

God is love and love lives here!



600 North Houston Lake Blvd., Centerville 31028
(478) 953-3090

www.thewellatcenterville.com

Office Hours: Mon-Thur 8:30a-12:30p

Rev. Tommy Odum

pastortommy@thewellatcenterville.com; 478/397-9491

Sunday, December 15, 2024, Third Sunday of Advent

What Every Couple Can Learn from Mary and Joseph This [Christmas](#)

By: Heather Riggleman

While he was trying to figure a way out, he had a dream. God's angel spoke in the dream: "Joseph, son of David, don't hesitate to get married. Mary's pregnancy is Spirit-conceived. God's Holy Spirit has made her pregnant. She will bring a son to birth, and when she does, you, Joseph, will name him Jesus—'God saves'—because he will save his people from their sins." - [Matthew 1:20-21](#)

I could feel my blood pressure rising as Chris and I argued once again where we would spend Christmas. Chris, an only child, felt it was best spent with his parents while I, the second oldest among six siblings, wanted to see my family. We were both tired of negotiations because neither one of us was willing to relent.

Chris' parents had moved to Nebraska and we could see them anytime we wanted. Plus we spent nearly every holiday with them. It was a blessing to have them close by but all my family lived in Wyoming. Because of our busy lives, not to mention the eight hours that separated us, we hadn't been to Newcastle in years. I was desperate to see my siblings and their families.

When life changes, when circumstances aren't as we expected, when we are navigating new territory, we need hope. Can you imagine for a moment how the Christmas story might have been written if Mary and Joseph lacked the capacity to adjust to things beyond their circumstances? Where was hope in the middle of their scandalous story?

To begin with, Joseph had to adjust to the fact his fiancé was already pregnant. According to the law, he could have had her stoned instead he planned to save face and quietly divorce her. We can read between the lines of today's passage the devastation, betrayal, and dashed hopes Joseph felt as he was trying to figure a way out.

But God sent an angel to tell Joseph that Mary was with child conceived by the Holy Spirit and that this child would save their people. So instead of sending Mary away, he married her.

While the first year of [marriage](#) is always difficult. Mary and Joseph faced a unique set of challenges. On top of dealing with no ordinary pregnancy filled with disgrace and gossip, trying to establish their home, run a business, and learn how to live together as a couple, they were forced to close up shop. They had to travel to Bethlehem because the Roman government was conducting a census in order to raise taxes. Every man had to travel back to their birthplace. Just what they needed!

Early one morning, Mary and Joseph left their home for Bethlehem. Mary was eight months pregnant and rode on the back of a little donkey. Joseph had a short tether wrapped tightly around his arm to lead the little burro and prevent it from dislodging Mary. They stopped along the road, slept on the hard ground and had to make due with less than ideal circumstances.

Finally, when they arrived within sight of the city, Mary stopped. She probably said something like, "Husband, I cannot ride one more moment. I'm going to sit here while you go into the city of Bethlehem and book us a room at the Holiday Day Inn. Be sure to tell room service to bring up more clean sheets, towels, and boiled water for when the baby comes."

Mary was a long way from home, emotionally drained, worn-out, and at the end of her rope. Especially when Joseph returned to tell Mary, "Wife, the Holiday Inn was sold out, so I checked every hotel—even the Country Inn. Finally, I convinced one of the managers of their valet service to let us crash in their manger. I paid him the last of our cash for fresh straw and privacy. We'll be the only ones there besides all of the livestock."

That night, heaven bent down and kissed the earth as the Son of God was born.

Can you imagine how the Christmas story might have been written if Mary and Joseph didn't have the capacity to hope or the ability to compromise beyond their circumstances?

Father Richard Rohr says, "Hope is the patient and trustful willingness to live without closure, without resolution, and still be content and even happy because our Satisfaction is now at another level, and our Source is beyond ourselves."

Hope is the essence that allows us to bend beyond our circumstances.

Hope has the ability to breathe air into crushed hearts allowing them to expand and beat again.

Hope creates room in our hearts for something more beyond ourselves.

Hope gives us fresh eyes in the midst of our struggles.

Later that evening, Chris came downstairs to check on me. Exhaustion had put me to sleep when he woke me. "I know what we can do, instead of traveling in between houses, let's have Christmas here this year."

This idea, this compromise was completely out of the box and unexpected but I couldn't have imagined a better idea. I was bursting at the seams with excitement and so thankful for Chris choosing to find a way to make it work.

Like Mary and Joseph, every couple on earth must learn to develop this capacity to hope if they are to enjoy a happy marriage. Real-life is filled with unexpected turns and unforeseen problems. There was doubt, trust issues, complications, and instability. But with help from God, Mary and Joseph were determined to make it work. It was their destiny to raise the Son of God. Together. Their love story is a marriage lesson to us all.

Keep the Faith,
Pastor Tommy

Flowers on the Altar given to the Glory of God

🌸 In loving memory of Woody Davis by Marie Davis




- ✓ 12-24-24 Christmas Eve Service 6p
- ✓ 12-25-24 through 01-02-25 Office Closed- **Christmas**
- ✓ 01-09-25 Blood Drive 1p-5p
- ✓ 01-13-25 Finance Committee Meeting 6p
- ✓ 01-13-25 Administrative Council Meeting 630p
- ✓ 01-17/18-25 Beth Moore Simulcast
- ✓ 01-20-25 Office Closed- MLK, Jr birthday
- ✓ 01-26-25 Mr Harry’s 100th Birthday Luncheon 1130a
- ✓ 02-02-25 Volunteer Appreciation Dinner 5p
- ✓ 02-10-25 Finance Meeting 6p
- ✓ 02-17-25 Office Closed- President’s Day
- ✓ 03-05-25 Ash Wednesday
- ✓ 03-10-25 Finance Committee Meeting 6p
- ✓ 03-10-25 Administrative Council Meeting 630p
- ✓ 03-30-25 5th Sunday Lunch 1130p

Magnolia Park Cemetary Luminary Service

Please join us for a night of remembrance on Friday, December 13th, starting at 6:00 pm. This evening is not just an event; it's a beautiful gathering of friends and families coming together to remember and honor our loved ones. You can look forward to the soft glow of luminaries lighting the cemetery. The service will begin at 6:00 pm with a bagpiper. This will be followed by a brief message of remembrance and special music. **We encourage you to arrive before 6:00 to park in our designated parking area. Golf cart shuttles will be available, provided by Battery Source. Enjoy complimentary coffee and hot chocolate from Woodlands Coffee Roasters.**

Community Missions

- The next Food Pantry will be January 22, 10a-1p, it will be the only one this month. Please see Cheri to help with this ministry. You will be blessed. Our Food Pantry Team rocks!
- Thank you so much to all for your time and donations to our recent 2024 Toy Giveaway. Because of your generosity, we were able to provide toys to many families enriching their lives in this wonderful Christmas season. We have distributed toys through the Christmas Festival, individual families who have reached out to us, Southern Santa of Houston County and through the Clothes Closet. Thanks to our youth who came out Saturday to assist with giving and all others who joined in this special giving mission. Love Lives at The Well, Brenda
- We will be open the second and fourth Wednesdays for shopping (9a-1p) and second and fourth Tuesdays for processing(9a-12p) as we resume our regular schedule in 2025.
Donations can be dropped off in the white trailer in front of the Outreach Building. The door may need a hard tug to open; it is unlocked.
- Finally, we are collecting donations for our Indoor Yard Sale to be held January 31-February 1, 2025 beginning at 9am and ending 1pm on both days. Donations for the yard sale can be left in the white trailer.
Thank you to all our Clothes Closet Volunteers. You are the Best! Brend



17

Joy Fleming

18

Don Porter

21

Johnny Gurr

Alice Roland

Bible Reading Plan

Week of December 15th :

Sunday.....	Revelation 6
Monday.....	Revelation 7
Tuesday... ..	Revelation 8
Wednesday.....	Revelation 9
Thursday.....	Revelation 10
Friday.....	Revelation 11
Saturday.....	Revelation 12



New Concerns

Michael Walston
Brent Nelson
Eric & Gloria Nelson

Continue Prayers for:

Tommy Milner
Carolyn Nettles
Brenda Crow
Kimberley Cochran
Mariann Ellis
Sue Matherly
Sherrie Shell
Mel Smeltz

Lamar Outz
Paul Smith
Phil & Betty Bailey
Dianne Harrington
Mac McCullough
Kathy Blanchard
Betty Bowen
Michael & Jennie Walston
Betty Byrd
Mary Prater
Jim & Mary Leary
Virginia Eadie
Bill Reedy
Our Country, Leaders, Military and First Responders

Finance Report for

12-08-24

Operating Budget.....	\$8,404.59
A/C Fund.....	2401.45
Apportionments.....	203.00
Clothes Closet.....	195.88
Food Pantry.....	<u>495.89</u>
Total.....	\$11,700.81

Worship Attendance

135

Sunday School

47

Friendship Circle

- Many thanks to those who generously donated supplies for the blessing bags for the homeless. The recipients were very much appreciative!!
- Thanks to those who donated bears for distribution to Centerville Police Dept., Fire Dept. and a nursing home!
- The Sweet Shop was a big success, thanks to all those who cooked and brought wonderful goodies!

Are you Looking for a place to serve? To get involved? We have it!

This Week's Schedule:

Sunday- December 15

Ushers

10:30a J.O. Miller, Tony Rozier
Mel Smeltz, Cheri' Cox, Lynn Mayfield
Keith Mobley, Stevie Bowen
Joy Fleming, Sherrie Shell, Roy Carter
9:15a Sunday School
10:30a Worship
Christmas Cantata ~ Love is Born

Greeters

10:30a Cheri Cox, Marie Davis

Communion Servers

Eric & Gloria Nelson
Cheri' Cox, LaWanna Porter

Prayer Teams

Luis & Jan Morales-Hill
Don & Sharron SChall

Finance Stewards

Paula Williams, Sherrie Shell, Kelly Evans

Assisting with Children

Sunday- December 15

Nursery- Sarah Blackburn, Rosalyn Ross
Children- Sherry Armour, Linda Blanton

Sunday- December 22

Nursery- Lauren Wilson, Brittany Ross
Children- Brenda Craw, Lynn Miller

Monday- December 16

7:30p Narcotics Anonymous

Tuesday- December 17

9:15a Movin' n Groovin'
10:00a Partners in Prayer
10:00a Yoga
11:30a Life Group IV "J Walkers"

Wednesday- December 18

8:00a Men's Fellowship Breakfast
11:30a Friendship Circle
7:30p Narcotics Anonymous

Thursday- December 19

9:00a Life Group II "Work of Art"
9:15a Movin' n Groovin'
10:00a Yoga
7:30p Narcotics Anonymous

Friday- December 20

7:30p Narcotics Anonymous

Saturday- December 21

7:30p Narcotics Anonymous



Sunday School at 9:15a

Are you looking to get involved in Sunday School? We have a great line up of classes to explore! Maybe you've been attending Sunday School regularly but see a topic you're interested in – it's okay to move around and try different classes – let's learn and grow together!

Sunday School Class

Seekers
Issues & Answers
New Beginnings
Christian Fellowship

Studies

Christmas Lessons
Luke
An Unlikely Advent
1 Timothy

Teacher

Kathy Rutke
Joy Fleming
Nancy Hudson
Luis Morales



Young at Heart Christmas Party

Date: Friday, December 13, 2024

Time: 11:30 - 3:00pm

Lunch served and entertainment begins at 12 noon

Where: The Well's Social Hall: Free Will - Donation

Food: Ham, turkey and all the trimmings

Entertainment: Randy Stephen's "Elvis" Christmas music and show



Please RSVP to Gloria at 478-550-2362. We really need a head count, so we know how much food and how many places to set up.



Purchase a
Poinsettia

Get Your Poinsettias for Christmas

We still have Poinsettias available!

Cost is \$12.50.

Call or email the church to place your order.

They are to be taken home after
Christmas Eve service.