

# Welcome

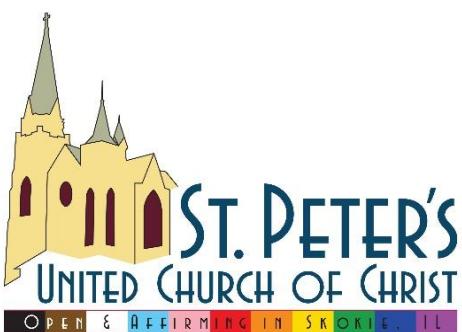


ORDER OF WORSHIP FOR

**Sunday,  
December 21,  
2025  
10:00 AM**

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**Fourth Sunday of  
Advent**





# Welcome to Worship!

**SUNDAYS @ 10:00AM**

**In-person Worship.** All are welcome to join us

**Livestream on YouTube.** Live at 10am then available on our channel after



## Ways to Give

**Send a Check.** Mail to the address below ... this way still works fine!

**Send with Zelle.** Use your banking app to send to [finance@stpeteruccskokie.org](mailto:finance@stpeteruccskokie.org)

**Use PayPal.** <https://www.paypal.me/stpeteruccskokie>

**Set up Vanco.** <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-ZCME/home>

Set up your account or log in to give



## Open Communion

All Christians and seekers after God are invited to partake of the Lord's Supper with us the **first Sunday of every month** and special Holy Days (Christmas, Maundy Thursday, and Easter). **At-home Communion** participants are invited to provide their own elements and join when Pastor bids you, "take, eat, and drink."



## About St. Peter's UCC

We've been in the heart of downtown Skokie since 1867. We are a part of the United Church of Christ, which means we are passionate about our faith and open in our thinking. We believe in a Triune God who **loves everyone**, regardless of gender identity, orientation, race, status, or physical or mental ability, and we **joyously welcome all people** to share worship, membership, marriage, baptism, funeral, and fellowship with us.



## Contact, Follow, or Talk to Us

**Rev. Brenda Barnes Jamieson (Interim Pastor):** [pastor@stpeteruccskokie.org](mailto:pastor@stpeteruccskokie.org)

**Ben Westphal (Music Director):** [bcwestphal@gmail.com](mailto:bcwestphal@gmail.com)

**Laura Olson (Office Manager):** [office@stpeteruccskokie.org](mailto:office@stpeteruccskokie.org)

Office hours Mon-Fri 9am to 2pm

**Facebook/Instagram/YouTube:** [@stpeteruccskokie](https://www.facebook.com/stpeteruccskokie)

**Website:** [www.stpeteruccskokie.org](http://www.stpeteruccskokie.org)

*Like, follow, or join our  
email list for up-to-date info  
about events and activities!*



**8013 Laramie Avenue, Skokie, IL 60077 | 847-673-8166**

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**St. Peter's United Church of Christ in Skokie**  
**Order of Worship for**  
**Sunday, December 21, 2025 at 10:00am**  
**The Fourth Sunday of Advent**

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*During our sacred music, listen. Be attentive. Feel God's Spirit connecting all of us gathered here, those with us online and in spirit, and those who cannot be present today.*

**PRELUDE**                    “Veni Emmanuel”                    arr. Callahan

**THE RINGING OF THE BELLS**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**                    Peggy Reins

*You may stand in body or spirit.*

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: God's Spirit has led us here.

All: **And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is HOPE.**

One: God's Spirit has led us here.

All: **And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is PEACE.**

One: God's Spirit has led us here.

All: **And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is JOY.**

One: The Spirit prepares the way for God-With-Us.

All: **And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is LOVE.**

One: God's Spirit has led us here.

**ALL: O Come, O Come Emmanuel!**

**OPENING HYMN** “O Come, O Come Emmanuel”

A: **O come, dear child of Mary, come,  
God’s Word made flesh within our earthly home;  
Love stir within the womb of night,  
Revenge and hatred put to flight.  
Rejoice, rejoice! Take heart and do not fear,  
God’s chosen one, Emmanuel, draws near.**

**A WORD OF LOVE**

Dorothy Panzke

**LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES** *Four candles are lit.*

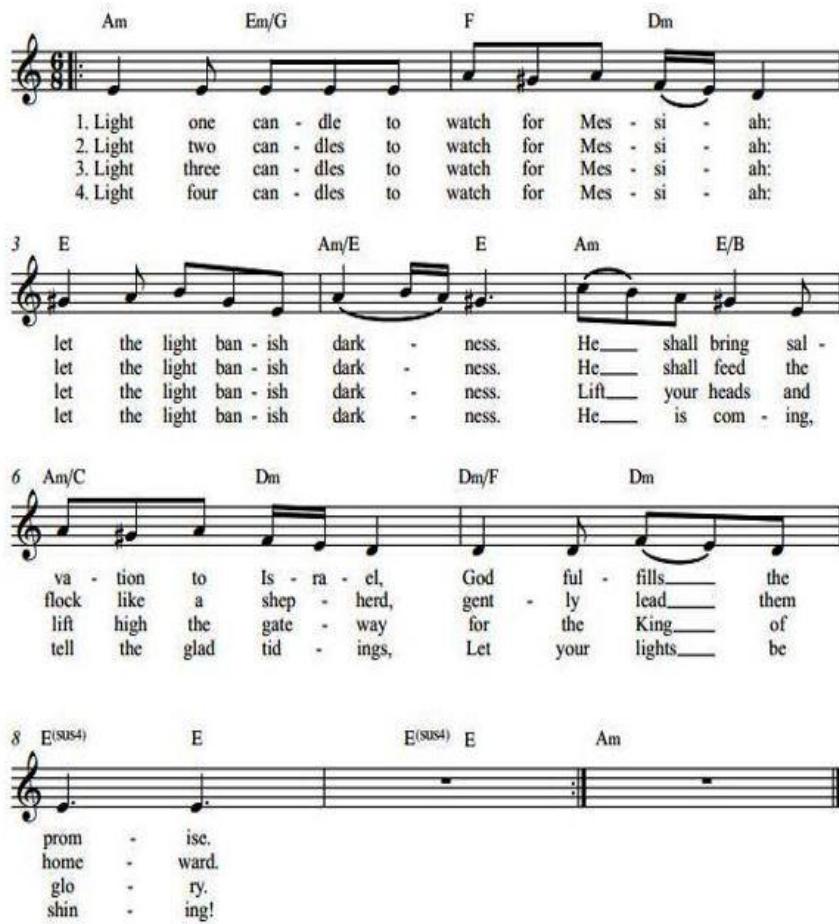
*Lighting the candle of Love today are Freddie, Arthur, Felix, Christine and Peter Svenson*

P = Pastor

C = Congregation

A = All

## RESPONSE "Light Four Candles to Watch for Messiah" v.4



1. Light one can - dle to watch for Mes - si - ah;  
2. Light two can - dles to watch for Mes - si - ah;  
3. Light three can - dles to watch for Mes - si - ah;  
4. Light four can - dles to watch for Mes - si - ah;

let the light ban - ish dark - ness. He shall bring sal -  
let the light ban - ish dark - ness. He shall feed the  
let the light ban - ish dark - ness. Lift your heads and  
let the light ban - ish dark - ness. He is com - ing,

va - tion to Is - ra - el, God ful - fills the  
flock like a shep - herd, gent - ly lead them  
lift high the gate - way for the King of  
tell the glad tid - ings, Let your lights be.

prom - ise.  
home - ward.  
glo - ry.  
shin - ing!

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## CALL TO CONFESION

One: God does not ask us to believe in the future. God asks us to believe the future *in*, until our faith helps to shape the world God intends. Let us join in confession.

## PRAYER OF CONFESION

All: **God of Advent, you do not ask us to believe in love. You ask us to believe love *in*. Shape our relationships and priorities. You do not ask us to believe in the reign of heaven. You ask us to believe the reign *in*. Shape our character and commitments until we become one with your intentions for all creation. Change us from within, until we are ready to change the world for you.**

**Amen.**

*Pause for quiet reflection*

## WORDS OF ASSURANCE

One: In the face of fear and disbelief, God breaks in to show us love.

All: **For there is nothing we can do, and nothing that can be done to us that will ever stop God from loving us.**

One: In Jesus our Christ, we are forgiven. We are loved. We are being made whole.

All: **Thanks be to God! Amen!**

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## SUNG RESPONSE                    “Gloria”

**A:      Glo-o-o-o-o-o-ria, in excelsis Deo,  
Glo-o-o-o-o-o-ria, in excelsis Deo.**

## PASSING OF THE PEACE

One: The peace of Christ be with you all.

**A:      And also with you!**

*Share a sign of God's peace: a smile, a wave, an elbow bump, a handshake, a hug. Let us fill this space with love.*

## HYMN                    “Emmanuel, Emmanuel”

The musical score consists of two staves of music. The top staff is in G major and the bottom staff is in C major. The lyrics are as follows:

Em-man - u - el, Em-man - u - el, his name is  
called Em-man - u - el. God with us,  
re-vealed in us, his name is called Em-man-u - el.

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

Hebrew Scripture

Ann Herren

Isaiah 7:10-17

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

*You may wish to stand for the reading of the Gospel.*

**CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURE**

*Please be seated.*

Matthew 1:18-25

**CHORAL ANTHEM** “Emmanuel Draws Near”

by Katie Houts

**SERMON**

“For the Longest Night”

P = Pastor

C = Congregation

A = All

**HYMN**      "In the Bleak Midwinter"      **vs. 1-3**



1 In the bleak mid-win - ter, frost - y wind made moan;  
2 Our God, heaven can - not hold him, nor earth sus - tain;  
3 An - gels and arch - an - gels may have gath - ered there;  
4 What can I give him, poor as I am?



earth stood hard as i - ron, wa - ter like a stone;  
heaven and earth shall flee a - way when he comes to reign:  
cher - u - bim and ser - a-phim thronged the air;  
If I were a shep - herd, I would bring a lamb;



snow had fall - en, snow on snow, snow on snow,  
in the bleak mid - win - ter a sta - ble place suf - ficed  
but his moth - er on - ly, in her maid - en bliss,  
if I were a wise man, I would do my part;



in the bleak mid - win - ter, long a - go.  
the Lord God in - car - nate, Je - sus Christ.  
wor - shiped the be - lov - ed with a kiss.  
yet what I can I give him: give my heart.



**PASTORAL AND SILENT PRAYER****THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**A: Our Father, who art in heaven,  
Hallowed be Thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil;  
For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the  
glory forever. Amen.**

**OFFERTORY**

*If you donate electronically, you may place an "Electronic Giving" card into the plate as it comes around so you can enjoy participating in the physical act of giving.*

*You may stand in body or in spirit.*

**OFFERTORY RESPONSE**

*Sing to the tune of "All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night"*

**A: What can I give him, poor as I am?**

**If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;  
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;  
yet what I can I give him: give my heart.**

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

**A: Love and Light of the world, we give you thanks for these gifts. We thank you for the privilege of generosity. We give you thanks for the ability to share your divine love in a tangible form with our siblings around the world. Help us to remember, as we await Christ's birth, to give more generously than we receive, knowing we will always be rich in your abundant love.**

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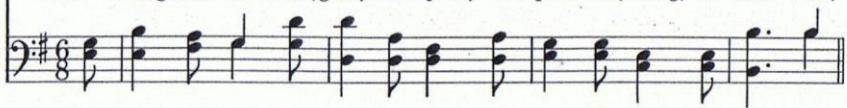
A = All

## CLOSING HYMN "What Child is This"

*In unison*



1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, On Mar-y's lap is sleep-ing?  
2 Why lies he in such mean es-tate Where ox and ass are feed-ing?  
3 So bring him in-cense, gold, and myrrh, Come peas-ant, king, to own him;



Whom an-gels greet with an-thems sweet, While shep-herds watch are keep-ing?  
Good Chris-tian, fear: for sin-ners here The si-lent Word is plead-ing.  
The King of kings sal-va-tion brings, Let lov-ing hearts en-throne him.



### REFRAIN



This, this is Christ the King, Whom shep-herds guard and an-gels sing:



Haste, haste to bring him laud, The babe, the son of Mar-y.



**CHARGE AND BENEDICTION****POSTLUDE** “Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending”

Arr. Hurd

*During the Postlude, we pause to reflect as we prepare to follow God out into the world.**Today's liturgy is adapted from:**Barbara Lundblad, Working Preacher, December 22, 2013;**Let It Be Deep: Service Prayers for the Fourth Sunday of Advent Year A by Maria Mankin.*

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**FOR WORSHIP TODAY**

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INTERIM MINISTER	Rev. Brenda Barnes Jamieson
MUSIC DIRECTOR	Ben Westphal
DEACON	Peter Svenson
LIVESTREAM RECORDING	Jenn Schneider
NURSERY ATTENDANT	Heidi Tarzian

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# News in the Pews

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**On this last Sunday of Advent we happily reach out to all who have come to approach the throne of Grace. Christmas will be truly Christmas when we center our minds on the Christ child who came to offer the world salvation and hope.**

**We extend heartfelt gratitude to all our volunteers; without their help, this and every service would not be possible – thank you.**

**Today is our Veterans of the Cross Christmas Fund offering. Funds provide direct financial support to those who serve the church and are facing financial difficulties. This applies to active and retired clergy, lay employees, and their surviving spouses.**

**Join us for our very special Christmas Eve Worship, this Wednesday at 7PM. Carols and candles – celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ our Savior with us!**

**Baby Shower for Jesus!** Our Sunday School program is sponsoring collecting baby items for the Niles Township Food pantry to give to their needy families. Items like baby food formula, diapers, lotions, cheerios, fruit cups, fruit snacks, juice and milk boxes and pudding cups are all great items to donate. You can place your items in the sanctuary under the tree on Sundays, or on the table outside the gym during the week. Thank you so much for your help!

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**Thinking about joining the church?** We will be holding classes in January. If you might be interested, please tell Brenda, Laura or another church leader.

**A call to Audit.** Your Board of Finance is looking for one of two people that could volunteer to help audit the records of the Financial Secretary and the Treasurer before our annual meeting. If you or someone you know has a skillset or an inquiring mind to dive in and ask pertinent questions about how St. Peter's manages our finances, please reach out to Chad McCoy at [chadwood.mccoy@gmail.com](mailto:chadwood.mccoy@gmail.com). The time would be a few hours in the church office sometime in mid-January. Thank You!

**2026 Calendars are in!** Copies will be available in the Narthex, Lanford Fellowship Hall, and near the offices. Take one for a friend, too!

**Shopping in Little Village** - If you missed shopping in Little Village with Niles Township Clergy Forum, you can still make a difference. They need our business, since ICE activity has severely impacted their economy. Little Village is going all out to make a shopping trip fun and convenient. For more information, check out the Little Village Chamber of Commerce.

**Softgoods Drive in January!** Starting January 4<sup>th</sup>, we will be collecting clothing, bedding, linens, shoes, belts, hats, coats, pillows & stuffed toys for our Savers Fundrive, which pays by the pound. Bring your items to the office on weekdays or on Sundays. Thanks for your help!

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# Our People

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**Please keep St. Peter's extended family in your thoughts and prayers. Other folks that need your prayers include:**

- Matt Anthony, nephew of Marlene Russell, who has incurable cancer.
- Kate Traub, niece of the Bailey's, recovering from surgery.
- Mark Taylor.
- The Kuras family welcomed a baby girl Virginia! All are doing well.
- Daughters of Ann Herren Jenny and Betsy, both recovering after surgeries.  
Wendy, friend and colleague of Beth Sterba, who is fighting liver cancer.
- Chad McCoy and his family.
- Richard Hook who had a stroke.
- Kathy Zipperer and her family.
- Dorothy Panzke with a new health concern.
- Annie's friend Renee is fighting a long term, rare illness. She and her family are fighting to find a remedy that will slow and maybe even reverse the progress of this illness.
- Nicole McGinnis, childhood friend of Laura's who is fighting stage 4 cancer.
- David, uncle of Chad McCoy, as he undergoes kidney dialysis treatments.
- Robert Elliot, brother-in-law of Anna Riley, diagnosed with cancer stage 2.
- Prayers for Julius and all immigrants, refugees and displaced people.
- Sharon Johnson's daughter Donna continues her battle with Lymphoma, which can be controlled but not cured.
- Susan Garcia's Aunt Janice battling cancer.

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- Paul Brzozowski has now completed all treatment and will have MRIs every 2 months.

Others in our church family to keep close in our hearts include Larry Baumhardt, Lois Jarmuth and Bob Seitman.

***If you are aware of others to include in our shared prayers, please let a church officer, an Elder, or the office know!***

**Happy Birthday this week** to Michael Chavez, Payton McDonald, Carol Iannotti, Carol Hook, Laura Olson and Beverly Mau!

**According to the schedule** and barring any switches, next Sunday's Lector is Jenn Schneider, and Carolyn Van Til is on Nursery duty. Thank you so much for your service!

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## CHURCH LEADERSHIP

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PRESIDENT	Peggy Reins
VICE-PRESIDENT	Barb Todd
TREASURER	Chad McCoy
SECRETARY	Annie Noorts
FINANCIAL SECRETARY	Maria Altmayer

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## *Regular Reminders!*

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**Let us know you were here!** Please sign the attendance sheet in the black pew pads and when you think your pew is ready, please pass the pad towards the center aisle of the church.

**We are always grateful for all offerings to the church.** So many thanks to everyone who's been keeping us going with your donations! See inside the front cover for details on how to donate.

**Private Signs:** You will notice certain rooms around the church have been designated as "private." If ICE should ever come to our building, they will not be allowed to enter any room marked "private."

**You can now donate via Zelle!** Put finance@stpeteruccskokie.org in the address. Please indicate under memo/notes where the funds should go.

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## **MISSION MOMENTS**

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**God With Us**

**December 21, 2025**

**Fourth Sunday of Advent**

**PURPLE**

**Matthew 1:18-25**

It was Christmas Eve, and I was joining my father at a church he had been attending. I settled into the pew, letting the medley of hymns soothe my still frazzled soul from the push to meet holiday deadlines at my Manhattan magazine job. Soon, though, I heard more than the music. I heard a silent prayer fill my heart.

God, thank You for being in my life. May I never forget to thank You even when dark times come. May I always know You are with me.

Why was I thinking about dark times descending upon my seemingly perfect life? I was young. My career was taking off. I had a wonderful apartment. I even had a special someone in my life.

Thankfully, the church school procession of angels with lopsided cardboard wings had begun, giving me something else to focus on. But throughout the service, every now and then, I kept thinking about, “May I never forget to thank You even when dark times come.”

Two months later, “the one” I envisioned building a future with was killed in a jeep accident while traveling in Africa. The proverbial rug

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was ripped out from underneath me. Yet through my tears, I remembered my Christmas prayer. And so, I prayed in my sorrow a prayer of thanks for God being with me here in my dark time.

The year of unwanted change flew by and once again it was Christmas Eve. This time, though, I wasn't sitting in the pew of the church my father was attending. I was standing with a heavenly host of angels with lopsided cardboard wings. I had left my magazine job and was now serving the church as Christian ed director as I prepared to enter seminary. Little did I know then that down this unexpected path was a rural congregation waiting for me where I would find not only my call, but someone to share my life with.

As I waited with the overly excited angels, I thought about how drastically my life had changed. It was then the realization of where God had led me fully hit. I was standing in church named "Emmanuel," which was located on a street called "Hope." The angels began fluttering as the organ bellowed with the first notes of the processional hymn. But I didn't hear any of it. All I could hear was a familiar prayer, in which I invite you to say along with me:

*God, thank You for being in my life. May I never forget to thank You even when dark times come. May I always know You are with me. In the name of Emmanuel, God with us always, we pray. Amen.*

(Rev. Donna Frischknecht Jackson is a communications specialist for the United Church of Christ and author of today's Sunday Bulletin.)

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### **Isaiah 7:10-17**

<sup>10</sup> Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, <sup>11</sup> “Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” <sup>12</sup> But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test.” <sup>13</sup> Then Isaiah<sup>[a]</sup> said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? <sup>14</sup> Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel.<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>15</sup> He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. <sup>16</sup> For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted. <sup>17</sup> The Lord will bring on you and on your people and on your ancestral house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—the king of Assyria.”

### **Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19**

<sup>1</sup> Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,  
    you who lead Joseph like a flock!  
You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth  
<sup>2</sup> before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh.  
Stir up your might,  
    and come to save us!  
<sup>3</sup> Restore us, O God;  
    let your face shine, that we may be saved.  
<sup>4</sup> O Lord God of hosts,  
    how long will you be angry with your people’s prayers?  
<sup>5</sup> You have fed them with the bread of tears  
    and given them tears to drink in full measure.  
<sup>6</sup> You make us the scorn<sup>[a]</sup> of our neighbors;  
    our enemies laugh among themselves.  
<sup>7</sup> Restore us, O God of hosts;  
    let your face shine, that we may be saved.  
<sup>17</sup> But let your hand be upon the one at your right hand,  
    the one whom you made strong for yourself.  
<sup>18</sup> Then we will never turn back from you;  
    give us life, and we will call on your name.  
<sup>19</sup> Restore us, O Lord God of hosts;  
    let your face shine, that we may be saved.

### **Matthew 1:18-25**

<sup>18</sup> Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah<sup>[a]</sup> took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. <sup>20</sup> But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” <sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

<sup>23</sup> “Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.” <sup>24</sup> When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife <sup>25</sup> but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son,<sup>[b]</sup> and he named him Jesus.