

Joseph, son of David

This year, as the lectionary directs, we will spend the majority of our time in the Gospel according to Matthew. Both Matthew and Luke tell of the birth of Jesus, but the two versions have differences. Matthew describes a dream so convincing, that upon waking, Joseph followed the instructions of the angel in his dream, and agreed to “take Mary as his wife” in spite of the fact that her *delicate condition* would have allowed him to legally walk away and never have anything to do with her again.

The angel also told Joseph that the child would be a boy – when a child’s gender was always a surprise until the birth. And the angel told Joseph the child’s name.

Joseph – a man of God, a man of ethics, a man of his era, a man who had never had a wife before, but now had one who was already “with child” and he was told who, when, where, and how he would respond to this extraordinary situation. This was a strong man, who willingly followed the voice of unreason and took excellent care of his wife and family, without hesitation.

I wonder if we shouldn’t give Joseph more attention. Many of you know firsthand what it’s like to be told what to do, and when, and how. Sometimes you follow readily, sometimes you balk and wonder why it seems you don’t have the chance to choose.

So we salute Joseph – the man who raised our Lord. And we give thanks for his craftsmanship, shown day by day to the boy, and his patient education of the Scriptures, taught chapter by chapter to the boy, and his willingness to follow the Spirit of God to places unknown, through experiences unknown, for reasons unknown, simply because he was a faithful man of God.

Perhaps during this Advent season, as we await the birth of the Holy Child, we will remember some of what it was like to be Joseph, and to serve God without hesitation, without community backing, and always with an eye to what was the right thing to do.

May we always try to serve God like Joseph.

Candice

Then Joseph, being raised from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife, and knew her not until she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.

– Matthew 1: 24-25