



Worship Service Theme: Third Sunday of Advent: JOY

Helpful Elements:

Christmas hymnal and sing-along recordings

Purple table covering

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.

(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 purple candles of hope and love; today we light **PINK** candle of joy, remembering how the birth of Jesus brought hope, love, and joy into the world. 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.¹

¹ http://faithandworship.com/prayers_Advent.htm

Hymns:

Joy to the World

O Come O Come Emmanuel

God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen

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.

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ 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 the Midnight Clear

We Three Kings

Second reading: Luke 1: 39-49. This story happens soon after the angel Gabriel appears to Mary and tells her that she will be the mother of the Christ child.

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

womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!”

⁴⁶ 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:

The First Noel

Angels We Have Heard on High

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

Interactive Homily: Let’s talk more about joy.

- What are some things, events, and people that make you feel joyful?
- I wonder what you think: 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 in the heart; you can even have “tears of joy”
- The Isaiah scripture we read earlier 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. Did Mary have reason to be joyful? Hmm ... what were her circumstances at the time?
 - Unmarried and pregnant! Uncertainty in the future
 - So how can she have joy?
 - She is focused on what is happening NOW

- Certainty in GOD, past, present, and future; she trusts that God is doing great things for her
- 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.

Hymns:

**Go Tell it on the Mountain
Away in a Manger**

Third Reading: Poem, "True Joy" by M. Jolynn Rawson-Hunt (slightly edited)

"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 often, others see what's in front of our face,
 But we're too blind to look because 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 those answers are what he said.
 Family, love, laughter are true joy in the making;
 God's precious gifts, free to all for the taking.

Hymns:

Silent Night

Here We Come A-Wassailing (*this song was sung by carolers as a blessing to the households they visited; listen for the blessings in the song!*)

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.”

³With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

⁴And you will say in that day:

“Give thanks to the Lord,

call upon his name,

make known the Lord’s deeds among the peoples,

proclaim that God’s name is exalted.

⁵“Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously;

let this be made known in all the earth.

⁶Shout, 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.

Hymns:

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