

The journey for Mary and Joseph culminated in Bethlehem—Joseph’s ancestral home  
It was a long journey, especially for one who was nearing term of her pregnancy  
It’s about 80 miles and took several days

Often there is a journey involved when God comes to us  
Whether we are called to go somewhere or to stay at home  
The journey may be figurative or real  
There is movement—hurdles, waiting, anticipation, struggles, hopes and dreams  
Sometimes the journey is difficult and other times quite easy, but it prepares us  
In it we are changed and transformed—we become ready for whatever is next...

Finally, Mary and Joseph arrive in Bethlehem, finding a place to stay—and Mary gives birth to her son  
God has come to earth as a tiny, helpless baby, born to a peasant couple  
That God would come to earth as a baby, lying in a manger is astounding  
In that moment all of God and all of God’s love is wrapped up in that tiny baby

I’ve been drawn to the words vulnerability and love as I think about Jesus’ birth  
The vulnerability of the baby—helpless to survive on his own—completely dependent on Mary  
The incredible love that Mary and Joseph felt as they held Jesus  
I imagine it overwhelming them at his birth

I also thought about God’s vulnerability and love  
It’s common to think about God’s love—but not God’s vulnerability  
God’s vulnerability as God choose to send his son to earth to show us who God is  
Releasing him to human frailty and the reality that it might not go well  
The overwhelming love of God—who loved us enough to send his son to earth  
*God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. 1 John 4:9 NRSV*

I think it is an invitation for us to be vulnerable in our love  
To be willing to step out of our comfort zone—not just to be uncomfortable  
But to be willing to say yes to the unknown journey, trusting that God will lead us  
Willing to risk loving others even when they don’t love us back  
To lay down our defenses that we have constructed to keep us safe  
To invite the interdependence of others to walk with us when we can’t go it alone  
It is an invitation to welcome God’s love into our lives  
Love that is tiny and helpless at first, but grows and becomes real  
To trust the unfolding way in which love changes and transforms us