

Third Sunday of Advent

December 16, 2018

Reflection

Reader: Joy is at the heart of the journey through Advent to Christmas: Joy in the knowledge of what God has done throughout the ages, joy in the realization that God is able and that God does change things for the better, joy in the assurance that God can enter into our lives no matter what our situation may be. The Apostle Paul calls us a life of rejoicing:

- . . to live a life full of rejoicing and gentleness
- . . . to put aside worry in the confidence that the Lord is near
- to lift our requests in prayer, with thanksgiving
- to trust that the Peace of God will guard our hearts and minds.

Let us then consider the condition of joy in our lives.

- . . Do worries sometimes seem larger than our confidence that God is near?
- . . . Does the busy-ness of our lives sometime interfere in our life of prayer?
- Does anxiety over the big things of the world ruin the little joys of life?

Advent is a time when we can clean out the inner stables of our lives so that new life can be born, our spirits may be refreshed, and our lives may be renewed in the joy of salvation.

Candle Lighting Liturgy

Reader: The Lord your God is in your midst, rejoicing over you with gladness, renewing you in love. I will bring you home and restore your fortunes, says the Lord.

[Light Advent Candles 1 and 2.]

People: In this new light, we give thanks to the Lord.

Reader: With joy you will draw waters from the wells of salvation.

People: We will rejoice in the Lord always.

Reader: We light a third candle to reveal the pathway to faithfulness.

[Light third Advent Candle.]

People: As a covenant people we will seek to live in the joy of the Lord.