



December 23, 2021

The Blind Faith of Mary and Joseph

"Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel" ... Isaiah 7:14

...So why do we love and admire people like Mary and Joseph, and then not imitate their faith journeys, their courage...?

These were two laypeople who totally trusted their inner experience of God and who followed it to Bethlehem and beyond.

There is no mention in the Gospels of the two checking out their inner experiences with the high priests, the synagogue or even their Jewish Scriptures.

Mary and Joseph walked in courage and blind faith that their experience was true; with no one to reassure them they were right.

Their only safety net was God's love and mercy, a safety net they must have tried out many times, or else they would never have been able to fall into it so gracefully.

Richard Rohr





**7:00 p.m. Traditional Candlelight Service
(Sanctuary)**
**11:00 p.m. Traditional Candlelight Service
(Chapel)**

**PLEASE NOTE: There will be a regular church service on
Sunday, December 26th. Please plan to join us then.**

***THE OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED FOR THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS. ON
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24 AND MONDAY, DECEMBER 27. WE WILL ALSO BE
CLOSED ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31, FOR THE NEW YEAR HOLIDAY.
WE WISH EVERYONE A SAFE, HAPPY AND HEALTHY HOLIDAY!***

Those Needing Our Prayers

Jacob Holobovich

Greg Seltzer

Mildred Winfree

Peggy Semetti & Family (Karen's Hoelzer's mother)

Prescott Family – They all

have Covid. All vaccinated except a little one not old enough to be vaccinated.

Don't forget that after 2 weeks these names will be removed from the list. Those with asterisks are people who need continuous prayer and they will be listed on the Prayer List that is sent out weekly.

Homebound: Connie Nichols, 3 Bolling Circle, Chadds Ford, PA 19317

IMPORTANT

If you wish your December offering credited to your 2021 giving, you must have your final 2021 payment into the church office by **this Sunday, December 26.**



A hard-fought hope

A Message for Advent and Christmas

Pastoral theologian Frederick Buechner described what God said to Job about suffering and calamity: “You don’t want to know why things happen. You want to know that I love you.”

Job, one of the books in the Bible, describes the story of a man who lost everything but his life. And after losing everything else, he wished he’d lost his life too.

Job lost his wealth, his family, his friends and his health. Left utterly and completely alone, he wanted to go nose to nose, toe to toe with God and ask, “Why? Why did you allow this to happen to me?”

Can you blame Job? Who wouldn’t? I haven’t lost as much as Job, and I have looked God straight in the eyes and asked, “Why?”

At some level, all of creation is in a Job moment. Disasters, poverty, racism and a pandemic that has brought the world to a common experience of tragedy and loss. We have lost family, friends, time, identity, health, trust, jobs, interactions with people, innocence, confidence, and the list goes on.

It is not just what an individual has lost, but our communities and their social relationships: family, church, school, the neighborhood. People in our networks are all experiencing similar losses. Collectively, we most likely have never globally and collectively known such loss, tragedy and fear for such a sustained period of time.

You would think people would lose faith, belief in God. Nope. A recent Pew Research study found that people’s faith at this moment has not changed because of the pandemic. We cling to the Advent/Christmas story in which God said, *I love you*.

This faith, this love, this hope does not come easily. It is hard-fought. Just ask Job, or your friend who just lost their mother, or the parents who have been at their wits’ end working and engaging children in online learning with not enough room in the house to find a quiet space for an important Zoom meeting.

It’s hard, and yet, it is worth fighting for because God fought for us. A love greater than we could have imagined came as a whisper in the birth of a child.

During this Advent/Christmas season, don’t forget that in the midst of the tragedy and the challenges, you are loved. And don’t forget to love someone else. It may be their only means to know that they too are loved by God.

A Blessed Advent and a Merry Christmas to each of you.

Bishop John Schol
The United Methodists of Eastern Pennsylvania & Greater New Jersey

SCRIPTURE READING FOR THIS WEEK

Psalm 148
Luke 2:41-52

HYMNS FOR SUNDAY

Love Came Down at Christmas (242)

Verse 1

Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, Love divine;
Love was born at Christmas;
star and angels gave the sign.

Verse 2

Worship we the Godhead,
Love incarnate, Love divine;
worship we our Jesus,
but where – with for sacred sign?

Verse 3

Love shall be our token;
love be yours and love be mine;
love to God and all men,
love for plea and gift and sign.

I Love to Tell the Story (156)

Verse 1

I love to tell the story of unseen things above,
of Jesus and his glory, of Jesus and his love.
I love to tell the story, because I know 'tis true;
it satisfies my longings as nothing else can do.

Chorus

I love to tell the story, 'twill be my theme in glory,
to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.

Verse 2

I love to tell the story; more wonderful it seems
than all the golden fancies of all our golden dreams.
I love to tell the story, it did so much for me;
and that is just the reason I tell it now to thee.

Chorus

I love to tell the story, 'twill be my theme in glory
to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.

Verse 3

I love to tell the story, 'tis pleasant to repeat
what seems, each time I tell it,
more wonderfully sweet.
I love to tell the story, for some have never heard
the message of salvation from God's own holy Word.

Chorus

I love to tell the story, 'twill be my theme in glory
to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.

Verse 4

I love to tell the story, for those who know it best
seem hungering and thirsting to hear it like the rest.
And when, in scenes of glory,
I sing the new, new song,
'twill be the old, old story that I have loved so long.

Chorus

I love to tell the story, 'twill be my theme in glory
to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

If you wish to send a card to any of these persons, please call or email the church office at 610-459-2911 or mary@elamumc.org for addresses.

BIRTHDAYS

01/01	Margaret Ryan	01/19	Marissa Blazier
01/02	Megan Kardine	01/21	Kelsey Galanti
01/03	Caiden Thomas		Andrew Clifton
01/04	Joseph Lisicky, Jr.		Tyler Fox
	Shelley Reid		Kaitlyn Sherman
01/05	Paul Gicker		Kendra Wyatt
01/11	Gavin Springer	01/23	Bennett Aull
01/13	Erin Hogan	01/24	Ryan Amoss
	Nicole Oldrati	01/25	Meghan Algeo
01/14	Ava Borderieux	01/26	Clint Amoss
	Cheryl Graney		Daniel Nixon
01/15	Maxx Messinger		Scott St. Germain
	Gail Munro		Mackenzie Thomas
01/16	Sid Brookes	01/28	Dylan Amoss
01/17	Abigail Frey	01/30	Tess DeMarro
	Jordan Morrisroe		Doug Mills
01/18	Shawn Barry		Barry Sheppard
	Samantha Topka	01/31	Pat Manley

ANNIVERSARIES

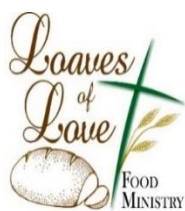
01/08/1983	Lori & Roy Aungst
01/28/1972	Bonnie & Bob Eroh
01/13/1995	Donna & George McCloskey
01/06/2017	Samantha & Michael Riemenschneider
01/20/2016	Judi & Donald Rosenberry

If your name is not listed here and you have a January birthday or anniversary, please contact Mary at 610-459-2911 or mary@elamumc.org, and you will be added to our records. Please also let us know if we have an incorrect anniversary or birthdate.

REMINDERS



We are continuing to collect hats, mittens and socks for the **men and women** of Safe Harbor (**MUST BE NEW**). A tree has been set up in the side narthex for your donations. **Deadline for donations is January 2nd.**



There is an ongoing collection of items for college students in need and Philadelphia homeless. Here is a wish list if you would like to contribute:

Single cup Mac and Cheese

Fruit cups

Fruit snacks

Juice – small bottles

Breakfast bars

Juice boxes

Chef Boyardee microwavable cups

No Deadline.

HEARTS & HANDS PRESCHOOL/CHILDREN'S DAY OUT (CDO) OPEN HOUSE & REGISTRATION DATES

Preschool/CDO Open House is **Thursday, January 6, 2022 from 6:30-8:00 p.m. (snow date of Tuesday, January 11th)**. Preschool is for children ages 3-5 years and Children's Day Out is for 2-year-olds. **Informational sessions will be held at 6:45 and 7:30 p.m.**

The 2022-2023 Hearts and Hands Registration dates for current preschool and CDO families and Elam members and regular attendees is scheduled for **Wednesday, January 12th at 9:00 a.m.**

Open registration for both programs will be held on **Wednesday, January 19th beginning at 9:00 a.m.** (snow date, Friday, January 21st at 9:00 a.m.)

Lunchbunch, an Extended Day Program, is also available for preschoolers and includes lunchtime, crafts, music, games, and indoor/outdoor gross motor play, afternoons from 12:00-1:30 p.m. or 12:00-3:00 p.m.

If interested in any of these programs, please contact our Preschool Director, Kelly Forwood, at 610-459-2911 or email her at director@elamheartsandhands.com.



“For a child has been born for us, a son given to us, authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6

CHILDREN'S CORNER

Children's Worship Bulletin™



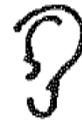
Ages 3+

December 26, 2021 • Luke 2:41-52

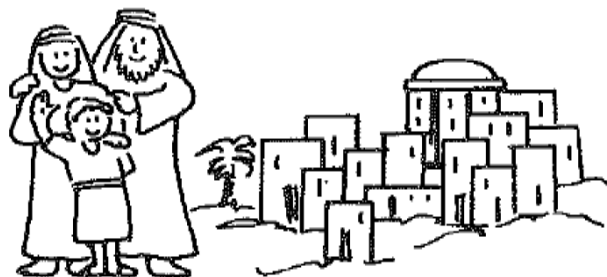
Jesus in the Temple

Jesus and His family
went to Jerusalem for the ...

Write the beginning sound for each picture.



p							
---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--



Jesus continued to grow in favor with God and people.

Find Jesus in each picture.



Children's Worship Bulletin™

Ages 7+

December 26, 2021 • Luke 2:41-52

Jesus in the Temple

Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. When Jesus was 12 years old, He went with them. What happened when the festival was over?

Find 15 differences between the 2 pictures below.



While his parents were returning home, Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. Thinking He was in their company, they traveled on for a day.

How did the people
at the temple react to Jesus?

Fit the words in the list
below into the spaces to complete the sentence and find out.
(Some words need to be split between 2 words below.)

VERY SAME SAW
EAR THIS DIM
NEW STAND



E _____ O _____

____ HO H _____

H _____ WA _____ AZ _____ D

A _____

UNDER _____ ING

AND HI _____ NS _____ ERS.