



December 13, 2022

Dear Friends,

Let me start out by wishing all of you a Merry Christmas! I didn't grow up in a Christian home and there wasn't much of a religious or spiritual focus connected to Christmas for me growing up; however, that all changed for me in December 1995. I committed my life to following Jesus that December.

Another big change happened December of 2012, that's the year Michelle and I moved to Fargo to plant a church. Until That Christmas season I had never fully understood or practiced "Advent."

Now I look forward to celebrating the Advent season as much as the regular Christmas traditions. For the past couple of years, I've taken one of the birth narratives and try to put myself in the shoes of different characters and sometimes I try to re-imagine the events in a contemporary setting.

This year I picked the birth narrative from my favorite book of the Bible, Luke's gospel. I chose to focus on Simeon and Anna as demonstrations of hope in uncertain times.

Then something pretty exciting happened. As I was rereading the narrative, something (actually someone) jumped out of the story and grabbed my attention. The emotion I experienced was just like unwrapping a gift and feeling surprised, excited, and grateful at what was in the box.

The unexpected surprise came in the person of Elizabeth, Mary's cousin. I believe the perspective I learned was influenced by being on staff with YFC and it will definitely impact my ministry going forward.

Allow me to elaborate. When Mary's world got turned upside down by unexpected circumstances- when she was wrestling with all sorts of emotions- facing all kinds of uncertainty- she found safety from a trusting relationship with an adult.



*Left to Right Front Row - William, Deb, Danielle
Back Row - Myself, Greg, Paige, Sue, & Kim*

Mary found in Elizabeth what all youth are looking for: Unconditional love, compassion, someone to listen to them, someone to support and encourage them, someone that believes in them when they don't/can't believe in themselves.

As a YFC missionary we encounter many youth that are experiencing all kinds of volatile and uncertain life situations and we have the privilege and opportunity to be an "Elizabeth" to them.

Advent is a season of longing or anticipation marked by hope. I'm longing to see what opportunities God has for us (YFC staff) in the coming years to enter into the lives of youth here in the FM Area and be an "Elizabeth" for them.

As we celebrate this Advent season, would you please consider supporting Red River Youth for Christ? Since we are a non-profit, we rely on partners like you to fund this ministry. Please prayerfully consider making a financial year-end gift and investing in the lives of teens. Gifts can be mailed in the enclosed envelope, or you can give online by going to www.redriveryfc.com and clicking on the "Donate" button at the top of the page. All donations are tax-deductible, and a receipt will be sent if you include your email.

Merry Christmas,

Tim Brown

