

Sundays at 9:00AM

May 11, 2025

The Jefferson Spirit



Women Who Carry the Promise

Luke 1:39–56 captures a sacred moment between two women—Mary and Elizabeth—who are both carrying miraculous promises from God. When Mary visits her cousin, Elizabeth’s child (John the Baptist) leaps in the womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, blesses Mary’s faith. In response, Mary offers a powerful song of praise known as the *Magnificat*, declaring the greatness of God who lifts the humble, fills the hungry, and keeps His promises. This passage is not just about motherhood—it’s about faith, joy, and the way God works through the overlooked and ordinary to bring about His extraordinary plan.

Order of Worship

Welcome

Time of Reflection and Prayer (Gwyn Reynolds—Sweet Hour of Prayer)

Opening Prayer

*Call to Worship (Congregation)

Leader: Come, let us gather with joy—like Mary and Elizabeth, meeting with wonder and expectation.

People: We come to celebrate the God who sees us, calls us, and works through us.

Leader: Blessed is she who believed that the Lord would fulfill His promise to her!

People: We come with faith in our hearts and praise on our lips.

Leader: Our souls magnify the Lord, and our spirits rejoice in God our Savior!

People: For the Mighty One has done great things for us—holy is His name!

All: Let us worship the God who lifts up the lowly, fills the hungry, and remembers His mercy from generation to generation!

Children’s Message

***Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, p.138 UMC Hymnal**

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:39–56

Sermon: Women Who Carry the Promise

(Gwyn Reynolds—I Heard My Mother Call My Name in Prayer)

Offertory - UMC Choir

***Doxology - p.95 UMC Hymnal**

At the Name of Jesus, p.168 UMC Hymnal

***Affirmation of Faith**

**We believe in God,
the Creator of heaven and earth,
who lifts up the humble and remembers the forgotten,
who brings down the proud and fills the hungry with good things.**

**We believe in Jesus Christ,
the Promised One,
carried in the womb of Mary,
heralded by Elizabeth,
and born into a world in need of light.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
who fills hearts with joy,
causes children to leap in the womb,
and gives voice to songs of praise across generations.**

**We believe that God's mercy is from everlasting to everlasting,
that His promises never fail,
and that our souls can magnify the Lord,
for He has done great things for us—
and holy is His name. Amen.**

Announcements

Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Forgive us, Lord.

Breathe Your Spirit into us again.

Open our hearts to Your presence.

Set us free to believe, to love, and to be sent in Your name.

Amen.

***Lift High the Cross, p.159 UMC Hymnal**

***Sending Forth**

Postlude

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:39-56

Mary Visits Elizabeth

³⁹ At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰ where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!" ⁴³ But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!"

Mary's Song

⁴⁶ And Mary said:

"My soul glorifies the Lord

⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸ for he has been mindful

of the humble state of his servant.

From now on all generations will call me blessed,

⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me—

holy is his name.

⁵⁰ His mercy extends to those who fear him,

from generation to generation.

⁵¹ He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;

he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.

⁵² He has brought down rulers from their thrones

but has lifted up the humble.

⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things

but has sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel,

remembering to be merciful

55 to Abraham and his descendants forever,

just as he promised our ancestors."

⁵⁶ Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home.

Interesting Facts About Luke 1:39–56

- **Two Miraculous Pregnancies Collide** Mary and Elizabeth are both experiencing miraculous pregnancies—Mary, a virgin, and Elizabeth, previously barren and well past childbearing age. Their meeting symbolizes the intersection of the old covenant (Elizabeth's child, John the Baptist) and the new (Jesus).
- **The First Recognition of Jesus Comes from a Fetus** When Mary greets Elizabeth, John the Baptist leaps in the womb (v. 41). This is the **first recorded recognition of Jesus' presence**—and it comes from an unborn child. It highlights the prophetic role of John even before birth.
- **The First Christian Song in Scripture** Mary's *Magnificat* (v. 46–55) is considered the **first hymn of praise in the New Testament**. It has been set to music, chanted, and sung by Christians for over 2,000 years.

- **Mary's Song Echoes Hannah's Song** The *Magnificat* closely mirrors **Hannah's song** in 1 Samuel 2:1–10. Both women thank God for lifting up the humble and bringing down the proud. This connection shows Mary's deep knowledge of Scripture and places her in the tradition of faithful women God uses for His redemptive purposes.
- **The Holy Spirit Is Active Throughout** The Spirit fills Elizabeth (v. 41), causes the child to leap (v. 44), and inspires Mary's praise. This scene is rich with Holy Spirit activity even before Pentecost, reminding us that God's Spirit has always been moving.
- **Mary Is Likely a Teenager—Yet Bold and Theologically Deep** Despite her youth, Mary speaks with extraordinary spiritual insight, quoting themes from the Psalms and the prophets. She becomes a model of courageous, reflective faith.
- **The Word "Magnificat" Comes from Latin** The title of Mary's song comes from the Latin translation of Luke 1:46: "*Magnificat anima mea Dominum*"—"My soul magnifies the Lord."
- **The Passage Centers on Women—Unusual for Ancient Literature** In a culture where women's voices were often marginalized, Luke gives center stage to Mary and Elizabeth. This passage highlights the **faith and spiritual authority of women** in God's story.

Old Testament Connections in Luke 1:39–56

- **Elizabeth's barrenness** echoes women like **Sarah, Rebekah, and Hannah**, who were also barren until God intervened (Genesis 21, Genesis 25, 1 Samuel 1).
- **Mary's song (the Magnificat)** closely mirrors **Hannah's prayer** in 1 Samuel 2:1–10—both celebrate God lifting the humble and opposing the proud.
- Mary refers to **God's mercy to Abraham's descendants** (Luke 1:55), recalling the covenant made with **Abraham** in Genesis 17:7.
- The phrase "*He has filled the hungry with good things*" reflects God's care for the poor in Psalms and prophetic books like **Isaiah** (Psalm 107:9; Isaiah 58:10–11).
- **John the Baptist** (Elizabeth's son) is born in the spirit of **Elijah**, fulfilling the prophecy in **Malachi 4:5–6**, preparing the way for the Lord.
- The concept of a coming **Messiah** is rooted in Old Testament promises such as **Isaiah 7:14** and **Micah 5:2**, both pointing to Jesus' birth and role.

Luke 1:39–56 Quiz: "Leaping, Singing, and Praising!"

1. Who did Mary hurry to visit after the angel's announcement?

- A) Her cousin Rachel
- B) Her sister Martha
- C) Her relative Elizabeth
- D) Her neighbor Naomi

2. Where did Elizabeth live?

- A) Nazareth
- B) Bethlehem
- C) The hill country of Judea
- D) Jerusalem

3. What happened to Elizabeth when she heard Mary's greeting?

- A) She fainted
- B) She was filled with the Holy Spirit
- C) She began prophesying
- D) She offered Mary food

4. What did the baby in Elizabeth's womb do?

- A) Kicked her side
- B) Was still and quiet
- C) Leaped for joy
- D) Turned upside down

5. What relationship does Elizabeth recognize between Mary and the child she is carrying?

- A) She thinks Mary is confused
- B) She calls Mary "mother of my Lord"
- C) She doesn't mention the child
- D) She doubts Mary's story

6. What does Elizabeth call Mary?

- A) Highly favored
- B) A servant of the Lord
- C) Blessed among women
- D) The chosen one

7. What is the first line of Mary's song?

- A) "Rejoice, O Israel!"
- B) "Praise be to the Lord!"
- C) "My soul glorifies the Lord"
- D) "The Lord is my Shepherd"

8. What is Mary's song traditionally called?

- A) The Gloria
- B) The Magnificat
- C) The Benedictus
- D) The Hallelujah

9. What does Mary say God has done to the proud?

- A) Rewarded them
- B) Strengthened them
- C) Scattered them
- D) Ignored them

10. Who does Mary say God has helped, remembering His mercy?

- A) The poor
- B) The Gentiles
- C) Israel
- D) The shepherds

Answer Key:

- 1. C) Her relative Elizabeth
- 2. C) The hill country of Judea
- 3. B) She was filled with the Holy Spirit
- 4. C) Leaped for joy
- 5. B) She calls Mary "mother of my Lord"
- 6. C) Blessed among women
- 7. C) "My soul glorifies the Lord"
- 8. B) The Magnificat
- 9. C) Scattered them
- 10. C) Israel

Sermon Insights

Sermon Lesson:

In Luke 1:39–56, we witness the powerful meeting of two women—Mary and Elizabeth—both carrying promises that would change the world. Their encounter is more than a joyful visit; it’s a moment of divine confirmation, spiritual encouragement, and holy celebration. Elizabeth’s words bless Mary for her faith, and Mary responds with the Magnificat, a bold song of praise declaring that God lifts the humble, feeds the hungry, and keeps His promises across generations. This passage reminds us that God often works through the quiet, the faithful, and the willing—those who say “yes” even when they don’t see the full picture. Like Mary and Elizabeth, we are called to carry God’s promises with courage, to speak life into one another, and to trust that the God who begins a good work will always bring it to completion.

Application:

- **Speak Encouragement into Someone's Calling** Just as Elizabeth affirmed Mary’s faith and calling, we’re called to be voices of encouragement in each other’s lives. Your words might be the confirmation someone else needs to keep trusting God’s promise. Who can you bless this week with a word of hope or affirmation?
- **Magnify the Lord in All Circumstances** Mary praised God *before* she saw how everything would unfold. Her worship came in the midst of uncertainty. Like Mary, we can choose to magnify God—not because everything is clear, but because He is faithful. Start each day with gratitude, even in the unknown.
- **Trust That God Lifts the Lowly and Keeps His Promises** Mary’s song reminds us that God sees the humble and acts on behalf of those the world overlooks. If you feel small, unnoticed, or weary, take heart—God specializes in working through the willing, not the powerful. Keep walking in faith, knowing He hasn’t forgotten you.

Conclusion:

Luke 1:39–56 reminds us that God often does His greatest work through unexpected people in quiet places. When Mary and Elizabeth met, their faith came alive, their children responded even in the womb, and their words pointed to a God who lifts the humble and keeps His promises. This passage calls us to believe even when we don’t see, to speak life into others as Elizabeth did, and to magnify the Lord with hearts like Mary’s. As we celebrate Mother’s Day, may we honor the women who have carried God’s promises—and be inspired to carry them ourselves with courage, humility, and joy.

Announcements:

May 11 - 10AM May Birthday Celebration
May 17 - 3-5 Paint Day - last day to reserve your spot
June 8 - 10AM June Birthday Celebration
June 14 - 9 AM Prayer Meeting at JUMC
June 22-26 - 6:15-8:15 PM Vacation Bible School at JUMC
July 12 - 9AM Prayer Meeting at JUMC
July 13 - 10AM July Birthday Celebration

Prayer Requests:

Prayers for Carol Waple and her family as she awaits for heart surgery at Washington Hospital Center.

Prayers for the family of Bailey Drake who was killed in a motorcycle accident this week.

Doris Branch has asked for prayers for Greg Duda and the caregivers, who has been diagnosed with Glioblastoma and prayers for Chad Lewis who is having some health issues.