

**Worship Service**  
**Third Sunday of Advent: JOY**

**Helpful Elements:**

Christmas hymnal  
Advent stand and electric candles  
Advent banner  
Nativity scene (separate table)

**Welcome:** Welcome! My name is \_\_\_\_ and I'll be leading our worship time today. Today is the third Sunday of Advent. The word "advent" comes from the Latin term "adventus" which means "arrival" or "coming," and it's the season when the church remembers and celebrates the coming of Christ to earth, as well as anticipating his return.

The **PINK** candle we light today represents **joy**. Please pray with me as we open our time together.

**Opening prayer:** God of hope, who brought love into this world,  
be the love that dwells between us.  
God of hope, who brought peace into this world,  
be the peace that dwells between us.  
God of hope, who brought joy into this world,  
be the joy that dwells between us.  
God of hope, the rock we stand upon,  
be the center, the focus of our lives  
always, and particularly this Advent time.  
Amen.<sup>1</sup>

**Hymn: Joy to the World**

**(Turn on the candles of Hope, Love, and Joy – or have someone in the front row "light" them.)**

The first two Sundays of Advent, we lit the candles of hope and love; today we light the candle of joy, remembering how the birth of Jesus brought hope, love, and joy into the world.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://faithandworship.com/prayers\\_Advent.htm](http://faithandworship.com/prayers_Advent.htm)

**Hymns:**

**O Come O Come Emmanuel  
God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen  
Angels from the Realms of Glory**

**First reading:** Isaiah 65: 17-19

“See, I will create  
new heavens and a new earth.  
The former things will not be remembered,  
nor will they come to mind.  
<sup>18</sup> But be glad and rejoice forever  
in what I will create,  
for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight  
and its people a joy.  
<sup>19</sup> I will rejoice over Jerusalem  
and take delight in my people;  
the sound of weeping and of crying  
will be heard in it no more.”

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

**Hymns:**

**It Came Upon a Midnight Clear  
The First Noel**

**Second reading:** Luke 1: 39-49

<sup>39</sup> At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea,<sup>40</sup> where she entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup> When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. <sup>42</sup> In a loud voice she exclaimed: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! <sup>43</sup> But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? <sup>44</sup> As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup> Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!”  
<sup>46</sup> And Mary said:

“My soul glorifies the Lord  
47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
48 for he has been mindful  
of the humble state of his servant.  
From now on all generations will call me blessed,  
49 for the Mighty One has done great things for me—  
holy is his name.”

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

### **Hymns:**

**Angels We Have Heard on High**  
**O Little Town of Bethlehem**  
**Good Christian Friends, Rejoice**

**Interactive Homily:** Let's talk more about joy.

- What are some things, events, people that make you feel joyful?
- Is there a difference between joy and happiness or pleasure? If so, what is it?
  - Joy can be deeper; a sense of longing, a pang; “tears of joy”
- The Isaiah scripture talks about God's promise to create a new heaven and a new earth. Does this sound like something that would make you joyful? Why or why not?
- What brings you joy right now?
- What would bring you joy in the future?
- We've just heard part of Mary's joyous song when she meets with her cousin, Elizabeth. Why was Mary joyful? What were her circumstances?
  - Unmarried and pregnant!
  - Uncertainty in the future; so how can she have joy?
    - Looking at what is happening NOW
    - Certainty in GOD, past, present, and future
- What are some ways that we can cultivate more joy in this season of Advent?

... Let's take a moment to silently pray and reflect on the joy of the Lord.

**(Silent Prayer)** ... Lord, in your love and mercy, hear our prayers. Now let us pray the Lord's prayer together:

**Lord's Prayer:** Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever, Amen.

### **Hymn: Go Tell it on the Mountain**

**Third Reading:** Poem, "True Joy" by M. Jolynn Rawson-Hunt

"I'll be happy once I've done this certain thing":

We all say this often not realizing what it brings.

We look only to the future for our happiness,

Letting life slip through our fingers in its fullness.

Will we really feel complete when the task is done,

or look back and see how we missed so much fun?

Self-consumed so we can't see anything else,

hurting those we love as well as ourselves.

So many things around us to be grateful for,

when seeking for an answer, willingly open the door.

So often, others see what's in front of our face,

but we're too blind to look as we're snared in the race.

What is this life supposed to be about?

Is it money, fortune, fame, or a big house?

When speaking to a man on his dying bed,

none of these answers are what he said.

Family, love, laughter are what we should seek.

These are the precious things right outside your door.

**Hymns:**

**Silent Night**

**O Holy Night**

**Fourth Reading:** Isaiah 12

“Behold, God is my salvation;  
I will trust, and will not be afraid;  
for the Lord God is my strength and my song,  
and he has become my salvation.”  
<sup>3</sup>With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.  
<sup>4</sup>And you will say in that day:  
“Give thanks to the Lord,  
call upon his name,  
make known his deeds among the peoples,  
proclaim that his name is exalted.  
<sup>5</sup>“Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously;  
let this be made known in all the earth.  
<sup>6</sup>Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion,  
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.”

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

**Hymn:  
Hark the Herald Angels Sing**

**Closing Blessing:** (Strike bell as you say the word “Lord”)  
The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and grant you peace. Amen.

**Closing Hymns:  
O Come All Ye Faithful  
(optional) Doxology**

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1 Peter 1:8-9

<sup>8</sup>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, <sup>9</sup>obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

