

**Worship Material**  
**Come, Jesus, be with us**  
**Material from Roots Bible Study**  
**Sunday 21st December**

**Begin with an opening prayer**

Come, Lord Jesus. Come be with us.  
Come be with us in our joys and celebrations.  
Come be with us in our doubts and difficulties.  
Come be with us to bless us and inspire us.  
Come be with us to correct and guide us.  
Come be with us to heal and save us.  
Come, Lord Jesus, come.

**Read Matthew 1:18-25**

**Bible notes**

In verse 23, Matthew quotes Isaiah 7:14. This is the classic example of Matthew's idea of how Jesus 'fulfilled' prophecy. This is not so much 'making it come true' as 'making the words mean more than they did before'. Whereas in Isaiah 'Immanuel/ God with us' had the meaning of God being on our side, in this passage, Matthew is showing that God is actually with us now, in this child, Jesus.

The focus here is on Joseph and his actions. At the time of Jesus' birth, marriage was a two-stage process. The bride was pledged to the husband and then followed a time of 'getting to know each other'. (This could include co-habitation, particularly if the families wanted to be reassured that the couple was fertile.) Only then would families make formal contracts, giving the woman financial protection if the couple split or she was widowed. So, Joseph was well within his rights to call off the engagement – his betrothed wife was pregnant and not by him! Mary was particularly vulnerable because she would leave the marriage shamed, with nothing except a child to raise. Joseph's name and dreams link him with the Joseph of Genesis, whose dreams led him to take the people into Egypt to protect them, just as this Joseph will later do for the child Jesus. The name Jesus was not uncommon and means 'God saves' or 'God is our salvation'

## Prayer

We praise you, Almighty God, for walking with us through Advent.

We praise and thank you:

that you have guided us and shown us the way;

that you have revealed yourself in the expected and unexpected;

that you have been balm to our pain and companion in our joy;

that we have seen prophecies fulfilled, promises upheld;

that we have glimpsed hope in the desperate times;

that in death there is life, where there is loss there is gain;

that tears of sadness can be transformed to tears of joy.

We praise you for the greatness of your transforming power.

And, as we wait for Christmas Day, we shout:

**Come, Jesus, be with us.**

**Amen.**

## A prayer to conclude

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.**