

Living Water Fellowship

4TH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

20TH DECEMBER 2020

COME TO JESUS

WELCOME:

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Heavenly Father the best gift of all is your presence and in the bleakness of a stable, your Love was born for us. Pure love - Undiluted Love – Indescribable Love poured out for all. Such grace undeserved requires a response in life here & now.

Forgive our ingratitude. Pardon our apathy. Draw us to you & ignite the fire of your Spirit in us. Breathe to life the life of your Son in us. Grow into fruitfulness your Kingdom in and among us. Continue your saving work in us today; we pray through Jesus Christ...Amen.

SONG: *Christmastime is Near*

GROW IN HIS GRACE

BIBLE READING: Matthew 1:18-25

FAITH CHAT:

SONG: *Infant Holy Infant Lowly*

THE MESSAGE: *CHRISTMAS IS MORE THAN...A FEELING*

PRAYERS:

COMMUNION:

Words of Institution & The Lord's Prayer:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, & the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Worship Video during Communion: Christmas Offering (Paul Baloche)

GO IN HIS POWER

BLESSING:

*(Name) † child of God,
May the Spirit of Christ produce
faith and obedience in you.
Amen.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

SONG: *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*

SHOW HIS LOVE

MATTHEW 1:18-25

¹⁸ This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly.

²⁰ As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David," the angel said, "do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. ²¹ And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

²² All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet:

²³ "Look! The virgin will conceive a child!
She will give birth to a son,
and they will call him Immanuel,
which means 'God is with us.'"

²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife. ²⁵ But he did not have sexual relations with her until her son was born. And Joseph named him Jesus.

Group Bible Study/Discussion:

1. Read Matthew 1:18-25. What questions immediately come to mind? Does your familiarity with these verses hinder you seeing it with fresh eyes?
2. Describe a time when you felt out of control. Your example can be light-hearted or serious. How did you resolve that situation?
3. Our concept of the Christmas story has become so familiar & sanitized over the years that we often fail to grasp the human reality of it. What would Joseph's reaction have been to learning that Mary was pregnant? What do you think of Joseph's plan?
4. What fear on Joseph's part does the angel address here? A few weeks back we noted that sometimes God calls us to risky, frightening obedience, into a future where our best hope is to "die facing the right direction." Can you recall a time when you were certain that God was nudging you toward this kind of obedience? What did you do?
5. The angel gives Joseph 3 reasons to trust God's work in his life through Mary & the child she is carrying. How does each offer assurance to Joseph AND to you?
 - a. He calls Joseph "son of David"
 - b. He describes the conception "by the Holy Spirit"
 - c. He names the child "Jesus"
6. How is Jesus' dual identification; both Immanuel (God with us) and Jesus (God saves) critical in God's plan to redeem creation from the brokenness of sin & rebellion? How is the biblical nature of "the incarnation" more fully revealed in this way? Note other Scriptural texts: John 1:14, Rom 1:3-4, Col 2:9, Heb 2:14, Rom 8:3, Gal 4:4. What other insights do you gain here?
7. Read Hebrews 11:1. How does this definition of faith relate to Joseph's response to the angel & to God in Matthew 1? How would you describe your own faith in relation to this verse? What areas in your relationship with Christ do you desire more immediate obedience?
8. Discuss Joseph's steps of obedience in faith to God's Word in his life. What stands out to you most? What would have been most difficult for you in that situation?
9. What does the phrase "God with us" mean to you today? With whom, who is right now not a part of the active fellowship of disciples, can you share that?