

Anglican & United Church Ministries

**Home of St. Mary the Virgin Anglican
& Vegreville United Churches**



They Will Call Him Immanuel

Matthew 1:18-25

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 21, 2025

**A Service of Morning Prayer
in the United Church Tradition**

Rector & Minister in Charge: The Rev. Laureta Blondin

Music provided by Lucille Landry

(* = Please stand, but only if it is comfortable to do so)

Welcome in the name of Christ to Anglican and United Church Ministries in Vegreville and thank you for joining us on this special day. We pray that you enjoy your time with us and that your spirit is enriched as we sit together at the feet of our Saviour. We believe that no matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey God welcomes you... and so do we! If you are visiting us, a warm welcome to you. We pray that you and your family are blessed and experience Christ's love in this morning's service. God's richest blessings be on you!

The congregations of St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Church and Vegreville United Church are committed to the ongoing work of being fully affirming churches. Inspired by the radical hospitality of Jesus Christ, we welcome everyone into the life of our congregations, without exception to ability, age, race, place of origin, ancestry, marital status, gender identity, sexual orientation, life stage, or any other basis by which a person can be pre-judged. You are invited to join us at this intersection of faith and life as we share God's grace with one another and the world through worship and ministries of healing, reconciliation, and justice.

The congregations of Vegreville United Church and St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Church respectfully acknowledge that we are located on ancestral Treaty Six Territory land ᓂᓂᓂᓂᓂᓂ (Siksikaitsitapi), a traditional gathering place, travelling route and home for diverse indigenous peoples including the Nehiyawak (Cree), Tsuut'ina (Sarcee), Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), Nakota Sioux, Haudenosaunee (Iroquois), Métis, Dënë Sųłıné (Chipewyan), Anishinaabe (Ojibway-Saulteaux), Inuk (Inuit), and many others whose histories, languages and cultures continue to influence our vibrant local communities. We give thanks for their hospitality and the opportunity to share common ground.

Children are welcome at all services! We believe it is very important for families to worship together. Don't feel your child must be absolutely quiet or still, for we are glad to have children — and all their wiggles, giggles, and squiggles — as part of our community and worship life! After all... as an old saying goes, "faith is caught, not taught!"

Fourth Sunday of Advent

LOVE Through Nurturing the Body

A virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel: God with us.

Matthew 1.23

Musical Prelude

The Gathering

Land Acknowledgement

All As we gather to worship, let's respectfully pause to remember we live and work and worship on Treaty 6 lands that are, by law, the unceded territory of the original First Nations peoples. May we live with respect on this land and live in peace and friendship with all diverse peoples who now call this land home.

* Advent Light Calls Us into Worship

One The grace of our ✠ Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

People **And also with you.**

1st Reader On this fourth Sunday of Advent, as we anticipate the coming Christ Child, we light the candle of love.

All: **We rejoice that in Jesus Christ, God is with us, Emmanuel.**

(Four candles are lit.)

2nd Reader Joseph was uncertain how to love Mary when he found her to be with child. The angel assured him the child was Holy, a gift of love for humanity for the Creator God.

All: **Jesus Christ is pure love, a holy gift.**

1st Reader Joseph and Mary became a family, naming their son,
Immanuel, God with us – Jesus, the one who saves.

All: **By the name of Jesus, we know love in all its forms.**

2nd Reader In this time, our congregation celebrates the light of love in
our community and through our shared ministry.

All: **We thank God for those who show love through
nurturing the body.**

One We pray today for all God's children,

All: **That each one might know the hope, peace, joy, and
love that comes from God through the Advent of the
Christ Child. Amen.**

Brief moment of silence

Adapted <https://www.moravian.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Advent-Liturgy-2025-inserts-rev.pdf>

*** ♪ Opening Hymn..... *Come Thou Long Expected Jesus* (VU #2)**

Prayer of Approach and Confession

All: **God, love is such a familiar word, such an often-used
word, but of all the words we use to speak of Your
relationship to Your creation, our favourite word is
'love.' As the night of the Bethlehem birth again draws
near, let us again find Your love in this story, in this
manger, in this baby. Let Your love again be born in this
world, and in each of our hearts. Let us be a community
of Christ's love. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.**

Brief moment of silence to silently offer up our private confessions.

Words of Assurance

(Isaiah 35:10)

One Now return to the Lord with joy and gladness.
Sing a song of redemption! Let sorrow and sighing be no more.
In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

People **Thanks be to God.**

We Hear God's Word

Prayer for Illumination

One As we prepare to hear God's word, let us pray,
All **O God of wisdom, you delight in deep truth. Let these words of scripture teach our hearts, that we may hear about your joy and love, for the sake of Christ, your wisdom for us. Amen.**

First Reading

Isaiah 7.10–16 [NRSV]

¹⁰Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. ¹²But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. ¹³Then Isaiah said: 'Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴Therefore 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. ¹⁵He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶For 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.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 80.1–7, 16–18 [NRSV]

- 1 Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock; *
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.
- 2 In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, *
stir up your strength and come to help us.
- 3 Restore us, O God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

- 4 O Lord God of hosts, *
**how long will you be angered
despite the prayers of your people?**
- 5 You have fed them with the bread of tears; *
you have given them bowls of tears to drink.
- 6 You have made us the derision of our neighbours, *
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.
- 7 Restore us, O God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.
- 16 Let your hand be upon the man of your right hand, *
the son of man you have made so strong for yourself.
- 17 And so will we never turn away from you; *
give us life, that we may call upon your name.
- 18 Restore us, O Lord God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

The Gospel Matthew 1.18–25 [NRSV]

Officiant The Lord be with you.

All **And also with you.**

Officiant This is the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

All **Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

¹⁸Now 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. ¹⁹Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰But 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. ²¹She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' ²²All 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.' ²⁴When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, ²⁵but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.'

Officiant The Gospel of Christ.

All: **Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

Reflection The Rev. Laureta Blondin

A Brief Moment for Silent Reflection

Affirmation of Faith

Celebrant Let us declare our communal Affirmation of Faith.

All **We are not alone; we live in God's world.**

**We believe in God, who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh, to
reconcile and make new, who works in us and others
by the Spirit.**

**We trust in God. We are called to be the Church: To
celebrate God's presence, to live with respect in
Creation, to love and serve others, to seek justice and
resist evil, to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, ✠
our judge and our hope.**

**In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us.
We are not alone. Thanks be to God. Amen.**

Intercessory Prayers of the People

*We hold the following ministries, communities, and people in prayer.
During the Prayers of the People in our services of worship we bring before
God the needs of others and ourselves. Please consider offering these
requests to God in your own daily prayers through this week.*

As we await the coming of Christ in mercy and majesty, let us pray for the Church, the world, and for all people according to their need. Our response to, "With love we pray," is "Lord Jesus come soon."

O come, Emmanuel, our Lord and God, our King and Brother! Come with healing and blessing, with light and life. Come and save us all from sin and evil and endless death(*pause*). With love we pray, ***Lord Jesus come soon.***

Ever seeking your glory, we pray for the church. Today we remember:

- in the Anglican Communion's world cycle of prayer, we pray for the people and leadership of *The Anglican Church of Burundi* that is also Edmonton Diocese's own companion diocese.
- in the United Church of Canada cycle of prayer, we pray for the Rev. Dr. Kimberly Heath, our Moderator and for the people and leadership of the *Pacific Mountain* Region.
- in the Anglican Church of Canada cycle of prayer, we pray for our Primate, the Rt. Rev. Shane Parker, and for the people and leadership of the Diocese of British Columbia, the Rt. Rev. Anna Greenwood-Lee, their Bishop.
- in the Northern Spirit Region cycle of prayer, we pray for the Rev. Adam Hall, our Pastoral Relations Minister, and for the people and leadership of the Living Spirit Pastoral Charge in Drayton Valley.
- in the Diocese of Edmonton cycle of prayer, we pray for the Rt. Rev. Stephen London, our Bishop and for All Saints' Cathedral, Edmonton and Alexandra Meek, their Rector, as well as John Gee, their Deacon; Robin Gibbons, their International Ecumenical Canon; Michael Lapsley, their Honorary Canon for Healing and Reconciliation, and RJ Chambers, their Office Administrator.
- in our local cycle of prayer, we pray for the people and the leadership of Saint John the Baptist Russo Greek Orthodox Church.
- in our indigenous cycle of prayer, we pray for the people and the leadership of the Métis Nation of Alberta.

O Wisdom, proceeding from the mouth of the Most High, fill the Church with your Spirit. Sustain and order its worship, proclamation, and works of charity, according to your most holy will. Come; and teach us prudence. *(pause)*. With love we pray, **Lord Jesus come soon.**

O Adonai, ruler of the House of Israel, rule also in the lives and works of your people in this congregation. Give us your Word and show us your glory. Look with favor upon all who seek to be your disciples in this place. Come; with your outstretched arm to redeem us *(pause)*. With love we pray, **Lord Jesus come soon.**

O Emmanuel, the ransom of your people Israel: deliver your persecuted servants from torment this day also. Keep them faithful and steadfast. Help us to honor their witness and provide for their needs. Turn their tormentors from their evil ways. Come; and teach them courage *(pause)*. With love we pray, **Lord Jesus come soon.**

O Bright and Morning Star, you gladden the hearts of those who sit in darkness. Shine on all who are overwhelmed by despair, confusion, hatred, or unbelief. Come; and lead them into the brightness of your holy love *(pause)*. With love we pray, **Lord Jesus come soon.**

O King of the nations, the ruler they long for, unite all people under your glorious and gentle reign. Teach us the things that make for peace. Come and save us, whom you formed from clay. *(pause)*. With love we pray, **Lord Jesus come soon.**

O Root of Jesse, you stand as an ensign before the peoples. Guard and guide all who stand in harm's way in defense of justice and freedom. Come quickly; and deliver them *(pause)*. With love we pray, **Lord Jesus come soon.**

O Key of David, you open what no one can close; you close what no one can open. Free all who suffer and are imprisoned by the powers of sin, evil, and death: especially those we now name aloud or hold within the silence of our hearts *(long pause)*. Along with those for whom no one prays, come, and close the path to misery. With love we pray, **Lord Jesus come soon.**

O Dayspring, splendor of life everlasting, keep safe in your mighty arms all those who died trusting in your promises. Come; and enlighten us, who still sit in the shadow of death, and open wide our heavenly home.

(pause). With love we pray, **Lord Jesus come soon.**

All these things, and whatever else you see that we need, grant to us, dear Father, for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

One We pray all these things to you, God — and now pray to you with the words your beloved son taught us...

All **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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

* ♪ **Prayer Response** **O Little Town of Bethlehem** (VU #64)

* Exchanging the Peace

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

Members of the community are invited to greet those around them with a sign of peace (handshakes or hugs) and words like "The peace of the Lord be always with you." This ancient tradition is an appropriate response to the peace that God gives to those who hear and do his word.

Our Offertory Gifts

Celebrant As we continue to prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ in this season of Advent, may our generosity be a reflection of the hope, peace, joy, and love we celebrate each week. Just as the light of the Advent candles grows brighter, so too may the light of our compassion and care for others.

♪ Advent Offertory Hymn

..... (Tune: VU 541 — Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow)

1. Hope fills our hearts and overflows,
Hope fills our lives, expands and grows.
In hope is how we're called to live,
Hope is how each one of us can give.
2. Peace fills our hearts and overflows,
Peace fills our lives, expands and grows.
In peace is how we're called to live,
Peace is how each one of us can give.
3. Joy fills our hearts and overflows,
Joy fills our lives, expands and grows.
In joy is how we're called to live,
Joy is how each one of us can give.
4. Love fills our hearts and overflows,
Love fills our lives, expands and grows.
In love is how we're called to live,
Love is how each one of us can give.

* Prayer of Dedication Over the Gifts

All **Gracious God, we remember that we are called to belong to you. As we offer our gifts, we dedicate them to your service and the spread of your good news. May our lives reflect the grace and peace that we are about to receive again through the birth of Baby Jesus. Strengthen us to live lives of faithfulness and to use these offerings for impact across the global community. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.** *(Romans 1:1-7)*

Benediction

God Moments & Announcements

♪ Recessional Hymn **O Come, O Come Emmanuel** (VU #1)

The Dismissal

Celebrant Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All Thanks be to God!

* ♪ **Three-Fold Amen**(VU #967)

Thank you for worshipping with us! Please join us for fellowship time with refreshments in the auditorium following the worship service.

Announcements: The Life and Work of the Church

Donations to our churches: To continue the good work of St. Mary the Virgin Anglican and Vegreville United churches and ensure their ongoing presence in our community, your financial support is most appreciated. Donations can be made by either cash, cheque or e-transfer. Please use one of the envelopes located in the Narthex for cash or cheque donations and place the envelope in the offertory plate by the door. If writing a cheque, please ensure your cheque is made payable to either Vegreville United Church or St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Church. Annual Tax Receipts are provided for all donations totalling \$20 or more per year to the church of your choice. E-transfers for Vegreville United Church can be sent to vegucc@telusplanet.net and e-transfers for St. Mary's can be sent to stmarysvegreville@gmail.com. Cheques can also be delivered to 5126-48 Avenue, Vegreville, AB T9C 1M7.

Lessons & Carols Evening Service TONIGHT! A community service of scripture readings and seasonal Advent and Christmas music begins at 7:00 PM tonight. Music will be provided by the various members of our music team, the Lutheran Church Choir & Friends, the Holy Trinity Ukrainian Catholic Church Choir and the Vegreville Handbell Choir.

Dec. 24th **A Family Christmas Eve:** A communion service at 7:00 PM

Dec. 25th **Christmas Day:** A communion service at 10:00 AM

Dec. 28th **1st Sunday after Christmas:** A communion service at 10:00 AM