

2018-12-09 ... 6.30pm Evensong ... Revd Canon Judy Hunt

Luke 1: 1 – 25

‘Where it all begins’

### Introduction ...

Tonight’s New Testament reading is often missed out in major services during Advent and Christmas ... but is key.

Much of what I’m going to say tonight is drawn from a book by **John Davies** called ‘**Be born In Us Today**’.

He points out that, after Luke has pinpointed the historical context ... **the days of King Herod of Judea** ... it then all begins with **an elderly couple**.

This couple – Zechariah and Elizabeth – would not have been known to Herod, would not have been those likely to ever be – as we might term it – in the ‘media spotlight.’

The ‘insignificance’ is part of our

### Advent Hope ...

When we look around the world at the Headlines and at those making the Headlines, there are many days when we could be tempted to despair.

On those occasions ... let’s remember that God is still at work in those situations ... but is likely to be so through ‘insignificant people’ ... insignificant, at least, in terms of being known as important or influential, being highlighted by the media.

For example – think of South Africa 40 or 50 years ago. The students who built up the movement against apartheid were thought of – for many years – as being politically impotent, and therefore insignificant ... but later have become leaders and ambassadors.

St Luke too is writing about a couple who had no political leverage ... and in a time that was difficult and dangerous for the Jewish people.

This situation of unjust oppression meant that there were many groups amongst the Jews offering varied solutions:

withdraw to the desert – keep pure, await death ...

respond with violence and guerrilla warfare ...

co-operate and try to influence from the inside ...

As we look around our world today – we can see each of these responses in one way or another.

**PTO**

But – as stated by John Davies:

*'In the midst of all this discord and blame-throwing there were quiet people ... quiet people who got on with the job of living as best they could, according to the limited opportunities that the situation could give them ...'*

And it is from this last group of people that Zechariah and Elizabeth come ... and the New Testament story ... reality ... of God's salvation begins.

### **Application ...**

As you and I look back at our own lives ... and more widely at the lives of our communities, nation, world ... what apparently insignificant people have been used by God to make his Kingdom grow?

One of the Founders of a large Mission society reckons his Christian commitment and service would not have happened without the constant prayer and love given to him throughout rebellious teenage years ... by an 'insignificant' deaconess.

We have good reason to be people of hope ... partly because God uses insignificant people such as Zechariah and Elizabeth ... you ... me ... Amen.