



“you will conceive in your womb and bear a Son”

Advent A+D 2009

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

The angel Gabriel or the prophet John?

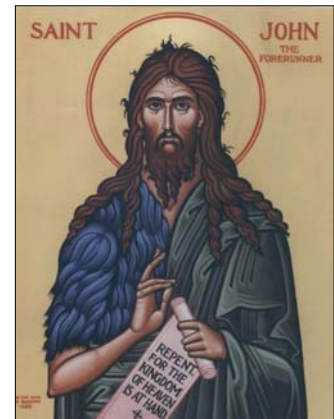
When I look for artwork to accompany our annual Advent Lessons and Carols service, I try for variety, but somehow I always end up back at the Annunciation.

John, the thunderbolt of God, who with one blow destroys both open sinner and false saint (Luther, SA III.iii:2), is a bit grim! His face doesn't sit well on a bulletin cover. Yet his work of preparing the way of the Lord, his message of repentance, is as much a part of Advent as Gabriel's.

Certainly we're more attracted by Mary's simple sweetness, as she accedes gracefully to the angel's message. Yet she, too, teaches humility and repentance. She makes no claim to deserve the gift of the Messiah, but, acknowledging her unworthiness, says, “*let it be to me according to your word*” (Lk. 1:38).

As Advent leads into Christmas we are pressed to make the same confession. How great are God's gifts in comparison to what we truly deserve—apart from Christ. We at Concordia Seminary have been blessed with so many undeserved gifts! We rely entirely on them, and we continually thank God for giving them through you.

The seminary's calling within Lutheran Church–Canada is to prepare new Gabriels and Johns for the ongoing work of proclaiming Christ's kingdom. The truth is, we don't really get to choose which preacher we get; God sends us the one we need. Yes, every Christian in our church has benefited from a preacher who has delivered the gifts, the unpleasant message of repentance and the joyful news of the Saviour. As you reflect on these men, we pray that you would be led to answer gift with gift and support the new generation of messengers.



“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”

We welcome any gift, by cheque (returned in the enclosed envelope) or credit card (by phone or through our website). But as the new year approaches, we encourage you to consider making monthly gifts through the Concordia Giving Partnership. The form to initiate Electronic Fund Transfer is available on the “Support Us” page of our website.

The whole family of Concordia, St. Catharines, wish you a blessed Advent-tide and Christmas celebration.

In His service,

Rev. Dr Thomas M. Winger
Acting President

