

MUMC At-Home Worship: December 13, 2020

Fear not! We're continuing with our worship series tracking the story of angels proclaiming Jesus' coming birth today by jumping over to a different gospel to consider Joseph's angelic encounter. Often a lesser character in the Christmas story, Joseph speaks primarily in his silence as he quietly and steadily supports Mary and their soon-to-be-born child. I pray his witness will inspire us to live similar lives of steadfast faith. Thanks for worshipping with us today!

-Pastor Dillon

If available, place a candle in the center of your gathering space and light it with this prayer:

Almighty God, calm our spirits and prepare our hearts for the celebration of your birth this year. Remove our fear, we pray, and replace it with joy. In Christ's name, Amen.

Hymn: *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*, United Methodist Hymnal #211 [watch/listen here](#)

Gospel Reading: Matthew 1:18-25

The word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Reflect:

1. The angel tells Joseph not to be afraid to stay engaged to Mary, which can help us recognize that this was not an easy request! Matthew tells us that Joseph was "a righteous man" and yet many would not see this as the righteous thing to do. Have you ever had to do something that seemed embarrassing or wrong to others, but you knew was the right thing to do? How did you find courage to do what was right?
2. In this scripture, Mary and Joseph's child is named Jesus but is also referred to as "Emmanuel" which Matthew helpfully translates as meaning "God with us." What difference might it make to know that God is not just watching from a distance but once lived a truly human life? What difference might it make to trust that God is still with us today, wherever we are?
3. Our encounter with Joseph's story is today coinciding with the third week of Advent as we light the candle of joy, which is so often thought of as a loud and ebullient emotion. Where might we see joy in Joseph's quiet story? How might it be valuable for us to practice quiet joy this week?

Hymn: *In the Bleak Midwinter*, United Methodist Hymnal #221 [watch/listen here](#)

Prayer Requests: Share prayer requests and have a moment of silent prayer

Lord's Prayer

Hymn: *O Little Town of Bethlehem*, United Methodist Hymnal #230 [watch/listen here](#)

Closing Prayer: Coming Christ, we strive to live like Joseph did, who bravely did the righteous thing even when it didn't make sense to those around him. We take strength from the reminder that you are with us today, as always, and pray that our fear gives way to quiet courage. Amen.

(Blow out the candle)

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
United Methodist Hymnal #211

1. O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain:
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.
2. O come, thou Wisdom from on high,
who order all things far and nigh;
to us the path of knowledge show
and cause us in her ways to go. Refrain
3. O come, O come, great Lord of might,
who to thy tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times once gave the law
in cloud and majesty and awe. Refrain
4. O come, thou Root of Jesse's tree,
an ensign of thy people be;
before thee rulers silent fall;
all peoples on thy mercy call. Refrain
5. O come, thou Key of David, come,
and open wide our heavenly home.
The captives from their prison free,
And conquer death's deep misery. Refrain
6. O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by thy justice here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight.
Refrain
7. O come, Desire of nations bind
All peoples in one heart and mind.
From dust thou brought us forth to life;
deliver us from earthly strife. Refrain

Matthew 1:18-25 Common English Bible

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ took place. When Mary his mother was engaged to Joseph, before they were married, she became pregnant by the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband was a righteous man. Because he didn't want to humiliate her, he decided to call off their engagement quietly. As he was thinking about this, an angel from the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because the child she carries was conceived by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you will call him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." Now all of this took place so that what the Lord had spoken through the prophet would be fulfilled:

Look! A virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, And they will call him, Emmanuel.

(Emmanuel means "God with us.")

When Joseph woke up, he did just as an angel from God commanded and took Mary as his wife. But he didn't have sexual relations with her until she gave birth to a son. Joseph called him Jesus.

Scripture quotations noted CEB are taken from the Common English Bible, copyright 2011. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

In the Bleak Midwinter

United Methodist Hymnal #221

1. In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan, earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone; snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow, in the bleak midwinter, long ago.
2. Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain; heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign.
In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed the Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.
3. Angels and archangels may have gathered there, cherubim and seraphim thronged the air; but his mother only, in her maiden bliss, worshiped the beloved with a kiss.
4. What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
if I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;
yet what I can I give him: give my heart.

"In the Bleak Midwinter" words by Christina G. Rossetti, 1872, music by Gustav Holst, 1906, both are in the public domain.

O Little Town of Bethlehem

United Methodist Hymnal #230

1. O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie;
above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.
2. For Christ is born of Mary
and, gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together,
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the King,
and peace to all on earth!
3. How silently, how silently,
the wondrous gift is given;
so God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming,
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still
the dear Christ enters in.
4. O holy Child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin, and enter in,
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel!

"O Little Town of Bethlehem" words by Phillips Brooks, 1868, music by Lewis H. Redner, 1868, and both are in the public domain.