

# Together in Advent

A SERIES OF SPECIAL  
SERVICES FOR ADVENT



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## ABOUT THE SERIES

In this Together in Advent series for traditional worship, we celebrate together as the family of God the coming of his Son for our salvation. Each week will focus on a different activity for our “to-do list” that is centered on giving and sharing instead of on materialism. The theme verse for the entire series is: “Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in your praise” (Psalm 106:47). Hymns in the series include “Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates,” “Let the Earth Now Praise the Lord,” “Hark the Glad Sound” and “On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry.”

- **Week 1:** Be Present (Malachi 3:1-7): Instead of spending all our time in Advent buying presents, we in God’s family set aside space to be present for one another, as Christ is coming to be present with us.
- **Week 2:** Send Peace (Micah 5:2-5a): Beyond sending cards to loved ones this Advent season, we do all we can as the family of God to send peace to one another because the Prince of Peace is on his way.
- **Week 3:** Share Joy (Zephaniah 3:14-20): In this time when we share cookies and other treats with one another, we share joy with those around us that they might taste and see that the Lord is good to us through the birth of his Son.

• **Week 4:** Wrap in Love (1 John 4:7-12): In this season of hustle and bustle, we move from wrapping presents to wrapping people in love, as Mary wrapped the Christ Child so lovingly in swaddling clothes.

Each service features a monolog sermon read by the pastor, a children's message and prayers, along with newsletter/bulletin notices about the series.

The kit includes everything you need for each service as well as a CD-ROM (Mac/PC) with the text of the entire kit in .rtf (rich text format), newsletter/bulletin notices, hymns, visual media recommendations, contemporary music song suggestions and PowerPoint documents of all the services with images and text (along with a copyright release) for use on screens.

### Ordering Information

Pre-printed bulletins, blank bulletins, and several other resources are available. Call Creative Communications for the Parish at 1-800-325-9414, or visit us on the web at [www.creativecommunications.com](http://www.creativecommunications.com) for current pricing and availability.

Printed bulletins Order Codes:

Service 1 (Be Present) **TGAA**

Service 2 (Send Peace) **TGAB**

Service 3 (Share Joy) **TGAC**

Service 4 (Wrap in Love) **TGAD**

Blank 8 1/2" x 11" bulletins Order Codes:

Service 1 (Be Present) **TGAE**

Service 2 (Send Peace) **TGAF**

Service 3 (Share Joy) **TGAG**

Service 4 (Wrap in Love) **TGAH**

Blank 8 1/2" x 14" bulletins Order Codes:

Service 1 (Be Present) **TGAJ**

Service 2 (Send Peace) **TGAK**

Service 3 (Share Joy) **TGAL**

Service 4 (Wrap in Love) **TGAM**

Fabric banner. 36" x 60". **TGAZ**

Promotional poster. 22" x 28". **TGAY**

Bulletin insert. 5 3/8" x 8 3/8" **TGAW**

Bookmark. 2 1/2" x 7". **TGAX**

Promotional postcard. 4 1/4" x 5 1/2". **TGPC**

Advent and Christmas motion background for screens **TGMB**

Signature collection **TGA8**

Complete collection **TGA9**

**Creative  
Communications  
Sample**

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## SERVICE TWO: SEND PEACE

### COMPLETE SCRIPT FOR WORSHIP LEADERS

- If desired, an **Environmental Projection** of the following image (purchased by you from shutterstock.com) can be shown on a screen or on the walls of your worship space to set the tone for the service before the service begins or throughout the service at various points:

<https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/row-mail-boxes-1757727>

- The **Opening Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Nunn Komm, Der Heiden Heiland 77 77, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

Let the earth now praise the Lord, who has truly kept his word  
And at last to us did send Christ, the sinner's help and friend.

What the fathers most desired, what the prophets' heart inspired,  
What they longed for many a year, stands fulfilled in glory here.

As your coming was in peace, quiet, full of gentleness,  
Let the same mind dwell in me which is yours eternally.

Bruise for me the serpent's head that, set free from doubt and dread,  
I may cling to you in faith, safely kept through life and death.

Then when you will come again as the glorious king to reign,  
I with joy will see your face, freely ransomed by your grace.

- The **Invocation** is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

**P** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

- The **Confession and Absolution** is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

**P** We confess our sin.

**C** Lord, we come before you in prayer today, asking for forgiveness. We have not loved as we ought to love, we have not given as we ought to give, and we have fallen short of the mark of truly being your obedient sons and daughters. We recognize our sins and in this moment of silence, we privately remember our shortcomings in love and life.

*(Silence for reflection and self-examination)*

**P** God, our heavenly Father, hears the prayers of his children and answers those prayers. Our prayer for forgiveness is answered in the person of Jesus Christ, his Son, who died for our sin that we might have new life in him. To those who believe his Word of truth he gives power to be the people of God. Praise God for his gift of love to us.

**C** Amen.

- The **Advent Call to Worship** is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation with verses sung to the tune Freu Dich Sehr 87 87 77 88, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

**P** We gather in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. God has brought us together as many people, from many places, and who have many different past experiences.

And yet as we gather together, we are united.

**C For Christ is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility,**

**P** By abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations.

**C His purpose was to create one new person out of two, thus making peace.**

*(The first and second purple candles are lit.)*

**P** And in this one body to restore the relationship of both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

**C He came and preached peace to those who were far away and to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.**

**P** And so we celebrate the Prince of Peace and sing:

Comfort, comfort ye my people, speak ye peace, thus saith our God;  
Comfort those who sit in darkness, mourning 'neath their sorrow's load;  
Speak ye to Jerusalem of the peace that waits for them;  
Tell her that her sins I cover, and her warfare now is over.

For the herald's voice is crying in the desert far and near,  
Bidding sinners to repentance, since the kingdom now is here.

O that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God a way!

Let the valleys rise to meet him, and the hills bow down to greet him.

Make ye straight what long was crooked, make the rougher places plain:

Let your hearts be true and humble, as befits his holy reign,

For the glory of the Lord now o'er earth is shed abroad,

And all flesh shall see the token that his Word is never broken.

• The **Prayer of the Day** is spoken responsively by the pastor or other worship leader:

**P** O Lord Jesus Christ, you came to earth to send us peace. Help us to be ambassadors of peace in this season as well. Give us the ability to break down barriers between us by offering forgiveness in your name. Move us to serve as peacemakers between those who are at odds with one another that they might be united again. Calm our worries at this time of year with



confidence and strength from you, our Prince of Peace. May every message we send bring harmony and hope in you to all experiencing division of any kind. Amen.

- **The Children’s Message** is delivered by the pastor or other worship leader:

*Needed: a Christmas card and a “white flag” made of white paper and a dowel rod*

- Ⓟ Boys and girls, during Advent, these four weeks leading up to Christmas, you may have noticed that there a lot more letters in your mailbox. That’s because a lot more people are sending Christmas cards like this one during this time of year. (*Hold up the Christmas card.*)

Why do people send cards at Christmas? (*Allow children to respond.*) They send cards to tell people what happened to them in the last year. They send cards to greet people and tell them they are thinking of them. But most of all, I think, we send cards to one another to remind people that Jesus is born, and he is our Prince of Peace. Remember what the angels said to the shepherds on the night Jesus was born, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, goodwill to men!” The angels’ message was a message of peace.

No matter what is going on in our lives and in the world, we always need to remember the fact that Jesus means peace to the whole earth. Any battles that are going on, any arguments people are having, any divisions that have happened, can all be healed by Jesus. He has come to mend the broken, the bind up the scattered, to restore order to things.

He accomplished this through his death on the cross. There he pieced the world back to together by destroying the power of sin. When he died, he made everything right between us and God again, and because we have peace with God, we now have peace with one another.

Do you know how there is a flag on some mailboxes? What does that flag mean? (*Allow the children to respond.*) It means that there is a letter or card inside that we want the mail carrier to send. I got to thinking, that at Christmastime, when we put Christmas cards in the mailbox to send, it is like that flag on the mailbox is serving as “white flag” in battle that means “We come in peace.” (*Hold up your “white flag.”*) All the Christmas cards we send inside those mailboxes are then, too, little ways of saying to all the world that these greetings “come in peace.” They come in peace to tell of peace, the Prince of Peace. Think of that the next time you see a flag raised on a mailbox this week, and then send some cards to friends and family that say “Peace on earth” on them. People (and God) will be glad you did!

- **The Old Testament Reading**, Micah 5:2-5, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

- Ⓟ But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand

and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. And he shall be their peace.

- The **Epistle Reading**, 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

☐ Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

- The **Hymn of Preparation** is sung by the congregation to the tune Gott Sei Dank 77 77, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

Jesus! Name of wondrous love! Name all other names above!  
Unto which must ev'ry knee bow in deep humility.

- The **Gospel Reading**, Matthew 1:18-25, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

☐ Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

- The **Sermon Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune St. Louis 86 86 76 86, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light.  
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary, and, gathered all above  
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wond'ring love.  
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,  
And praises sing to God the king and peace to all the earth!

- Show the **Video: Send Peace.mov**, found on the kit CD or digital download, if desired, or have someone read the following text (These paragraphs could also be the beginning of the sermon):

Ⓜ I guess my love for Christmas cards started when I was a child. I can remember my mother opening up the mail after I got home from school. I was fascinated to see how many we received each day and from where they'd been sent.

My father was an officer in the army so moving was a part of our lives. By the time I graduated from high school, I'd lived in more places than most people live in a lifetime. So my mother, being the friendly sort, made connections with military wives around the globe.

My job was to take the tape and hang the cards around the door frames in our living room and kitchen. But before I hung the cards, I lingered over them. I read each one.

I watched my mother meticulously write a special message in every card before placing it in its envelope, addressing it and then sending each off from the post office at whatever base we were living near at the time.

She never treated it as a generic activity where any card, with any old message, would suffice. I didn't realize it at the time, but she understood how difficult it was to raise a family moving from base to base. So these cards were an expression of the love and peace she prayed for in each home.

I'm a lot like my mother. No, I didn't marry a colonel. In fact, I never married at all. And no, I didn't spend my life moving. I graduated from college and settled in one community as teacher in that one part of the world.

But I still buy Christmas cards. I pour over each design to make sure they match the prayer and blessing I will personally write for each person on my list. Most of my recipients are not stationed somewhere—though a fair number are. But for each one, I pray that they may experience peace in a world where it comes in short supply.

- The **Sermon: From Sending Cards to Sending Peace** is delivered by the pastor:

Ⓟ Though we don't know all the history of Joseph before he enters the story of Scripture as the man who was pledged to be married to a virgin named Mary, the first verses of this story tell us something of his character and spirituality. He is described in the as a man who was

"faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace." He had undoubtedly planned a peaceful life under God, and yet suddenly conflict enters his life with the news of his fiancée's pregnancy. He knows this is NOT his child. He is 100% sure of that fact. He also is not buying her story about an angelic encounter and how this child is actually a miracle from God. He is faithful to the Lord, but he is no fool. It is interesting to note that while he is faithful to the Law (the Word of God), he opts for a merciful response towards Mary rather than condemnation. He could bring accusation against Mary, but he extends grace to her and plans to quietly dissolve the engagement. So the conflict is not with Mary but within himself. He seems consumed with the breaking of his heart and the shattering of his plans.

I love how Scripture packs all this inner turmoil in a few words: "When he had considered this." And that is when God sends an angel into the fitful dreams of this descendant of David. Once again God has a way of packing a lot into two verses:

"Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

With these words, the Lord not only restores the peace (or shalom) of Joseph's life, but elevates it. The Lord tells Joseph:

—Go ahead and marry Mary. Establish a home where God's peace abides.

—God is indeed behind this child and indeed is doing something unheard of. You can put your mind at ease. She has not been unfaithful and in fact, quite to the contrary, she has been chosen by God to bear this child.

—She will give birth to a Son and you are to give him the name Yeshua, or Jesus, which reminds you, Joseph, and everyone that God saves.

—You will witness the birth and the coming of the long-awaited Messiah who will be the Savior of the world.

From this moment on, Joseph is a different man. God has sent him peace in this dream and the shalom he experienced from God carries on into the rest of the story and the rest of his life. He takes Mary to be his wife. We will shift to Luke 2 to see what happens next (on Christmas Eve).

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## SERVICE TWO: SEND PEACE MUSIC GUIDE

Nunn Komm, Der Heiden Heiland 77 77 .....	130-131
Freu Dich Sehr 87 87 77 88 .....	132-133
Gott Sei Dank 77 77 .....	134-135
St. Louis 86 86 76 86 .....	136-137
Veni Emmanuel LM and refrain.....	138-139
Carol CM D.....	140-141
Contemporary Music Song Suggestions.....	142

Tune..... Nunn Komm, Der Heiden Heiland 77 77

The first system of musical notation consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. Both are in the key of B-flat major (two flats) and common time (C). The music begins with a first-measure rest (marked '1') in both staves. The melody in the treble staff starts on G4, moving to A4, Bb4, and C5. The bass line starts on G2, moving to F2, E2, and D2. The piece is in a simple, homophonic style.

The second system of musical notation continues from the first system. It also consists of two staves in the same key and time signature. It begins with a fifth-measure rest (marked '5') in both staves. The melody in the treble staff continues from the previous system, with notes G4, A4, Bb4, and C5. The bass line continues with notes G2, F2, E2, and D2. The piece concludes with a final cadence.

Creative  
Communications  
Sample

- The **Opening Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Nunn Komm, Der Heiden Heiland 77 77, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

Let the earth now praise the Lord, who has truly kept his word  
And at last to us did send Christ, the sinner's help and friend.

What the fathers most desired, what the prophets' heart inspired,  
What they longed for many a year, stands fulfilled in glory here.

As your coming was in peace, quiet, full of gentleness,  
Let the same mind dwell in me which is yours eternally.

Bruise for me the serpent's head that, set free from doubt and dread,  
I may cling to you in faith, safely kept through life and death.

Then when you will come again as the glorious king to reign,  
I with joy will see your face, freely ransomed by your grace.

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## SERVICE TWO: SEND PEACE CONTEMPORARY MUSIC SONG SUGGESTIONS

- The following song suggestions can be used for a more contemporary worship service in place of the more traditional hymns included in this kit. Rights to use these songs in the service must be purchased by your parish through CCLI or other copyright licensing agencies.

“You are Holy (Prince of Peace)” by Marc Imboden and Tammi Roton

“Here I Am to Worship” by Tim Hughes

“O Come, O Come” by Mercy Me

“Love Came Down” by Brian Johnson, Ian McIntosh, Jenn Johnson, Jeremy Edwardson, Jenny Riddle

“God With Us” by All Sons & Daughters

“Noel” by Lauren Daigle and Chris Tomlin

“O Come All Ye Faithful” by Chris Tomlin