

# Notes from the Music Director (No. 23)

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Rochester, Pennsylvania

**Henry Doktorski, III**

December 20, 2015—4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent



"Visitation" from Altarpiece of the Virgin (St Vaast Altarpiece) by Jacques Daret (c. 1435), at the Staatliche Museen, Berlin.

In today's Gospel (Luke 1:39-45), Mary, the mother of Jesus, while pregnant with child, visits her elder cousin Elizabeth (who happens to also be pregnant, with John the Baptist) in a small town in the Judean hill country. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. 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." Mary ecstatically responded to Elizabeth with what today we call the Magnificat, or Canticle of Mary:

My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
for he has looked with favor on the lowliness 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.

His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.

Our Offertory anthem today is the popular Advent carol, "The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came," an old Basque carol with text paraphrased by Sabine Baring-Gould (1834-1924). In the text, the Angel Gabriel announces to Mary—"O lowly maiden, most highly favored lady"—that she will give birth to a son, "Emmanuel, by seers foretold." Mary responds with great humility, "To me be as it pleaseth God. My soul shall laud and magnify God's holy name."

To hear "The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came" sung by the choir of Kings College, Cambridge, go to  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pliqObTHxUQ>.

## Resources

Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version (Zonderfan: 1989)

LBW: Lutheran Book of Worship (Augsburg Publishing House: 1978)

WOV: With One Voice (Augsburg Fortress: 1995)

W&P: Worship & Praise Songbook (Augsburg Fortress: 1999)

ELW: Evangelical Lutheran Worship (Augsburg Fortress: 2006)

Wikipedia: <https://en.wikipedia.org>

Hymnary.org: <http://www.hymnary.org>

GIA Publications: <http://www.giamusic.com>

Hymntime.com: <http://hymntime.com>

Singers.com: <http://singers.com>

Back to the index of “24 Essays on 24 Hymns”:

[http://henrydoktorski.com/Music\\_Director\\_Notes.html](http://henrydoktorski.com/Music_Director_Notes.html).