

Those Who Are Willing

by Rev. Wayne C. Deloach
Christmas Eve, 2006

I can't help but wonder ... what Mary wondered,
As she sat in that barn while those angels thundered,
Their message of hope and of peace and good will,
In the midst of a night that was otherwise still.

I can't help but think, "What went through her mind?"
Did she search through her heart trying to find,
The faith that she needed to believe it was true?
Could it really be that God would do,

Something so great, a thing of such power?
She must have wondered in that holy hour,
Why she had been chosen, why she above all,
Why she had been chosen to receive God's call.

And she must have wondered just where it would lead.
In the birth of her son, was God planting a seed?
Was God doing the thing he had promised to do?
And, then, as I think, I wonder, too,

How much did she know? How far could she see?
Did she have an inkling of what the future might be?
How much did she know? What was it she thought,
When those shepherds came and it was "the Christ" they sought?

She was a young mother, no more than fifteen.
And is it possible she could have foreseen,
What the future held for this babe at her breast?
Like any new mother, she hoped for the best.

She hoped for a life free of worry and fear.
She hoped for a life full of joy for this dear,
Babe in her arms, her first-born, this son.
But did she believe that he was the one?

Or did it all feel like a vision and dream?
Could it really be true? It must have seemed,
So far beyond reason ... unbelievable, too,
That in one such as her God would do,

Something so great, so far out of sight,
As in the flesh of her womb wrap his light of light.
And it must have seemed strange, in fact, stranger than stranger,
To be pondering that by a dirty, old manger.

But that was the promise. That's what he had said,
That angel who came before she was wed.
He told her God's plan and helped her to see,
She'd give birth to a son and a King he would be!

That was the promise. And she hadn't much doubt,
That that's what this night was really about.
But could it be true? Could it really be true,
That God was now doing what he said he would do?

I'm sure she had questions, both those and some more,
As she welcomed those shepherds who came to the door.
I'm sure she had questions and is that what she thought,
When the shepherds came saying it was Christ they sought?

The answer's unclear. The Scriptures don't say,
What it was that she "pondered" surrounded by hay.
But "ponder" she did and "kept things in her heart,"
As she sat in that barn right there at the start,

Of this life so amazing, so full of Good News!
This life that has power, that calls us to choose,
A new way of life, a new way of living,
A new hope for the world that's built on forgiving.

Ponder she did and give thought to his birth,
And the meaning it had for all on the earth.
Ponder she did and kept things in her heart,
As she listened to angels right there at the start.

But I wonder if Mary, that mother so young,
Really knew ... really knew what God had begun,
In the womb of her body and the love of her heart.
I wonder if she knew how important her part.

I think that the answer is "probably not."
And I say that because God has always sought,
To fulfill his plan and to work his will,
In ways that are strange and that seem strange still.

I mean, who would have thought that a girl of fifteen,
Would be used by God in ways unseen,
To give life to his son and bring joy to the earth,
And that a filthy, old barn would be the place of his birth?

Who would have thought it? Who'd devise such a scheme?
It's most certainly strange and beyond any dream.
But that's what God did! And as strange as it is,
That's the way that God works to accomplish his,

Will in the world, his plan for all time!
And it often appears without reason or rhyme.
And it's not always clear and we can't always see,
Where the road will end or what the future will be.

It's not always clear what God is about,
It's not always clear and there's often some doubt.
And questions get asked and we wonder, too,
What in the world our God is trying to do!

But that's how God works and it seems a bit odd,
That, in the process of that, the one we call God,
Would use as a means for his plan's fulfilling,
Not the wealthy or the wise but those who are willing.

He looks for the willing, for those who will pray,
"Let it be your will, let it be your way."
He looks for the willing to do what he's planned,
And to do it even if they don't understand.

He looks for the willing and that's why he sent,
That angel to Mary and that's why she went,
Along with God's plan. She was willing, you see!
She was willing and, so, she came to be,

The mother of Jesus, the King of all Kings!
The one for whom the whole world sings!
The one who takes our sorrows away!
The one who gives life and who brings a new day!

And all because Mary, that mother so dear,
Was willing ... and was willing in spite of her fear,
To let God have his way and do what he planned.
And she didn't require that she understand!

She didn't require that she understand!
Instead, she was willing to just hold out her hand,
And let God go to work and accomplish his will!
And because she was willing to this day we still,

Remember her name and give thanks for her story!
We remember her faith and that night of glory,
When our Savior was born because she was willing,
To be used by God in his plan's fulfilling.

Mary was willing. That's all that we know,
Willing to be used and willing to go,
Wherever God led and to do what God asked,
No matter the calling, no matter the task.

Mary was willing and in that is the key,
If life's to become what God wants it to be.
We can't see the future. We don't know what's ahead.
But the key to that future is found when it's said,

"Let it be your will! Let it be your way!"
That's the key to the future and a bright new day.
God calls us to faith - to have trust in his plan,
And to trust it even though we may not understand.

God still is at work. Of that there's no doubt.
And while we don't know what God's always about,
This much we know because the message is clear,
That when we are willing, we have nothing to fear!

Amen.