

Matthew 1:18-25

Come, Jesus, be with us

In the midst of the festive season, it is so easy to overlook the one at the heart of Christmas – Jesus. This week's readings have Jesus very much at the centre and remind us of the good news of his coming – news that was even better than expected. We will explore what Jesus' presence with us means and how we can help others to realise the Jesus who comes to be with them.

Read this week's passage:



Living Scripture

'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.' Isaiah 7:14

The prophet Isaiah foresees a time when God will rescue his people: by the time the baby 'Immanuel' is born and weaned, the army threatening Israel will have disappeared. The name Immanuel means 'God with us' and, in Matthew's Gospel (1:23), we are told Jesus is also God with us, his birth similarly telling us salvation is near.

What does 'God with us' mean to you? When do you notice God's presence?

In both the original prophecy, and in the birth of Jesus, there is a time of waiting. God is coming, on the way, but there is pregnancy, times of growth, where there may not be much to see, but still salvation is coming.

Do you trust God to be at work when you can't see it? Perhaps there is something in the invitation, Come Jesus, be with us.

Where can you invite Jesus to be with you this week?

First impressions

- How would you describe the feeling of being with someone who knows and loves you?
- What does 'Immanuel' (God is with us), mean to you?
- What steps could you take to know God better in the week ahead?



LISTEN

Listen to Emmanuel God with us' (Chris Tomlin). Listen or read the lyrics together and imagine how Mary and Joseph might have felt hearing those words.



BAKE

Leave off one side of a gingerbread house to make a stable and use the chimney pieces to make a manger. Add people and eat!



Write 'What brings you joy?' on a planner, calendar, diary or a prominent place in your house as a reminder to keep coming back to things which bring you joy as a way of being filled.



Find more free Roots resources to reflect on this week's theme:

Pray

Thank you, Lord, that you came at Christmas to be with us and that you come afresh to us each new day. Send us out now to be signs of your loving presence to others who need you too. For your name's sake, we pray. Amen.



Write



The people Isaiah addressed were longing for home. Write alternative Christmas lists of what you are longing for or hoping for at this time for yourself, for others and for the world. So, no Barbie Dolls or Hot Wheels Cars! When the lists have been written, you might like to sing Bernadette Farrell's 'Longing for Light' (Christ be our Light) as the lists are 'posted' in a Christmas post box or placed on the on the Communion table in church..