

“A Fruitful Word”

23 December 2018

Little Trinity Anglican Church, Toronto

### Discussion Questions

(take as many as you want, in any order)

*Read Luke 1.39-55 and Isaiah 55.10-11*

1. Read the Isaiah passage. What metaphor is the speaker (God) using to describe God’s word? What does the passage say about God’s word? What does this particular metaphor mean for how we understand God’s word? (And, for that matter, what *is* God’s word, anyway? How is God’s word different from God’s Spirit?) Why does the sermon begin by introducing the Isaiah passage as a lens for understanding the Luke lesson?
2. Why does John jump for joy in Elizabeth’s womb at the sound of Mary’s greeting? Imagine yourself as an onlooker in this scene: what happens? What’s it look like? What are the expressions on the women’s faces? The tones of their voices?
3. John 1 tells us that the eternal Word of God takes on flesh in Jesus – and we usually think about Jesus as a full grown man, or at least a baby. How does it affect your understanding of the passage to imagine the Word of God in flesh being the size of a poppyseed, given how far along Mary’s pregnancy is at this point?
4. Consider Elizabeth’s response to Mary’s greeting. Who is blessed, and why? What do you make of Elizabeth being the first person to name Jesus as Lord?
5. Unpack the Magnificat (Mary’s song, verses 46-55, so named for the first word in the Latin version: “*Magnificat anima mea Dominum...*”). What sections can you identify? Do any parts stand out to you, and why? What’s Mary saying, and why is she saying it? How do you relate what’s happening to Mary to the bringing of divine justice and the promise to Abraham? Does the sermon’s suggestion of Isaiah 55 as a metaphor ring true for you? Why/why not?
6. If Jesus has returned to the Father in his resurrection and ascension, how do we understand God’s word being active in the world today? What is God’s word? How do you know it? What does it mean to you? Does the Isaiah passage suggest various forms in which you might recognize God’s word – or at least various moments of fruitfulness? Do any of the moments – rain, sprout, seed, bread – stand out to you?