ has come for you!

You may have a dream you feel prepared for.... *But what* about God’s dream?

I stood on the edge of a mystery and miracle!

Will you stand there with me?
And give birth to God’s dream?
Can you say yes?
I have come today to give you and announcement like Gabriel gave to me!
Gabriel told me that the Lord is with me—The Lord is with you!
Christ came! For you!
Can you say yes to this dream?
And step into a moment where Annunciation becomes Incarnation?
Incarnation means God’s word made flesh!
Can Christ come alive in you?
Can you say yes to a dream of the incarnation in your life?
Can you birth God’s dream into reality?
When we give birth to the reality of God’s dream—God’s presence—then—
New names are given—favored ones—lives are changed—the world
encounters the power of God.
God makes possible what we think is impossible!
God doesn’t wait for the world to be ready— without God’s grace I don’t
think I would have been ready to say yes to this dream...
God’s grace awakened something in me....
Something I’d been waiting for.... But I didn’t know it...
The world was waiting to be awakened to this grace that is already present!
We are still waiting for this dream to be fully alive!
But Christ did not wait.
God didn’t wait to send Jesus until the world was ready!
God said yes!
My son Jesus didn’t wait to come until people and nations were at peace
Jesus came while we- prisoners of sin, cried out for release!

He did not wait for the perfect time,
He came when the need was deep and great.
He dined with sinners in all their grime,
Turned water into wine.
My son Jesus, did not wait.

Till hearts were pure.
In joy he came
To a tarnished world of sin and doubt.
To a world like ours, of anguished shame
He came, and his Light would not go out.

He came to a world which did not mesh,
To heal its tangles, shield its scorn.
In the mystery of the Word made Flesh
The Maker of the stars was born.

**We** cannot wait!
We cannot wait till the world is sane
To raise our songs with joyful voice,
Today we’ve lit the candle of joy
Will you Rejoice?
Will you say yes and let God birth a dream in you?
Will you rejoice!
And Raise your voice!
It was in His grace that I found my voice
And through His grace I gave birth to the dream of a Savior for the world!
Through God’s grace you too can awaken to this dream
You too can give birth to this dream!
Let the power of the Holy Spirit come over you!
Rejoice!
Christ has come and is coming still!

- In red from
- Madelein L’Engle poem