

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

—Matthew 1:23

It was a crazy dream—one that seemed to relieve Joseph of his great concern over Mary but that hinted at something far greater than an ill-timed pregnancy. This child will be called “Emmanuel, God with us.” The naming of this miracle announces the uniting of heaven to earth so that God’s holiness will be known in human flesh.

No longer would human flesh be understood as anything less than holy. From this moment on, no one could be disposable; all have transcendent and eternal value because he is Emmanuel.

The widow and orphan, the sick and destitute, the refugee and the prisoner, the invisible and the forgotten—all bear the divine image and are dearly loved by Joseph’s son. Care for me, says Jesus, through your care for the least of these.

—Duncan Gray III