



A SERIES
OF SPECIAL
SERVICES
FOR ADVENT

Conversations
with the *Angels*

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Conversations *with the* Angels

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ABOUT “CONVERSATIONS WITH THE ANGELS”

In this worship series for three weeks of Advent, parishioners listen in on imaginary conversations between the pastor and the angels found in the Advent and Christmas story.

Each service contains: a complete order of service • a dialog sermon • a children’s sermon • prayers • music for the accompanist

Everything you need for each service is contained on digital files with text of the entire series 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.

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WEEK 1: PROMISES FULFILLED

ORDER OF SERVICE

Opening Hymn..... Angels, From the Realms of Glory

Angels, from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Once you sang creation's story;
Now proclaim Messiah's birth:
Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ, the coming King!

Invocation

P God, before whom all the angels veil their faces and in whose presence they delight, with joy and longing we acknowledge your glory and worship you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, eternal Trinity.

C Amen.

Advent Approach

Ⓟ Speak to the daughter of Zion and cry to her: “Behold, your King is coming to you!”

O Lord, how shall I meet you,
How welcome you aright?
Your people long to greet you,
My hope, my heart’s delight!
Oh, kindle, Lord most holy,
Your lamp within my breast
To do in spirit lowly
All that may please you best.

Ⓟ Prepare the way of the Lord; clear a straight path for him, and all mankind shall see the salvation of our God.

Your Zion strews before you
Green boughs and fairest palms;
And I too will adore you
With joyous songs and psalms.
My heart shall bloom forever
For you with praises new
And from your name shall never
Withhold the honor due.

Ⓟ Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.

I lay in fetters, groaning;
You came to set me free.
I stood, my shame bemoaning;
You came to honor me.
A glorious crown you give me,
A treasure safe on high
That will not fail or leave me
As earthly riches fly.

Ⓟ The Lord is at hand. Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

Love caused your incarnation;
Love brought you down to me.
Your thirst for my salvation
Procured my liberty.
Oh, love beyond all telling,
That led you to embrace
In love, all love excelling,
Our lost and fallen race.

P The Lord is near to all who call upon him, to all who call upon him in truth. He fulfills the desire of all who fear him; he also hears their cry, and saves them.

Rejoice, then, you sad-hearted,
Who sit in deepest gloom,
Who mourn your joys departed
And tremble at your doom.
Despair not; he is near you,
There, standing at the door,
Who best can help and cheer you
And bids you weep no more.

Lord's Prayer

Children's Sermon

Old Testament Reading Genesis 22:9-18

Psalm 91

P He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, who abides in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to the Lord,

C "My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust."

P For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence;

C he will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge;

P his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.

C You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.

P A thousand may fall at your side; ten thousand at your right hand;

C but it will not come near you.

P You will only look with your eyes

C and see the recompense of the wicked.

P Because you have made the Lord your refuge, the Most High your habitation,

C no evil shall befall you, no scourge come near your tent.

P For he will give his angels charge of you to guard you in all your ways.

C On their hands they will bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.

P You will tread on the lion and the adder,

C The young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot.

P Because he cleaves to me in love, I will deliver him;

C I will protect him, because he knows my name.

P When he calls to me, I will answer him;

C I will be with him in trouble, I will rescue him and honor him.

P With long life will I satisfy him,

C And show him my salvation.

Epistle Reading 1 Peter 1:3-13

All creation, join in praising
God, the Father, Spirit, Son,
Evermore your voices raising
To th'eternal Three in One.
Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ, the coming King!

Holy Gospel.....Matthew 13:36-43

The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
His wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame:
“All hail, to thee, O lowly maiden Mary,
Most highly favored lady.” Gloria!

“For know a blessed mother thou shalt be,
All generations laud and honor thee;
Thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,
Most highly favored lady.” Gloria!

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head,
“To me be as it pleaseth God,” she said,
“My soul shall laud and magnify God’s holy name.”
Most highly favored lady. Gloria!

Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born
In Bethlehem all on a Christmas morn,
And Christian folk throughout the world will ever say:
“Most highly favored lady.” Gloria!

Dialog Sermon

Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
Born to set thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us;
Let us find our rest in thee.
Israel’s strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth thou art;
Dear desire of ev’ry nation,
Joy of ev’ry longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver,
Born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever,
Now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By thine all-sufficient merit,
Raise us to thy glorious throne.

Offering

Prayers

P In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets,

C But in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son.

P Give us grace, Lord Jesus Christ, to hear the faithful witness of your prophets and apostles,

C For they bear witness unto you,

P And to believe with true and trusting hearts the Word they bear,

C For they bear witness unto you.

P As once you came to Thomas to remove his doubt, assuring him of your abiding presence with your people evermore,

C Come now to us, we pray.

P Remove our doubt, and make us faithful witnesses as well, by word and deed, to your abiding presence with your people evermore.

C Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

P Let your holy angels guard us day and night,

C And fill our hearts to join them in their praise,

P Until you come, O Son of Man, in the company of all the heavenly host, to gather us, forgiven and redeemed,

C To praise your glory with exalted praise forevermore. Amen.

Prayer of the Day

Advent Adoration

Oh, come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!
Oh, come, ye, oh, come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him, born the King of angels:
Oh, come, let us adore him, oh, come, let us adore him,
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Benediction

P Now may God, before whom the angels veil their faces and in whose presence they delight—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit—bless us and keep us, and bring us to everlasting life.

C Amen.

Closing Hymn..... Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

Christ, by highest heav'n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold him come, offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, hail the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as Man with man to dwell, Jesus, our Immanuel!
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by, born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

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WEEK 1: PROMISES FULFILLED

COMPLETE SCRIPT FOR WORSHIP LEADERS

- If desired, an **Environmental Projection** is 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:

[shutterstock.com/image-photo/antique-statue-gold-angel-rays-hope-1843940965](https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/antique-statue-gold-angel-rays-hope-1843940965)

- The **Opening Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Regent Square 87 87 or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

Angels, from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Once you sang creation's story;
Now proclaim Messiah's birth:
Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ, the coming King!

- The **Invocation** is spoken responsively by the pastor or other worship leader and the congregation:

☐ God, before whom all the angels veil their faces and in whose presence they delight, with joy and longing we acknowledge your glory and worship you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, eternal Trinity.

☐ **Amen.**

- The **Advent Approach** is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader, with responses sung by the congregation to the tune *Wie Soll Ich Dich Empfangen* 76 76 D:

☐ Speak to the daughter of Zion and cry to her: “Behold, your King is coming to you!”

O Lord, how shall I meet you, how welcome you aright?
Your people long to greet you, my hope, my heart’s delight!
Oh, kindle, Lord most holy, your lamp within my breast
To do in spirit lowly all that may please you best.

☐ Prepare the way of the Lord; clear a straight path for him, and all mankind shall see the salvation of our God.

Your Zion strews before you green boughs and fairest palms;
And I too will adore you with joyous songs and psalms.
My heart shall bloom forever for you with praises new
And from your name shall never withhold the honor due.

☐ Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.

I lay in fetters, groaning; you came to set me free.
I stood, my shame bemoaning; you came to honor me.
A glorious crown you give me, a treasure safe on high
That will not fail or leave me as earthly riches fly.

☐ The Lord is at hand. Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

Love caused your incarnation; love brought you down to me.
Your thirst for my salvation procured my liberty.
Oh, love beyond all telling, that led you to embrace
In love, all love excelling, our lost and fallen race.

Ⓟ The Lord is near to all who call upon him, to all who call upon him in truth. He fulfills the desire of all who fear him; he also hears their cry, and saves them.

Rejoice, then, you sad-hearted, who sit in deepest gloom,
Who mourn your joys departed and tremble at your doom.
Despair not; he is near you, there, standing at the door,
Who best can help and cheer you and bids you weep no more.

- The **Lord's Prayer** is spoken in unison by the pastor and the congregation.
- The **Children's Sermon** is delivered by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ Hello, boys and girls, and welcome to Advent. Advent is a time when we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus on Christmas. Long before Jesus was born, God promised his people that he would send a Savior from sin, death and the devil. Then when the time came close for Jesus to be born, he sent angels to tell special people that Jesus was that Savior.

He sent the angel Gabriel first to a man named Zechariah to tell him that he and his wife Elizabeth would have a son named John who would prepare the way for Jesus. Then he sent Gabriel to a young girl named Mary to tell her that she would be the mother of Jesus.

God's promises were coming true in Jesus. He showed the world that he had come from God by living a sinless life, healing the sick, performing miracles, and preaching and teaching the Good News that he had come to save the whole world. Jesus did that by dying on the cross and rising to life again to forgive our sins and open the way to heaven for us.

So how can you be like the angel Gabriel this Advent season? (*Allow the children to respond.*) That's right! We can be like Gabriel by announcing the coming of Jesus to people and telling them that God keeps his promises to us.

Sometimes we make promises to people or to ourselves, but then we don't always keep them, do we? That doesn't happen with God. When God makes a promise, he will always keep it. Think of these promises he has made to us:

Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and give you help, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand (Isaiah 41:10).

I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you (Jeremiah 31:3).

Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool (Isaiah 1:18).

God promises in these verses that he will always be by our side and love us and forgive our sins. All these promises were fulfilled when Jesus came to earth. Jesus shows us that we can trust in God no matter what. We never need to be afraid.

So go out and spread the word that Jesus is with us and he loves us and forgives us. That is the greatest news anyone can hear, I promise. Let us pray:

Dear God, thank you for sending Jesus to us as you promised and for never forgetting us. Help us to be honest and true with one another and to keep our faith in you strong. Amen.

- **The Old Testament Reading**, Genesis 22:9-18, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

P When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.” And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called the name of that place, “The LORD will provide”; as it is said to this day, “On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided.” And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven and said, “By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.”

- **Psalm 91** is spoken responsively by the pastor or other worship leader and the congregation:

P He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, who abides in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to the Lord,

C “My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust.”

P For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence;

C he will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge;

P his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.

C You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.

P A thousand may fall at your side; ten thousand at your right hand;

C but it will not come near you.

P You will only look with your eyes

C and see the recompense of the wicked.

P Because you have made the Lord your refuge, the Most High your habitation,

C no evil shall befall you, no scourge come near your tent.

P For he will give his angels charge of you to guard you in all your ways.

C On their hands they will bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.

P You will tread on the lion and the adder,

C The young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot.

P Because he cleaves to me in love, I will deliver him;

C I will protect him, because he knows my name.

P When he calls to me, I will answer him;

C I will be with him in trouble, I will rescue him and honor him.

P With long life will I satisfy him,

C And show him my salvation.

- The **Epistle Reading**, 1 Peter 1:3-13, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

P Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the

revelation of Jesus Christ. Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls. Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look. Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

- The **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Regent Square 87 87 87, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

All creation, join in praising
God, the Father, Spirit, Son,
Evermore your voices raising
To th'eternal Three in One.
Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ, the coming King!

- The **Holy Gospel**, Matthew 13:36-43, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.” He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.”

- The **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Gabriel’s Message 10 10 11 7 3, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
His wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame:
“All hail, to thee, O lowly maiden Mary,
Most highly favored lady.” Gloria!

“For know a blessed mother thou shalt be,
All generations laud and honor thee;
Thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,
Most highly favored lady.” Gloria!

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head,
“To me be as it pleaseth God,” she said,
“My soul shall laud and magnify God’s holy name.”
Most highly favored lady. Gloria!

Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born
In Bethlehem all on a Christmas morn,
And Christian folk throughout the world will ever say:
“Most highly favored lady.” Gloria!

- The **Dialog Sermon** is delivered responsively by the pastor and another reader, who is speaking the part of the angel:

Ⓟ During these Advent weeks, we are moving steadily toward Christmas, the celebration of the birth of Christ. The first time God’s people moved toward Christmas, over two thousand years ago, their way was made easier, on a number of occasions, by the presence of angels, those messengers of God whom he had sent to announce the Good News of Christ’s coming. We have heard about God’s angels already in our Scripture readings, beginning with “the angel of the Lord” who called to Abraham there on the mountain of sacrifice—a dramatic demonstration of the promise in our Psalmody, that “He will give his angels charge of you to guard you in all your ways.” When our Savior comes again, we know (and his coming again is one of the major themes of Advent), he will do so “in the presence of the angels,” sent like reapers to gather the fruitful. In the meantime, as we move toward another celebration of Christmas, we do so quite aware of the role God’s angels played in heralding that grand event and preparing his people for it. Would it be helpful for us, as we now move toward Christmas, if God’s people could speak with those angels who once spoke to our ancestors in the faith? To hear their words afresh? Perhaps even to question them about their message as Zechariah and Mary once did? If we could hold conversations with the angels this Adventide, what do you suppose they might say?