

## **Advent Devotional December 22, 2019**

### **Scripture**

Luke 1:57-66

*57 Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. 58 Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. 59 On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. 60 But his mother said, "No; he is to be called John." 61 They said to her, "None of your relatives has this name." 62 Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. 63 He asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And all of them were amazed. 64 Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. 65 Fear came over all their neighbors, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. 66 All who heard them pondered them and said, "What then will this child become?" For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him.*

### **Devotional**

#### **The Rev. Dr. Clinton C. Cottrell '00**

Not unlike parents naming a baby today, Elizabeth and Zechariah were being pressured to name their eight-day-old son by the convention of the time, preferably by using Zechariah as the child's name. When Elizabeth used the name "John," there was immediate resistance—so much so that others were confused and turned to the mute father, who scribbled out the name "John" on a tablet (and who mysteriously regained his speech). No one in the family was named John—this just wasn't done!

But both Elizabeth and Zechariah knew the reason for naming the child "John": they were honoring what the angel Gabriel had declared (see Luke 1:13). In fact, Elizabeth and Zechariah honored the will of God, and clearly the aged couple were blessed. It was *others* who were filled with fear at what had happened, while still more were talking about what had occurred that day.

We are but a few days from the day we memorialize and celebrate the birth of Jesus. How much of our preparation for Christmas is about what the world expects? Parties, gifts, and even preparation for Christmas Eve worship can be all-encompassing in our lives. What is God calling us to do that goes against conventional wisdom? What can we learn from the example of Elizabeth and Zechariah? How are *our* actions giving others reasons to talk about the miracles of God this Advent season?

### **Prayer**

Gracious God, thank you for Elizabeth and Zechariah. Against all conventional wisdom, you granted them a child and much more. Help us in the final days of Advent to see how you, through us, are breaking conventions in the world today. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.