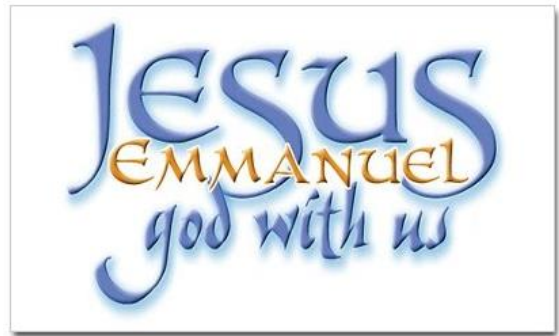


4th Sunday Advent A 2025.

Matthew 1:18-24 - GOD IS WITH US

This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but before they came to live together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph; being a man of honour and wanting to spare her publicity, decided to divorce her informally. He had made up his mind to do this when the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.' Now all this took place to fulfil the words spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 'The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and they will call him *Emmanuel*, a name which means 'God-is-with-us'.

When Joseph woke up he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do: he took his wife to his home.



Thoughts:

It is a basic conviction of Christians that God is known and close and seeks to meet up with us.

Do we believe we encounter the presence of God in our gathering? Jesus said: 'For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them' (Mt 18:20).

Do we believe we encounter the presence of God in combating hunger and human want? Jesus said: 'for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me' (Mt 25:35).

Do we believe we encounter the presence of God in combating poverty and injustice? Jesus said: 'I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me' (Mt 25:36).

Do we believe we encounter the presence of God in love, in goodness, in creativity? We believe that God is the source of our light and goodness. As Jesus said: 'Let your light so shine before all, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven' (Mt 5:16).

Do we believe that we can encounter the presence of God in prayer, and become aware that God is personal and hears us? Jesus said: 'And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith' (Mt 21:22).

