A couple weeks ago, the Gospel reading was the opening lines from the Gospel of Mark. I took some time that morning to give a little background on the kind of literature used to tell the Gospel stories. I said that the Gospels were not written as history, at least as we think of history. They are not an exact, literal retelling about dates, places and people.

Bible scholars tell us that the Gospels are made up of a kind of literature called “Biblical Narrative.” The purpose of the narrative is to stir us listeners into finding our place in these stories. The biblical stories are not meant to be accounts of events that happened four or three or two thousand years ago. The purpose of the narrative stories is to draw us into believing that these things are happening today . . . to us, for us, with us. Walter Brueggemann, an exceptional scholar of the bible, says that Gospel stories are meant to stir in us dreams, dreams of an alternative world, not fanciful dreams, but God’s dream for a world at peace.

Today’s Gospel story is a perfect example of biblical narrative. It’s a story about a young peasant girl, in a tiny, no-count corner of the world.

She gets visited by a very special messenger from God. Listen again to some of the things the messenger says to her:

“Greetings! I come to tell you are very special in God’s eyes. Don’t be afraid, Mary. You are to be a mother and give birth to a son. You are to name him Jesus. Your son will be great and will be known as the Son of God. He will occupy the throne of King David, and his kingdom will have no end.”
Can you imagine that!
Imagining that . . . is exactly what the biblical writer intends for us to do.

By our saying “Let it be,” our saying “yes” to the messengers God sends us, we are meant to be participants in healing the fractured world we live in.

At the end of his letter to the early Christians at Rome. He speaks of “the obedience of faith” – about listening to the messengers.

In our first reading, David was asked to set aside the big plans to build God a house. He’s asked to do it God’s way.