

Sermon Summary

November 30, 2025—

First Sunday in Advent

“Joseph: Righteous in the Waiting”

Matthew 1:18–25

Advent begins in the shadows, with a carpenter whose life has been interrupted. Joseph had plans for a home, work, and a wedding, and then everything changed. Matthew tells us that before Joseph saw any angels, he faced an impossible story and a painful choice. He could shield his reputation, or he could act with mercy. Joseph was a man of few words. Those few words say much, because his character speaks louder than any speech.

Joseph is called righteous, which means more than being nice. It means he wants what God wants, and he chooses the good even when it costs him. As he considers a quiet path that will protect Mary from shame, God meets him in a dream. “Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife,” the angel says, “because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. The child will be named Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. He will be called Emmanuel, which means God with us.”

Joseph wakes, and he does the next right thing. He takes Mary home. He protects the child. He bears suspicion he does not deserve. In his calm obedience we learn what Advent waiting looks like. It is not passive, and it is steady trust that moves our feet. Joseph trusts that God is working inside a story he cannot fully understand, and his yes makes room for the Messiah to enter a real home.

We light the candle of hope today for people whose plans have collapsed, for families carrying quiet grief, for anyone who stands at a crossroads and longs for a clear word. Advent invites us to practice Joseph’s quiet courage. Listen for God’s voice in Scripture and prayer, choose mercy over self-protection, and take the next right step. As we wait, we remember that God’s presence is not fragile. In Jesus, God enters our confusion and stays with us, and in that faithful presence, hope begins to rise. So we begin the season with trust, with open hands, and with ordinary faith that God will do extraordinary things in and through ordinary people.