

## Devotion, Week of December 21, 2025

Rev. Jeanne Simpson

This past Sunday we celebrated the theme of love. Many churches have special remembrances of Mary on that day. In Luke, when Mary discovers she is to have this special baby, she sings a hymn, which we call the Magnificat. It's an old hymn – part of it was sung by Hannah centuries before when she discovered she was pregnant with Samuel, who was also a special baby sent by God to anoint the first king of Israel.

Mary initially is afraid, but when she visits Elizabeth, who is pregnant with John, she sings this song. Elizabeth greets her with special words of joy:

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

Mary sings in response:

My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant.  
Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed,  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

So Mary can be relieved of her initial fear, at least for a while, with this special visit with her cousin, and sing a beautiful hymn about God's grace and love for her. Love came down at Christmas – love divine. The beautiful poem and hymn by Christina Rossetti says it so well:

Love shall be our token,  
Love be yours and love be mine,  
Love to God and all men,  
Love for plea and gift and sign.

May you remember and rejoice in God's love for you this Christmas.

*Jeanne*