

The CALL of CHRISTMAS

Small Group Notes
#3 A Gloriously Unsure Joseph
Rev. Joshua Sklar
Sunday Dec. 11, 2016

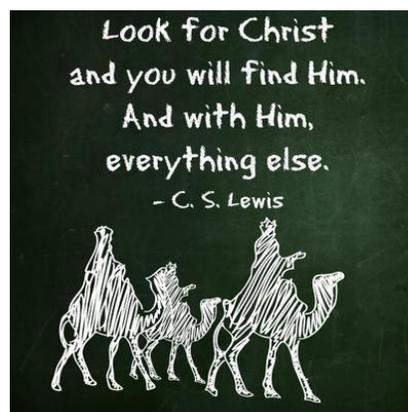
Merry Christmas! As you gather together in your small groups this week, it is our hope and prayer that this season will be a time of leaving behind the stress of the holidays and walking with love through a world that so desperately needs to find the true light of Christmas, Jesus.

On Sunday morning Josh spoke about Joseph and how he had his life interrupted in an incredible way. Throughout scripture we see time and again how people have their lives interrupted by Jesus who is called Immanuel. Let's take some time to look into the lives of the Magi (sometimes referred to as Wise Men or the 3 Kings) and see how they had their lives turned upside down.

Read Matthew 2:1-18

1. What do we know about the Magi? Discuss first and see if what the group knows lines up with the research below.
 - a. They were learned and educated men
 - b. They studied the stars – both astronomy and astrology
 - c. They wrote down whatever they saw
 - d. They most likely came from Persia or Babylonia (over 1400 miles to Bethlehem and a journey that would have taken months)
 - e. We are not sure how they knew to come to Jerusalem
 - f. They were seeking a King in response to seeing a new star
 - g. They are never named.
 - h. There is actually no mention of there being "3" Kings. Perhaps as there were 3 gifts the tradition has been handed down that there were 3 Kings...
2. As those who studied the stars, they were looking for signs and omens and would give meaning to many different events. The star that they saw caused them to believe that a King had been born. What is their response to the realization that a King was born?
3. As Magi, they had significant responsibilities back home. Yet, when the star appears, they stop their everyday regular lives and seek after Jesus. It is pretty fair to say that they, like Joseph, had their lives interrupted. What does it mean for us to be interrupted by God?
4. What would it take for God to clearly get our attention and interrupt us?

5. In their desire to find a King, they visit the palace and meet Herod. What does it say to the values of society that they seek Jesus in the palace? How does Jesus being born in a stable flip those values around?
6. The Magi are warned in a dream to not return to Herod. It is clear and concise and they take a different route home. How does God speak to us today? Have you ever had an experience where you have heard from God?
7. One of the traditions says that there were three kings. We do not know how many Kings there were but we know that there were 3 gifts. Gold was an extravagant gift, fit for a King and also used for decoration in the temple. Frankincense was a spiritual gift, like what was burned on the altar and offered to God in Hebrew worship. Myrrh was a practical gift that was used for embalming a body and which some believe foreshadowed the death of Jesus. While not everyone brings the same type of gift (extravagant, spiritual, practical) we can all bring gifts. What kind of gifts do we bring to God? Is any gift lesser or greater than others?
8. The Magi demonstrated an urgency in finding Jesus. What distracts us from finding Jesus at Christmas time? The rest of the year? At Christmas time, what helps us to find Jesus and worship Him?
9. When they finally found Jesus, they experienced great joy. In what ways has finding Jesus caused you great joy? What can we do to increase that joy? What do we need to let go of that is causing us to lose out on that joy?
10. The object of the journey of the Magi was to find Jesus and worship him. Their whole lives would have revolved around this for months. How do our lives reflect our desire to find Jesus and worship Him?



CHRISTMAS AT ALL NATIONS

1. **Hats and Mitts** campaign has seen approximately 2,500 mitts and 2,200 hats delivered to various schools throughout Sudbury area. **Thank you!**
2. **BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS:** 38 teenagers have received gifts from individuals, families or small groups...**Thank you!**
3. **THE GREAT CHRISTMAS OFFERING.** This year we are:
 - Helping create a safe place for the homeless though The NOAH Community Hub.
 - Supporting the Louis Street association after school homework club for kids
 - Providing the Living Nativity free of charge to all who attend
 - Sponsoring our magnificent Christmas Gala and reception

Every one of these events has the potential to change lives. Your sacrifice could change the eternal destiny of and adult or a child. Thank you for giving generously.

EVENTS:

Sunday DECEMBER 18th 10 a.m. **THE CHRISTMAS GALA:**

Invite your friends; it's a free gift to our community with a reception to follow.
**SIGN UP to bring 'ready to serve' pickup refreshments!)

DECEMBER 20-24th 7:30 each night **LIVING NATIVITY** outside at Science North

Set up: Saturday December 17th, meet at Eddy's for breakfast at 8 a.m. at Science North by 9 a.m. to set up the set.

Take down: Saturday December 24th 8:30 p.m. We need as many hands as possible to take down and remove the set, as well as pack the supplies.

Crew: Sign up at the office or on Sunday at the church to be a part of the cast (shepherds and wisemen still needed) or refreshment team.

Sunday DECEMBER 25th 10 am Our **ANNUAL FAMILY CHRISTMAS SERVICE.**

Sunday JANUARY 1st, 2017 – **PODCASTED SERVICE** – check in at allnationschurch.ca at 10 a.m. or after for 'a specially planned for you' worship service.
(NO LIVE SERVICE at 414 St. Raphael St.)