

# COME TOGETHER

The Arrival of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love

**Rocky  Mount**  
CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

**Advent 2021— Devotional  
Week One**

*Raising up followers who demonstrate  
Christ's love!*

# Come Together— Week 1

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## Day One

*“God sent the angel Gabriel to . . . a virgin pledged to be married . . . The virgin's name was Mary” (Luke 1:26-27).*

“Pledged to be married”? We would say she was engaged. And she was just about to learn she would be pregnant before she married! In that culture, it might have meant death by stoning. What an awesome announcement! What heavy assignment has God given you? How does it compare with Mary's?

***Prayer:*** *Heavenly Father, when your assignments startle me, help me to be strong.*

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## Day Two

*“But the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary’” (Luke 1:30).*

Mary had every right to be afraid. What would her fiancé say? What would her parents say? What would the neighbors say? Someone observed, “Courage is fear that has said its prayers.” Mary must have said her prayers because she showed great courage. Have you said your prayers today?

**Prayer:** *Lord Jesus, thank you for the privilege of prayer – today and every day.*

# Come Together— Week 1

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## Day Three

*“. . . you are to give him the name Jesus  
(Luke 1:31).*

Billy Graham tells about an American woman, teaching in China. On a mountain holiday, she met an old man and felt impressed to tell him about Jesus. Afterwards, the man said, “You know, I’ve prayed to him all my life, but I didn’t know his name.”

Cherish that name – Jesus.

***Prayer:*** *Lord Jesus, thank you for coming into this world for me.*

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## Day Four

*“He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High” (Luke 1:32).*

Who is the world’s greatest person? Churchill? Lincoln? All the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the rulers that ever ruled have not affected the life of humankind as has this one solitary life – the Lord Jesus. He is great!

***Prayer:*** *Lord, we praise you today. You are great and “most worthy of praise” (Psalm 145:3).*

# Come Together— Week 1

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## Day Five

*“‘How will this be,’ Mary asked the angel, ‘since I am a virgin?’”(Luke 1:34).*

An honest doubter, talking about the Bible’s miracles, once said, “I just can’t believe because my head keeps getting in the way!” Mary somehow moved beyond the doubts that initially made her wonder how God could perform a miracle. She embraced what the angel said and became the mother of Jesus.

***Prayer:*** *O God, help me to believe in my heart even though my head may have some doubts.*

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## Day Six

*“For nothing is impossible with God”  
(Luke 1:37).*

Someone credited the Army Corps of Engineers with saying, “The difficult we do immediately; the impossible takes a little longer.” Is the word “impossible” even in God’s vocabulary? You may question whether something is God’s will, but don’t question whether He can do it. Put your hope in Him for impossible situations.

***Prayer:*** *Lord Jesus, help me to lift my eyes beyond the impossible to the possible.*

# Come Together— Week 1

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## Day Seven

*“I am the Lord's servant,” Mary answered. “May it be to me as you have said” (Luke 1:38).*

A pilot listened to the control tower's instructions. “But there's a pole in the way,” he objected. “You take care of the *instructions*,” came the reply, “and we'll take care of the *obstructions*.” In spite of obstructions, Mary put her hope in the Lord. Her obedience is a good model for us.

***Prayer:*** *Father, help me to commit my hesitation to you and obey.*

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# Come Together— Week Two

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## Day One

*“And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night” (Luke 2:8).*

Some shepherds led their sheep into a walled enclosure at night. If no enclosure was available, shepherds had to watch over their flocks to protect them from wild, night-time prowlers. The angels appeared to men who were faithfully doing their duty. Are you faithfully serving where God has placed you?

**Prayer:** *O Lord, help me to be faithful at my post of duty.*

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## Day Two

*“I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people” (Luke 2:10).*

Good news is hard to find. Check today’s newspaper or the television news. In fact, the best news ever – the Savior has come – did not make the headlines of the *Bethlehem Beacon*. But it has brought peace to the hearts of believers for more than 2,000 years. Rejoice! The Savior is born!

***Prayer:*** *Lord, thank you for the good news of salvation through Jesus.*

# Come Together— Week Two

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## Day Three

*“The shepherds said to one another, ‘Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened’” (Luke 2:15).*

With no apparent hesitation, the shepherds acted on the good news they had heard. An obedient Christian is not content simply to hear the good news. Warm, informed hearts must act on what they hear. Great blessing should lead to great obedience. The path of an obedient person leads to Jesus.

***Prayer:*** *O God, may my heart always leap to obey you.*

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## Day Four

*“They hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby” (Luke 2:16).*

Christmas is an exciting time. Wrapped gifts, twinkling lights, heart-warming carols all lend to the spirit of excitement. The shepherds were the first, but not the last, to hurry in anticipation of what they would find. They were not disappointed. When you seek the Savior, you will not be disappointed either.

***Prayer:*** *Dear God, help me to be more excited about the Gift than the gifts.*

## Come Together— Week Two

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### Day Five

*“They spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child” (Luke 2:17).*

These rustic shepherds could not help themselves. The words tumbled out as they encountered others. They were like the apostles soon after the Day of Pentecost, who said, “We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20 NIV). Has your testimony bubbled over to anyone recently?

***Prayer:*** *Father, help me not to be a silent witness, but an active one.*

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## Day Six

*“Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart” (Luke 2:19)*

The world is a noisy place, not conducive to pondering. People who ponder must do so intentionally. You must plan for it or it hardly ever happens. This season is a wonderful time to think deeply about what Christ’s coming means to you. When will you take time to ponder?

***Prayer:*** *Dear Lord, I want to carve out time for you, time to ponder your coming.*

# Come Together— Week Two

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## Day Seven

*“The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen (Luke 2:20).*

The story of Christmas lends itself to praise. God so loved the world that He sent His Son. The power of sin and Satan is broken because God visited our planet in the person of Jesus. “O come, all ye faithful. Come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.”

***Prayer:*** *Heavenly Father, we praise and exalt you for giving us your Son and your salvation.*

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### Day One

*“Joseph her husband . . . had in mind to divorce her quietly” (Matthew 1:19).*

Joseph’s first impulse was to divorce Mary. “Divorce” because her pregnancy proved she was not a virgin, and he knew he was not the father. “Quietly,” because he was kind and “did not want to expose her to public disgrace.” But, as Joseph learned, first impulses are not always God’s way.

***Prayer:*** *O Lord, help me to stop and pray and not rely on first impulses.*

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## Day Two

*“But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream” (Matthew 1:20).*

Careful consideration is always a good policy. God leads; He does not push or pressure. So stop, think, pray, and consider. God may not send an angel to appear to you in a dream. But neither is He the author of confusion. He will make His way clear if you pray.

***Prayer:*** *Guide me, Lord, so that all my steps are ordered by you.*

# Come Together— Week Three

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## Day Three

*“You are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).*

What all the blood of all the bulls, goats, and sheep sacrificed on Jewish altars for centuries could not do, Jesus would do. He would “save His people from their sins.” His name, like its Hebrew counterpart “Joshua,” means Savior. His name described His mission and only He could fulfill it.

***Prayer:*** *Heavenly Father, thank you for giving your Son Jesus to be our Savior.*

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## Day Four

*“The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son” (Matthew 1:23).*

No wonder people are skeptical about the virgin birth. It had never happened before or since. It is an event without a category. If I say the category, “dogs,” you could name several breeds. “Cars?” You can cite several models. But “virgin birth?” A category with only one instance. Completely unique.

***Prayer:** Dear God, as mind-boggling as it is, I believe in the virgin birth of Christ.*

# Come Together— Week Three

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## Day Five

“‘They will call him Immanuel’ – which means, ‘God with us.’” (Matthew 1:23).

In Trafalgar Square stands a statue of naval hero Admiral Lord Nelson. The statue is so high that no one can see its features. A child said, “We need a statue down here, where we can see it.” In Jesus, God came down to our level. He is still “with us.”

**Prayer:** *Thank you, God, for coming down to live among us, both then and now.*

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## Day Six

*“Joseph . . . did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife” (Matthew 1:24).*

Mary, initially wary of the angel’s words, nevertheless obeyed. Joseph, planning to divorce Mary, discarded his plans and did as God commanded. It was risky. He faced ridicule and possible shunning from his neighbors. But those intent on following God will take the risk, step out on faith, and obey.

***Prayer:*** *Heavenly Father, once I know your will, help me to brave the risks and obey.*

# Come Together— Week Three

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## Day Seven

*“ . . . he gave him the name Jesus ”  
(Matthew 1:25).*

Names meant a great deal in Joseph’s day. Judea meant “hill country” and it was. Deborah means “sweet.” She was sweet as honey, but never lost her sting. One name today is known, honored, and loved above all others. This name means deliverer, rescuer, Savior. Call his name “Jesus.”

***Prayer:*** *Help me, Lord, never to betray that matchless name.*

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## Day One

“Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, ‘Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?’” (*Matthew 2:1-2*).

The Magi, or wise men, likely hailed from Persia. They were skilled in philosophy and science. They believed a person’s destiny was influenced by the star under which he was born. Perhaps they saw a supernova or comet, which caused them to seek a new king. Are you seeking Him?

***Prayer:*** *Lord Jesus, at this Christmas season, help me to find you and your presence in a fresh way.*

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## Day Two

*“We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him” (Matthew 2:2).*

Persia is east of the Holy Land, so the wise men themselves were “in the east” when they saw the star. They came to see the new king, which the appearance of the star signified. They also came to pay him honor. But most of all, they came to “worship him.”

***Prayer:*** *Thank you, Lord, for coming to earth for us. We worship you!*

# Come Together— Week Four

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## Day Three

*“When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him”  
(Matthew 2:3).*

Insecure, King Herod grew fearful when he heard about the birth of a new “King of the Jews.” The saying, “When Mama ain’t happy, ain’t nobody happy,” worked in Jerusalem too. When Herod was unhappy, nobody else was happy. Herod missed the perfect opportunity to find and follow this new King.

***Prayer:*** *Lord Jesus, help me not to miss the opportunity to worship you at this Christmas season.*

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## Day Four

*“But you, Bethlehem, . . . out of you will come a ruler” (Matthew 2:6).*

The prophet Micah predicted Bethlehem would be the birthplace of a ruler and “the shepherd of my people Israel.” The prophecy came true, when God used a census to move Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem in time for the birth. The same all-wise God watches over you and your family.

***Prayer:*** *Father, thank you for your attention to detail in my life.*

# Come Together— Week Four

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## Day Five

*“When they saw the star, they were overjoyed” (Matthew 2:10).*

Joy is forever associated with Christmas. The wise men were filled with joy. The angel said to the shepherds, “I bring you good news of great joy” (Luke 2:10). Opening gifts usually brings joy. But the greatest joy comes from receiving the greatest Gift – Jesus himself.

***Prayer:*** *Father, thank you for this joyful season and for your Gift to us.*

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## Day Six

*“On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary” (Matthew 2:11).*

It was possibly two years from the time the wise men first saw the star until they bowed before Jesus. He was no longer in the stable; now He, Mary, and Joseph were in a house. The location was not important. The fact that they found Him and worshiped Him is all-important.

***Prayer:*** *Father, we worship you because of the coming of Jesus.*

# Come Together— Week Four

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## Day Seven

*“Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh” (Matthew 2:11).*

Our gift-giving at Christmas originated in Bethlehem with the wise men’s generous gifts to the Christ Child. However, Christians know of a gift that is vastly more valuable than gold, frankincense, and myrrh. It is the gift of Jesus himself. “Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift” (2 Corinthians 9:15).

***Prayer:*** *Heavenly Father, thank you for sending Jesus, the greatest gift of all.*