

## A Walk with Joseph & Mary: Part 2

As a woman gets near the time of birth her mind becomes very focused in. Mary was not happy to be on the back of a pack animal bumping down an endless road. She didn't blame Joseph, but he blamed himself.

Guys do that when they see their woman in trouble and want to help her and protect her but cannot. Deep in his bones a good man feels a fierce need to protect his pregnant wife. Joseph was feeling like a colossal failure; angry at the politicians making this crazy census, angry about his poverty, how hard he had to work, and how vulnerable his new little family was. It was HIS job to provide for and protect them—but HOW, trudging down this endless road?

Joseph consoled himself with the thought that if they didn't stop but pressed on this last day, though it was getting dark, just a few more miles, maybe they could get to Bethlehem. He would use those few last dollars in his pocket to get a room at the inn. Yes, that was the plan—just keep going, and then we can rest. We're gonna make it.

Mary prayed, "Just get us there; Lord, give me strength." She was very young, in pain, wishing her mom was there to comfort and help. But she wasn't. It was just her and a first-time father, Joseph, all alone. Everyone else was a stranger, indifferent to their predicament.

On-and-on the miles slowly click by. Clip, clop, clip-clop clip-clop. Mary bobbing with each step on the donkey; Joseph holding the reins in one hand and his staff in the other. Day after day. Mile after mile. That's the plan: get her a room at the inn. But as they approach Bethlehem his heart sank... look at all these people streaming into this little town! Many had arrived early and there are "No Vacancy" signs everywhere.

Mary is at the end of her rope. She used all her strength just to get to their destination and she has nothing left. Joseph knows it. Mary isn't saying much; she's pulling into herself because it's about time for the baby. He looks at Mary, his young, exhausted wife, she's breathing heavily... and anger flashes through Joseph's mind: "HOW can this be the will of God? God, is this how you bless us? We have done everything we were supposed to do! You made promises to us! Where are your

promises?! Where?" There is no angelic re-assurance. Just silence. This is where FAITH comes in, because there is NOTHING left.

The hope of the world is riding on that donkey. She could slip off. The animal could stumble. Bandits on the road could attack. They have no security, no protection, no finances, no family with them. They have no strength left, and they are out of options. There is no hospital, no I.V., no medical team... this baby could die. Mary could die. Happened all the time in those days.

Joseph... can't look at her. He doesn't want her to see his desperation. He whispers, "Okay, okay, hold on a minute... God, I didn't mean what I just said a minute ago... Lord, give me strength, just give me strength."

*Mark*

**"Christmas Party" TONIGHT! 6:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall.** The food, the decorations, the "Talent Show" — it's going to be great! Team 1 is in charge. Carl & Sarah are leading the Talent Show. **Sign-up to bring Food and sign-up to be in the Talent Show.**

**Reception for Our "Elder Nominees" TODAY after Worship in the Teen Room:** right across the lobby. **Howard Mansdoerfer** and **Chet Churchill** will be there for you to talk with and greet as we continue the review process of additional Elders. There will be **pizza and refreshments**. The Elder Screening Committee will also be there to answer any questions.

Today and this week is the time to address any concerns/objections regarding the nominees directly with the Screening Committee. Remember the deadline is next Sunday, Dec. 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Our "Prayer & Fasting" Calendar for January is up!** Sign up with a check-mark on the day you will pray and fast.

“Now faith is being **sure** of what we hope for and **certain** of what we do not see.” (Hebrews 11:1)

**Want to learn more about being a part of Collingswood Church of Christ ?**

**Well... Come to our *NEW Member's Class***

**Next Sunday, Dec. 21<sup>st</sup>** right after worship service. This is a brief, no obligation class. Talk to us!

Dec. 24<sup>th</sup>, 5:00 – 5:40PM. This brief, meaningful time of worship focuses on Christ who set aside his crown and laid down his life for you.

**Youth Group:** Friday, December 19<sup>th</sup> we will go see the Living Nativity. See Karen for details.

**Volunteers for 2015 Are Needed:** Please sign-up on the bulletin board, especially our ***SNOW SHOVELERS***. Thanks!

**Today's Worship Leaders**

**Welcome & Scripture:** Tony Ceraso Jr. (Matthew 1:18-24)

**Main Prayer:** Josh Henderson

**Lord's Supper:** Nelson Nuñez, Tate, Bill Ceraso, Hardee Perazzelli

**Scripture Reading:** Logan McEntire (James 4:13-15)

**Closing Prayer and Announcements:** Bret Goen

**Nursery: Sandie F. & Nina** Next Week- Nawana & Renée

**Yellow Cleaning Team** Dec. 17-20 **Norma** Coordinates

**OUTREACH/MINISTRY**

Mark Finn – Preacher

Church Office- (856) 854-0197

**ELDERS:**

Rick Boyle (856) 986-4876

Tony Ceraso, Jr. (856) 278-6276

Bret Goen (856) 996-5267

**Worship ..... 119**

Bible Class ..... 72

Wednesday ..... 38

**Contribution ..... \$3,832**

Special Collection.....\$1,550

Daily Bible Readers: 24

Collingswood Church of Christ

Church Website: [www.ccc123.org](http://www.ccc123.org)

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“...Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, ‘Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.’...The star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, **they were overjoyed**. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and **they bowed down and worshiped him.**”

**Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11**