

A Walk with Joseph & Mary: Part 3

Joseph said to himself, “DO NOT lose it. Listen, you’re gonna get it together here. Somehow, God is WITH you. Forget your pride... this is for your family.... Yeah, the innkeeper yelled at you and TOLD you there was no room, but you’re gonna knock again and you are going to be persistent and insistent. Maybe there’s a broom closet, a janitor’s storage room, something to get out of this cold night air... something with a roof....”

The innkeeper was having his best and his worst day. Business has been unbelievably good, but he has been up for two days straight dealing with all these people... he already has folks doubled up in rooms. They’re about to run out of food, and more people keep coming. Exhausted, late into the night, he finally he crashes onto his bed... and even though he has made it clear there is NO room... some joker is knocking, BANGING on the door again.... The innkeeper mumbles angrily, puts his feet on the cold floor and ambles to the door. Between the bang, banging he swiftly cracks open the door... “What, *you* again?!” He figures, “If I don’t do something with this raggedy family, I’m gettin’ NO sleep... so I’ll offer him something he won’t take... the stable where we keep the animals out back.” He does just that, and hands Joseph a lit lamp. Joseph starts to hand him some crumpled money but the old guy growls, “Listen, Chief, looks like you need that more than I do. Just, do me one kind favor ... Don’t knock again, and I mean it!” The door clapped shut.

Joseph stood there a moment holding the lamp, staring at the closed door. He can see his breath billow in the lamplight. “Ha! Welcome to Bethlehem.” But he was out of options. They trudge wearily around back, and when he sees it, Oh! he’s ready to walk off. This IS a place for animals... it smells. There’s straw trampled in mud and manure. He turns away but this has to be it.

Mary says, “It’s fine, it’s fine, just let me lie down and rest anywhere, I don’t care, I don’t care.” Joseph remembers, “I’m not gonna be too proud. If we ever get out of this situation, I’m gonna make it up to her”. “Baby, I’m sorry. Things are gonna get better. I’m sorry.” She says, “Don’t be. It’s really okay.” Suddenly, Mary winces; the pain is starting to kick in.

Joseph reminds himself, “Okay, this is not about me.” He wipes his hands on his jacket and looks around for what’s there. A feeding trough. And there, there’s some straw up in the overhead bin that’s fresh and hasn’t been trampled. He spreads the hay around in a corner. He takes off his outer coat and spreads it out on the straw for Mary to lie down. He goes to the donkey’s saddle and brings her a skin of water. His hands are shaking. He’s not feeling sorry for himself, or her, or their situation... no time for that. No place for it. Only room for faith right now. It’s all they’ve got.

God is working all of this together for the good. But Joseph and Mary are in the dark; and they aren’t feeling so good. They are vulnerable, desperate, cold, rejected, at the end of their rope, out of options.

Into this desperation the Hope of the world is born. The cry of a newborn pierces the cold night air. Everything has changed.

Mark

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

Well... Come to our NEW Member’s Class

TODAY right after worship service.

This is a brief, no obligation class. Join us!

Candlelight

Christmas-Eve

Service 5:00 PM: THIS Wednesday, Dec.
24th, 5:00 – 5:40 PM. This brief, meaningful time of worship focuses on Christ who set aside his crown and laid down his life for you. Don’t miss this special service.

We Are Serving a Meal at “Cathedral Kitchen”: this Friday, December 26th. See Vivian if you can help!

Our "Prayer & Fasting" Calendar for January is up!

Sign up with a check-mark on the day you will pray and fast.

Youth Group: Sunday, December 28th we will take PATCO *into Philly for a Holiday Trip*. We will go to Macy's light Show and eat at the Reading Terminal, etc. See Karen for details.

Volunteers for 2015 Are Needed for things like: *communion prep., bringing donuts, bringing bagels and setting up, Sunday Clean-up of the food, and doing laundry for the month*: There are still January openings as well as many for the rest of the year. Please sign-up on the bulletin board. Thanks!

HELP! Once Again It Might SNOW: We have someone to use the snow-blower but we need people each time to help with a shovel, broom, and ice melt. Please sign-up on the bulletin board to help. Thanks, **SNOW SHOVELERS**

Today's Worship Leaders

Welcome & Scripture: Bret Goen (Micah 5:2, Isaiah 7:14, 9:6-7)

Main Prayer: Dan Swinehart

Lord's Supper: Chet Churchill, Jess Nitla, Tony Sr., Ed Francoeur

Scripture Reading: Bill Ceraso (Luke 2:1-7)

Closing Prayer and Announcements: Tony Ceraso Jr.

Nursery: Nawana & Renée Next Week- Chris H. & Elaine
Blue Cleaning Team Dec. 24-27

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 128
Bible Class 64
Wednesday 43

Contribution **\$4,903**
Special Collection.....\$250

Daily Bible Readers: 30

Collingswood Church of Christ

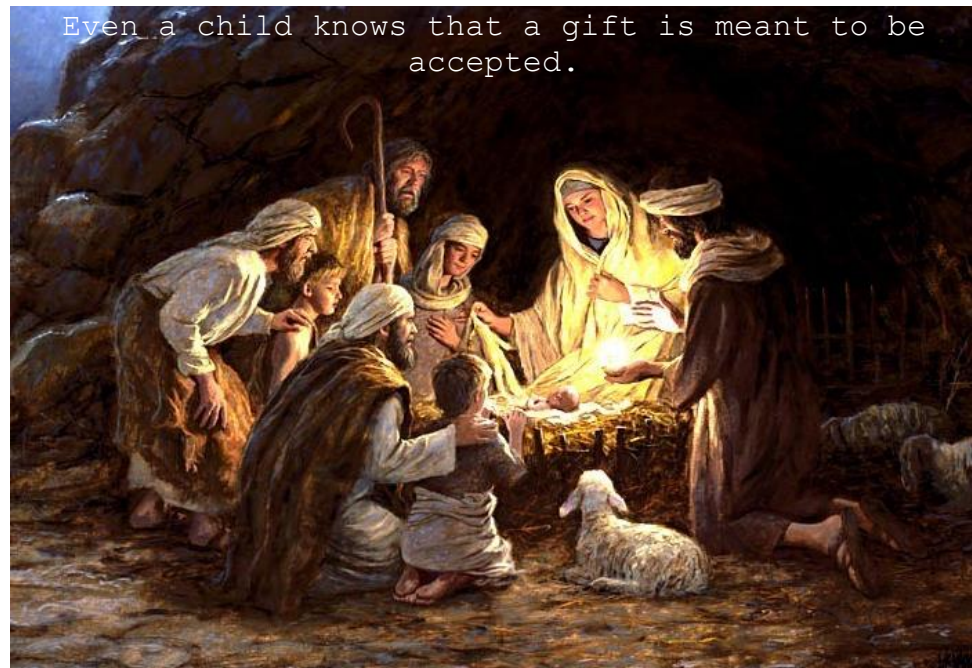
Church Website: www.ccc123.org

300 White Horse Pike
December 21, 2014

Collingswood, NJ 08107
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“Now faith is being **sure** of what we hope for and **certain** of what we do not see.” (Hebrews 11:1)

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is **The GIFT of God.**”
Ephesians 2:7-9



A gift never opened has never been received.
Why do you wait?

“The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free **GIFT** of the water of life.” —Revelation 22:16-18