



Advent Worship Service for Families

Third Week of Advent – Joy

Note: Some Advent wreaths may have one pink candle. The pink candle is always lit on the third Sunday of Advent and traditionally means "joy." If your wreath has a pink candle, light this as the third candle this week.

Third Sunday of Advent — Sunday, December 17, 2017

Light the three candles on your wreath and read together the following meditation:

First Reader: This is the third Sunday in Advent. Today we light three purple candles (OR two purple candles and the pink candle.) The first Sunday, we lit the candle of hope. On the second Sunday, we lit the candle of love. Today, we light the candle of joy. One thing that sometimes happens as we get ready to celebrate Jesus' birth is we expect to be happy all the time. Joy is not the same as happy. Joy is a deeper feeling created by knowing that God cares for us. Joy is remembering that God sent Jesus so we would always know of God's care. During Advent, we pray that we may remember again God's gift of Jesus to the world and know the joy that gift brings to all people.

Second Reader: Read **John 1:6-8**. Think about a time or a situation when things were dark. This could mean things were literally dark – in the middle of the night when a noise scares us, for instance. Or it could be we *felt* darkness, such as times when we are frightened and feel alone and hopeless. Now remember how it feels to have light – either physically experiencing light that breaks apart the darkness or feeling comforted and joyful because our feelings of darkness have ended. Is *joy* a word that you would use at this time? Who in our world need God's joy? What are our hopes for joy in our world today? How do we help others know that God gives joy?

Prayer:

Dear God: Thank you for your son, Jesus. Thank you for the joy remembering Jesus' birth brings to us today. Help us live in such a way that our words and our actions help others know of the joy you give. Amen.

Monday, December 18, 2017: Today read again John 1:6-8. Make a list together of the things that bring light to our lives and make us joyful. Paint or draw a picture of something that makes you joyful.

Tuesday, December 19, 2017: Is there someone you know who needs to hear words of joy? Make or select a card for that person and mail it today.

Wednesday, December 20, 2017: Joy is something we need in our city. Think about different leaders of our city. Select one leader of our city. Pray for that leader today.

Thursday, December 21, 2017: As we get ready to celebrate again the birth of Jesus, we sometimes get very busy. Today, take a ten-minute break. Sit quietly. If it helps you to concentrate, look at your Advent wreath. Pray, asking God's help to bring quiet and calm to a busy world.

Friday, December 22, 2017: Think about your family. Some may live with you. Others may be far away. Who in your family needs God's joy? Pray for this family member today.

Saturday, December 23, 2017: There are people in our neighborhoods, in our church, and in our community who need to know of God's joy. Select someone to visit by phone or in person. Stop by today and talk with that person. Tell the person you visit one way he or she brings joy to you.