

**December 22, 2019**  
**Fourth Sunday of Advent**

**Still : Love**

**Ancient Reading** ~ *Matthew 1:18-25*

This is how the birth of Jesus (Yeshua) came about. When Jesus' mother, Mary, was engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, Mary realized she was pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Joseph, her husband, an upright person unwilling to disgrace her, decided to divorce her quietly.

As Joseph was thinking this over, an angel of God appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, descendant of David, don't be afraid to wed Mary; it is through the Holy Spirit she has conceived this child. She is to have a son, and you are to name him Jesus (Yeshua) – 'Salvation', 'God Saves' – because he will save the people from their sins." All this happened to fulfill what God has said through the prophet:

"The virgin will be with child and give birth, and the child shall be named Emmanuel" - a name that means 'God Is With Us'.

When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of God had directed, and took Mary into his home as his wife. He had no union with her as her husband until she had given birth; she had a son, and they named him Jesus (Yeshua).

**Second Reading** ~ *adapted from Father Richard Rohr in "Preparing for Christmas"*

I hope you've met at least one "Dominion of God" person in your life. They are surrendered and trustful people. You sense that their life is okay at the core. They have given control to Another and are at peace, which paradoxically allows them to calmly be in control.

People of the Dominion of God are history makers. They break through the small kingdoms of this world to an alternative and much larger world, God's full creation. People who are still living in the false self are history stoppers. They use God and religion to protect their own status and the status quo of the world that sustains them. They are often fearful people.

Why do we love and admire Dominion people like Mary and Joseph, and then not imitate their faith journeys, their courage, their non-reassurance by the religious system? These were two laypeople who totally trusted their inner experience of God and who followed it to Bethlehem and beyond. Mary and Joseph walked in courage and blind faith that their own experience was true— with no one to reassure them they were right. Their only safety net was God's love and mercy, a safety net they must have tried out many times, or else they would never have been able to fall into it so gracefully.