



## St. Luke's East Hampton

Sermon Preached by the Rev. Benjamin Shambaugh

December 21, 2025 (8am); Advent 4A: [Isaiah 7:10-16](#), [Romans 1:1-7](#), [Matthew 1:18-25](#)

This week was a stressful time in the office, with everyone preparing bulletins and dealing with all the details for Christmas, the Christmas pageant, and the end of the year. At times like these, I try to keep the staff smiling by sharing a bit of humor or telling some bad dad-jokes. This year, I did that by showing them a video featuring Mary's response to a man singing the carol, "Mary did you know?"[1] In the video, Mary listens to the words and stares straight at the camera. Her eyes flash. She throws a blue shawl over her shoulder, and sings, "Yes, I freaking knew." With a fire in her voice, she puts patronizing patriarchy and mansplaining mediocrity in its place. This Mary is not meek and mild. This Mary is feisty and fearless, and full of spunk and sass. This Mary has hutzpah. She is a warrior with the confidence that comes from knowing that she is favored by God. I want to suggest to you that this Mary is much closer to the real Mary than the Mary in the pageant we will see just an hour or so from now.

During my three years of seminary, every day ended with the singing of a service known as Evensong. During every Evensong, we chanted the *Magnificat*, the Song of Mary (Luke 1:46-55), using the Rite I / King James Version which we read a few minutes ago. *He hath showed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away.* For three years, my seminarian soul was saturated with these words. If I repeated them in the White House today, I might be hung by my toenails for sedition. These words are radical. These words are revolutionary. These are not the words of a quiet obedient Mary whose primary purpose was to be a mom. These are the words of Mary, the *Theotokos*, Mary the God bearer.[2] These are the words of Mary *the Christotokos*, Mary whose mission was to bring Christ into the world, to raise him up and lay the moral foundations for his ministry and who would minister in his name. *"He hath showed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away.* Yes, she freaking knew. Mary knew that what she would do would turn the world upside down. She did it anyway. In doing so, she taught us what Christmas and the Christ of Christmas are all about.

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More...

[1] [MOTHER MARY RESPONDS TO "MARY DID YOU KNOW?"](https://youtu.be/tqLz8nGdOn4?si=52i0zKmEx4lOQuJk)  
<https://youtu.be/tqLz8nGdOn4?si=52i0zKmEx4lOQuJk>

[2] For a discussion of Theotokos and Christotokos see  
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Christotokos>