

Plot Twists  
Advent Lessons and Carols service  
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How many of you are fans of mystery or thriller novels, shows or movies? Really good mysteries or thrillers have one thing in common: a terrific plot twist usually near the ending. Something that makes you say, "Wow, I didn't see that coming!"

You know the Bible is full of stories like this. The people chosen by God to be the models for the world and build a righteous nation are, wait for it, slaves in Egypt! The one who will lead them out of slavery is, wait for it, the convicted murderer with a stutter named Moses. The person who will help Joshua bring the people into Jericho and the Promised Land is, wait for it, Rahab, the woman who runs the local brothel. The person God chooses to be the great king, the model for all kings, is, wait for it, the youngest son of a local shepherd in the small town of Bethlehem.

Generations later, the woman chosen to bear the child whose body holds God-come-to earth will be, wait for it, a young, unmarried woman in a small rural community. And the woman who will bear the prophet to prepare the way for Jesus' ministry is, wait for it, about 60 years old!

Who says God doesn't have a sense of humor or drama?

Today in our service of lessons and carols for Advent, I invite you to listen to the scriptures we are sharing to discern those funky plot twists, the places where the unexpected happens, where God brings good from bad, joy from despair, hope where hope seems lost. Listen, because this is how God works. It's how God has always worked. It's how God works now.

Because we don't expect the plot twists, sometimes we miss them. Sometimes we misinterpret them, in our own lives and in the

world. Sometimes we don't believe what Paul says, that God can work for good through anything. Anything. Even that which is decidedly not good. And God does this through us when we least expect it. We become the fulcrum of the plot twist if, like Mary, we let it happen!

Listen, now, for the great Author of the great story of which we are still a part, writes love into every plot twist. Including yours. Amen.