

Righteousness is all about relationships; being in a right relationship with God and with others. Joseph wanted to be in a right relationship with Mary and with his God and community of faith. What do you think righteousness means? Is righteousness an important attribute in your life? Do you value it in others? Think about these questions and how you would define righteousness and record your thoughts here.

Thursday, December 9

Read Matthew 1:18-24. There were several attributes credited to Joseph throughout the message: faithfulness, righteousness, compassion, obedience and self-control. All this is to say that Joseph was accepting; accepting of God's guidance in his life, accepting and responsible for others – for Mary and the child within her. Joseph was accepting of the possibilities that God offers under very unusual circumstances. Joseph was accepting of the surprises of life that occur despite our best efforts to make plans. Joseph's accepting nature enabled him to be most remarkable in dealing with a difficult situation when many others would have walked away. How accepting are you to other people and of certain circumstances beyond your control? What attributes that Joseph possessed do you believe you have and value? Write your response here.

Friday, December 10

Read Matthew 1:18-24. Joseph, like Mary, on the surface seemed like ordinary, common people. In fact, they were remarkable in how they dealt with appearances of angels, surprises and challenges. Joseph lived by his principles and made life-affirming decisions that helped to usher God into our human history and lives. Joseph should stand as an inspirational figure for anyone who wishes to live life in ways that honors both God and others, working for God's purposes in the world. At the core of those purposes is love! Write your reflections here.

Message Notes – December 5, 2021

The Journey – Joseph of Bethlehem *

- I. Today we will explore Joseph's journey toward Bethlehem as the _____ father of Jesus.
 - A. There are four questions that we will seek to address during our _____ Worship services:
 1. First, what actually _____ leading up to and including the first Christmas?
 2. Second, what does the story teach us about the character of _____?
 3. Third, what does it tell us about the child whose birth we _____?
 4. Finally, we will ask, what does this story mean for our lives _____?
 - B. We might rephrase this fourth question for today's message and ask, "What does this story say about _____ in general and _____ today?"
- II. Joseph was a carpenter which can mean a woodworker, craftsmen and possibly a stonemason. He is a _____.
 - A. You could say that he's a regular working _____, smitten with a young maiden from Nazareth and they are _____.
 1. But as things don't always happen as _____.
 2. When we meet Joseph in our lesson today he has just learned that his betrothed – basically his fiancé – is _____.
 - B. We read in our lesson from Matthew that Joseph is a _____ man.
 1. Righteousness is all about _____.
 2. Joseph's actions were driven by his relationship with _____.

*Matthew 1:18-24

- III. _____ description of Joseph from today's scripture.
- A. Joseph is loyal to his faith and the customs and traditions of his _____ community.
 1. Second, Joseph is a _____ man.
 2. Joseph is also a _____ man.
 3. Fourth, Joseph is _____.
 4. Joseph also had _____-_____.
 - B. All this is to say that Joseph is _____.
- IV. Pastor Adam Hamilton mentions a _____ in Matthew's brief narrative.
- A. _____ stood in stark contrast with Joseph: He was egotistical and arrogant – always seeking praise from others.
 - B. Joseph modeled _____, compassion and righteousness.
 - C. How can we be _____ of our society so that violence isn't perceived to be a greater solution than caring for one another?
 - D. Life is full of _____ and Joseph demonstrates well the choices that demonstrate righteousness, love and integrity.
 - E. The journey is before us and the _____ to travel it is ours.

Daily Devotional Guide

The following is a daily devotional and study guide meant to enhance your understanding of the message and grow as a Christian.

It is offered for your personal reflection or to share with others.

Monday, December 6

Read Matthew 1:18-24. During the message we learned that Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus, was an “average Joe.” He was indeed a carpenter – a *tekton* in Greek – which can mean a woodworker, craftsmen and possibly a stonemason. You might recognize the word *tekton* as part of the word “architect.”

An *arch-tekton* was a “master builder” just as an “archangel” was a lead angel. Joseph was simply a *tekton* – a simple builder.

However, we also learn from our scripture that Joseph was a remarkable person. God used Joseph to enter into human history as he loved and protected Mary as together they became Jesus' parents. How can God use you to do remarkable things in our world today? What gifts do you possess that can make a difference in our world? Meditate on these questions and write your thoughts here.

Tuesday, December 7

Read Matthew 1:18-24. An important lesson from Joseph's journey is things don't always happen as planned. Often surprises can be upsetting and even tragic; and sometimes surprises can create tremendous opportunities for us. Can you think of a time when events didn't occur as planned but in the end, things worked out even better than planned? Think about such a time, reflect on the deeper meaning of surprises in your life and write your reflections here.

Wednesday, December 8

Read Matthew 1:18-24. The first attribute of Joseph that we learn about is righteousness. There is a difference of opinions on what righteous and righteousness means. Most definitions point to behavior and the following of certain virtuous and moral rules. All too often we think of righteousness as self-righteousness – a negative and pejorative understanding of what righteousness means. Often self-righteousness involves hypocrisy on the part of a person claiming to be righteous.

There are important nuances involved when defining righteousness within the context of a faith community.