



‘Worship at home’ December 11th 2022

This Sunday marks the
third Sunday in Advent,
and we anticipate with joy the coming
Christmas celebration, and await the fulfillment
of God’s kingdom in our world.



Lighting a candle reminds us of the presence of Christ
in our world, and in our lives.

Opening

On this third Sunday of Advent,
we anticipate the celebration of Christmas.

Christ has come.

Signs of joy and new life surround us,
sometimes unexpectedly.

Christ is with us.

We are called to live as a people of joy
to bring joy to others.

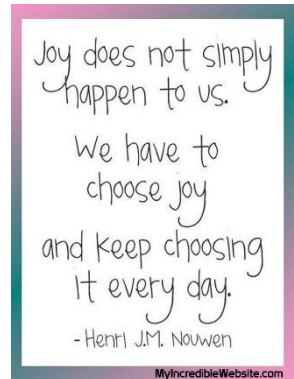
Christ will come again.

Come, and fill us with joy, deep within.

Amen

What brings you joy?

**Do you find any difference between joy
and happiness?**



Joy is the experience of knowing that you are unconditionally loved and that nothing—sickness, failure, emotional distress, oppression, war, or even death—can take that love away. Joy is not the same as happiness. We can be unhappy about many things, but joy can still be there because it comes from the knowledge of God’s love for us... Joy does not simply happen to us. We have to choose joy and keep choosing it every day. It is a choice based on the knowledge that we belong to God and have found in God our refuge and our safety and that nothing, not even death, can take God away from us.

– Henri Nouwen

<https://henrinouwen.org/>

Sometimes we find joy unexpectedly: a chance connection with an old friend; our delight in a child's laughter; the contentment of a cup of tea in the sunshine; an unexpected blessing through helping another.

Luke 1:46-55

Mary said, "My heart praises the Lord; my soul is glad because of God my Saviour, for he has remembered me, his lowly servant! From now on all people will call me happy, because of the great things the Mighty God has done for me. His name is holy; from one generation to another he shows mercy to those who honour him. He has stretched out his mighty arm and scattered the proud

with all their plans. He has brought down mighty kings from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away with empty hands. He has kept the promise he made to our ancestors, and has come to the help of his servant Israel. He has remembered to show mercy to Abraham and to all his descendants forever!"

Good News Bible



This scripture passage is commonly called the *Magnificat*, after the Latin word for "magnify". Mary praises God for God's greatness, rejoicing in God's saving actions in her life and in the world. It is a beautiful song of praise and joy.

Reflect on the emotions Mary may have felt on finding herself pregnant.

Joy

Uncertainty

Fear

Shame

Excitement

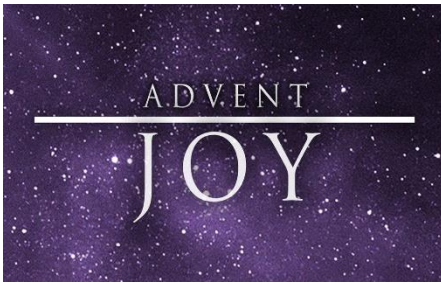
Hope

Anger

Disbelief



For Mary, the angel's news was surprising and unexpected. Also unexpected is her ability to find joy and express her praise in the complex turmoil of emotions she must have been experiencing.



Sometimes we find joy unexpectedly amidst the complex emotions of our lives. As we approach this Christmas, some might be finding it difficult to see the joy in this season. The stresses of this last year, or the uncertainties of the next,

may be challenging us. We remember that joy comes from finding God as our refuge and safety and knowing that nothing can separate us from God's love.

**Unexpected joy bursting in
birthing new beginnings
creating love
renewing life
All will be well
God is here**

- Rev Sue Ellis

The Canticle of Mary

My soul glorifies the Lord

My spirit rejoices in God my Saviour

*For he has blessed me lavishly
and makes me ready to respond.*

*He shatters my little world
and lets me be poor before Him.*

*He takes from me all my plans
and gives me more than I can hope for or ask.*

*He gives me opportunities and the ability
to become free and to burst through my boundaries.*

*He gives the strength to be daring, to build on Him alone,
for He shows himself as the ever greater One on my life.*

He has made known to me this:

*It is in my being servant that it becomes possible
for God's kingdom to break through here and now.*

- Olga Warnke

<https://jesuitinstitute.org/Pages/Prayers.htm>

Waiting for the Kingdom

Lord, we wait with eager expectation for the coming of Your kingdom when the humble will be exalted and the hungry fed.



Your kingdom come, Your will be done.

Lord, we prepare for Your advent with searching minds and contrite hearts, trusting in Your healing spirit and redemptive love.

Your kingdom come, Your will be done.

Lord, we watch with those who wait and weep, longing to see the rule of justice and the reign of peace.

Your kingdom come, Your will be done.

Lord, we seek You among the despised and rejected, knowing that there we will find Your light shining in the dark.

Your kingdom come, Your will be done.

Lord, we proclaim sight to the blind and liberty to the oppressed, trusting in Your tender mercy and passion for justice.

Your kingdom come, Your will be done.

Lord, we work with others to proclaim Your truth, challenging the mighty and raising the meek.

Your kingdom come, Your will be done.

Lord, we wrestle with our hopes and our fears, our struggles and our joys labouring with creation to come to new birth.

Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Amen!

~ Annabel Shilson-Thomas
<http://www.cbmidwest.org/>



Closing

This week may we find joy in the unexpected, may we make space to encounter God in the peace of our hearts, and commit ourselves to bring hope to those around us. May God be with each one of us, now and always. Amen