

**Discussion & Reflection Questions**  
**Advent 4 - Transformed By Love**  
**21<sup>st</sup> of December 2025**

**Read: Matthew 1:18-25**

**18** Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

**19** Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly.

**20** 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.

**21** She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.'

**22** All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

**23** 'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and they shall name him Emmanuel', which means, 'God is with us.'

**24** When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife,

**25** but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

**Questions:**

1. Joseph's plans are suddenly disrupted by Mary's news. How does this passage challenge the idea that love always feels comfortable or convenient?
2. Joseph is described as "a righteous man," yet his righteousness is expressed quietly rather than publicly. What does this suggest about how love & faithfulness are lived out in unseen ways?
3. Joseph initially plans to dismiss Mary quietly to spare her shame. How does this reflect a love that seeks the good of another, even at personal cost?
4. The angel's message requires Joseph to radically change direction. How & why do you think God changes our direction?
5. Jesus is named Emmanuel, "God with us." What does this name say about who Jesus is & how God works in the world?
6. Joseph takes on social risk, misunderstanding, and long-term responsibility. What does this say about how we should approach our own relationships, reputation, or comfort?
7. How does this passage encourage us to be transformed by love?

**Prayer:**

Gracious God,  
you chose the virgin Mary, by your grace,  
to be the mother of our Lord and Saviour:  
so fill us with your grace,  
that with her we may rejoice in your salvation,  
and in all things embrace your will;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. Amen.