



Christmas Surprises

ADVENT 2023

SURPRISING NEWS

This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was **a righteous man** and did not want to **disgrace her publicly**, so he decided to break the engagement quietly.

As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. “Joseph, son of David,” the angel said, “**do not be afraid** to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. And she will have a son, and you are to name him **Jesus**, for he will **save** his people **from their sins**.”
Matthew 1:18-21

Three fears we must overcome to follow God:

1. Do not be afraid of _____

2. Do not be afraid of _____

3. Do not be afraid of _____

QUESTIONS for personal reflection or group discussion

1. Read Matthew 1:18-23. Our telling of the Christmas story can become so sanitized we fail to grasp the human drama. Mary was suddenly pregnant—and not with Joseph’s child. How do you imagine Joseph’s emotional reaction to this?
2. Why would Joseph have been “afraid to take Mary home as his wife,” to quote the angel?
3. René described three kinds of fear that can keep us from obeying God, or committing to God in the first place: Fear of social rejection, fear of what God might ask me to do, and fear of admitting you’re a sinner. When you first considered turning your life over to Jesus as Lord, did you struggle with any of these fears? How did you get past it? Do you still struggle with any?
4. The angel specifies Jesus would save his people from their sins. Yet people wanted the Messiah to save them from the Romans. They wanted a political solution. God gave them a spiritual solution. Why is this important for Christians to remember today?

LIFE AT TLC

Welcome Party

New to TLC or want to get more involved? Come meet us after service, next to Loft coffee!

Giving Grove

Gifts are due back next Sunday **12/17**. Thank you!

Christmas Volunteers Needed

Visit tlc.org/christmas and click the *volunteer* button to see how you can help this holiday season!

Choir Next Weekend

Come enjoy Twin Lakes Worship with a special choir, featuring a new song!

Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

December 23rd 4 & 6pm December 24th 11am, 3 & 5pm
Join us for our beautiful annual tradition! We'll sing favorite carols, hear amazing music, light candles, and meditate on the profound meaning of Christ's birth.

Stay Connected

- To get our daily devos, text [tlc](tel:81411) to 81411 or visit tlc.org/devos
- To receive our weekly newsletter, go to tlc.org/newsletter
- For a list of ways we can offer tangible help: tlc.org/help
- To receive prayer: tlc.org/prayer
- Participate in today's offering: tlc.org/give