**God with Us**

**Brings Love**

**Mary and Joseph: A Love Story** (Matthew 1:18-24)

* Throughout all of human history love is really at the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of our humanity.
* God’s love is woven through the entirety of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* When we think of arranged marriage it seems \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and only suited for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. However, it was the idea of provision and sustaining a family line that drove people to learn to love and to see love through that provision.
* Just because the culture and traditions of those ancient days looked different doesn’t mean that there wasn’t deep \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ flowing between this couple.
* Mary and Joseph’s story is a true human love story, but it is also a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ love story that involves you and me and every human who has walked or will ever walk this earth.
* **Love is used as a defining word of who God is… “God Is** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**!”** (I John 4:7-21)
* God’s love for us \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ time and anything that could get in the way of His love for those created in His image.
* Love was there…
  + when He made the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and formed people in His image to be in relationship with Him.
  + when the world fell into sin and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and despite the catastrophic consequences of humanity’s fall.
  + helping Adam and Eve and their family into this altered world. Even then love was making a way to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ all that had been lost.
  + when God formed a covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
  + when continually God led the Israelites through \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, through triumph and imprisonment and exile.
  + throughout Old Testament. Love guided and corrected and showed mercy to the ever disobedient and easily distracted Israelites.
* **God’s Love is a Gift that He Gives!** (Luke 1:42-45, Matthew 1:20-21)
* In the middle of Mary’s human crisis, God provided just the love she needed through \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_who understood and supported her.
* As we walk in His love, He knows \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ what we need, when we need it, and He brings us support from people around us.
* God often uses \_\_\_\_\_\_ to provide that love and support for others.
* God knew exactly what was at the heart of Joseph’s hurt: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. He reassured him through the voice of an Angel.
* The love of God with Us is God’s perfect love in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ form that we celebrate.
* God’s love is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. It is never-ending and never changing just like God Himself. (Romans 8:38-39)
* **God’s love flows through us to those who need to know about it!**
* Like any true, God-written love story, Mary and Joseph’s love didn’t end with themselves. It was built upon the foundation of God’s perfect, supernatural love.
* Jesus is so much more than just another ordinary person.
  + He is the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of God’s love.
  + His life \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for us all.
  + He was and is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with Us.
  + His love is offered to the whole \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**So What Now?**

* In this Advent season, we have the opportunity to reflect God’s love to others.
* God’s love must first be genuinely received by us.
* It grows and overflows as we extend kindness and care and support to others around us.
* Let’s look for the small steps we can take this week to extend love towards others.

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