

## The Angel's of Christmas

What images come to your mind when you first think of Christmas?

I think of the Christmas Eve that my Dad and older brother were trying to sneak my new bike into the living room and one of them accidentally hit the horn and I woke up and went running in to catch them red handed. I think of decorating the Christmas tree with my family and my Mom never being satisfied that we had done it just right. I remember my grandmother and aunts waiting outside our house until they saw the lights go on Christmas morning and then joining us for presents and brunch. I remember my other grandmother's mantle crowded with so many stockings for all the cousins that I wondered why it didn't crash to the ground.

Perhaps you remember sitting atop Santa's lap or watching your own children smile as they enjoyed that same tradition. Or, perhaps your fondest memory is singing "Silent Night" in a darkened sanctuary during the candle-light service on Christmas Eve. Whatever the images of Christmas we think of first, as Christians our imaginations do not take us far before images of angels appear in our minds. For most, thoughts of Christmas almost always include gossamer winged angels appearing to Zachariah, Joseph, Mary, and the shepherds.

Truly, we cannot read the Christmas story, watch a Christmas pageant, or even walk through a department store during Christmas without encountering images of angels. Even when we sit back to enjoy an old Christmas movie like *It's a Wonderful Life* or *The Bishop's Wife* we find angels (Clarence and Dudley) playing central roles.

Angels are not unique to the Christmas story for they appear throughout the Bible, however their role as God's messengers of hope, peace, joy, and love make their words in the birth narrative of Jesus all we need to hear, heed, and claim in this season of Advent. So, through our *Angels of Christmas* Bible study, two Christmas movies, and our Advent Wreath Candle Lighting Liturgy, like Mary, we will ponder the messages of the Christmas angels in our hearts and we will see how the recipients of those

messages responded and how we too might recognize and respond to the angels that I believe are still in our midst.

*"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it."  
Hebrews 13:2*

