



# Advent 3 Joy

## Worship@Home December 13, 2020



### Gathering and Lighting the Advent candles

*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil. May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this. 1 Thessalonians 5: 16-24*

**Let us light the candle of JOY. May it burn in strongly in our hearts through this coming week.**

Gather in, one and all.

**We come to this welcoming space.**

A place for you here.

**Christ calls us in and greets us by name.**

### Call to worship

Good News, the Lord lifts up the lowly.

Good News, the Lord holds tight the hurting.

Good News, God's mercy is sure.

Good News, the hungry will be filled with good things.

Our Spirits rejoice at Lady Wisdom's favour.  
We await with Mary the coming of Christ into our lives anew.

### Acknowledging

Ordained as we all are to speak freedom and liberty, we walk with our First Peoples as they seek justice and respect. We in Shearwater, meet on the lands of the Bunurong/Boon Wurrung people and we pay them our respects, in particular their elders past, present and emerging.



### Looking and Breathing

The word 'Behold!' features in the Christmas stories. Say the word out loud with JOY! Slowly look around you and see what you behold. Take slow breaths and look up. (We can get very caught up seeing the cobwebs and not truly see them as webs of intricate belonging and home making). Behold, God makes all things new.





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### Singing: Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord! TiS 161

Tell out, my soul,  
the greatness of the Lord!  
Unnumbered blessings,  
give my spirit voice;  
tender to me the  
promise of his word;  
in God my Saviour  
shall my heart rejoice.

Tell out, my soul,  
the greatness of his name!  
Make known his might,  
the deeds his arm has done;  
his mercy sure,  
from age to age the same;  
his holy name -  
the Lord, the Mighty One.

Tell out, my soul,  
the greatness of his might!  
Powers and dominions  
lay their glory by.  
Proud hearts and stubborn wills  
are put to flight,  
the hungry fed,  
the humble lifted high.

Tell out, my soul,  
the glories of his word!  
Firm is his promise,  
and his mercy sure.  
Tell out, my soul,  
the greatness of the Lord  
to children's children  
and for evermore!

<sup>1</sup>Timothy Dudley-Smith

### Prayer

We come to confess that we are not always good news to others. Let us put aside judgement and harsh attitudes and proclaim liberty and healing. Let us tell God in this space, those things which trouble our hearts and separate us from one another and from God. Your Spirit leads us into pathways of care for others. Comfort, gladness, joy and thanksgiving. These are your way, O God. Draw us ever onward to plant, build up, raise and enrich. Deck us with garlands of joy and with jewels of justice and righteousness for your name's sake. Amen

### Listening

**Read** Isaiah 61: 1-4, 8-11

**Read** Luke 1: 46b-55

For these words of faith  
and Jesus the Word:

**Thanks be to God.**

### Reflecting

**Rev. Ian Turnnidge**

Joy!  
The candle is pink!  
Love changes us. God is love.

Mary's song, the one she sings after the fear of the annunciation has gone: the song she sings after she so plainly asks "how can this be?": the song she sings after she so humbly accepts her place in the mysterious scheme of Divine Will, "Be it with me according to your Word", is a song worth singing ourselves.

Mary sings her song with her cousin.

She visits Elizabeth, and together these women experience that kind of shared knowing that one can hear in the tone of voice of somebody

*Reflection continues P3*





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*Reflection continues*

calling at your door: in the leap of the belly in  
the joy of meeting: in the coming together after  
major events have intervened in our lives.

Mary's is a song of joy!  
A song of wonder, blessing and  
strange revelation.

I keep in touch with an old work friend. She  
has just had her first child! Her husband has  
just left her. She is a woman, middle years, in  
circumstances she never had foreseen. And yet  
JOY! Joy in the birth of new life: Joy in the birth  
of a little girl: Joy amidst the profound sadness  
and betrayal.

Mary sings to this new mother.  
In her song are words of hope and courage for  
my friend:

For surely the proud has scattered  
The powerful has been brought down  
The 'rich' has walked away empty  
Because the world has been made new-  
Mercy has a chubby pink face!

Today's reading from Isaiah echoes the same  
strange themes:

Good News to oppressed,  
Liberty to captives,  
Release for the imprisoned,  
Comfort to those who mourn,  
The oil of gladness,  
The mantle of gladness.

The Kingdom to be born will bring with it Joy!  
Unexpected delight from all that restricts life.

This Christmas, like no other, brings challenges  
from the unexpected year we have all  
experienced. As restrictions have relaxed, I  
have noticed within myself discomfort in entering  
back into the world out of my front door! I also  
note my sense of safety being challenged as life  
more fully takes on the appearance of 'normal'.  
Christmas celebrations, where family gatherings

will be smaller; where we need to be far more  
attentive to keeping one another safe and where  
our natural impulse to embrace will need to be  
moderated will remind us of all that the year has  
brought.

Many of the carols we will sing in a few days'  
time, on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, will  
bring a lump to my throat; *"The hopes and  
fears of all the years are met in thee tonight..."*.  
Maybe it will awaken the fear that lies in the  
exhaustion of the year: maybe the hopes we  
dare hold will seem so fragile this year: or  
perhaps it is that our ability to even imagine our  
future after the impact of this pandemic has  
been so severely damaged that this season  
will all collide like that moment the Angel brings  
tidings to Mary.

Can we, filled with fear and perplexity reply to  
the hope of the Gospel of Jesus Christ:  
"Be it with me according to your word"?

This day of Joy in our advent journey, dares  
us sing along with Mary. Her song reminds  
us of the beatitudes Jesus will preach and the  
Prophet Isaiah calls into the wilderness. Calling  
into being the incarnational reality we know:  
the lowly lifted up and the hungry are filled with  
good things.

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and give  
thanks in all circumstances! May it be so.



*Worship@Home: Advent 3 Joy. Uniting Church in Australia, VicTas, Presbytery of Gippsland*



Uniting Church in Australia  
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### Responding: Prayers for World and Community

**We bring the hopes and fears of all the year to you, God who meets us where we are.**

We bring the young ones;

the babies born in troubled times when the usual care and support has been hard to offer; when the grief of loss has been mixed with delight and possibility for their entry into the world; the children living alone or in families without shelter, without medical care, without adequate food or clothing;

the young ones surrounded by violence, war and unrest, instability and uprisings, injustice and hatred.

**Holy is your name, through all generations: Bring joy, bring hope, bring peace, Bless the young ones.**

We bring the middling ones;

those whose schooling has been disrupted, or was never adequate, or even offered;

the families that have been broken by economic hardship, sickness, grief or fear;

the lost ones, who find themselves alone, without a witness to their days, longing for connection and meaning companionship and comfort;

those who struggle to see a future where they can live in harmony with the earth and all her creatures.

**Holy is your name, through all generations: Bring joy, bring hope, bring peace, Bless the middling ones.**

We bring the elder ones;

the ageing aunts who have embraced technology and meet weekly on zoom and the others who are more puzzled than ever by the changes and demands of a socially distanced life;

those grieving the loss of friends and lovers without the dignity of a gentle death or the gathering of the circles of support to keep them strong;

the wise ones who are weary worried about the world they leave, longing for release.

**Holy is your name, through all generations: Bring joy, bring hope, bring peace, Bless the elders.**

Joy-bringer God, meet us in the everyday spaces of life, as we open doors in greeting to each other, and do your happy-dance within us. Fill our being with songs of delight so they might spill out from us and bless the world around.

**Holy is your name, through all generations: Bring joy, bring hope, bring peace, Bless the us all, in the name of Jesus who invites us to pray saying:**





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### The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins,  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever. Amen.**

### Passing the peace

You have the Good News to share.  
How will you do that today?  
May the Peace of Christ rest with you:  
**and also with you.**

### Offering

Together we offer Good News to a hurting world. What talent or gift can you use to do that?

### Notices

Have you caught up with what's happening with this year's Christmas Bowl?

<https://christmasbowl.actforpeace.org.au>



### Singing: O for a thousand tongues TIS 210

O for a thousand tongues to sing  
my great Redeemer's praise,  
my great Redeemer's praise  
the glories of our God and King  
the triumphs of his grace,  
the triumphs of his grace,  
the triumphs of his grace!

Jesus! the name that charms our fears  
that bids our sorrows cease;  
that bids our sorrows cease;  
such music in the sinner's ears  
is life and health and peace'  
is life and health and peace,  
is life and health and peace.

He breaks the power of cancelled sin  
he sets the prisoner free;  
he sets the prisoner free;  
his blood can make the foulest clean  
his blood availed for me,  
his blood availed for me  
his blood availed for me.

He speaks and listening to his voice  
new life the dead receive,  
new life the dead receive  
the mournful broken hearts rejoice  
the humble poor believe,  
the humble poor believe,  
the humble poor believe.

Hear him you deaf;  
his praise you dumb,  
his praise you dumb  
your loosened tongues employ;  
you blind behold your Saviour come;  
and leap you lame for joy,  
and leap you lame for joy,  
and leap you lame for joy!

*Hymn continues P6*





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*Hymn continues*

My gracious Master and my God  
assist me to proclaim,  
assist me to proclaim  
to spread through all the earth abroad  
the honours of your name,  
the honours of your name,  
the honours of your name.

*<sup>2</sup>Charles Wesley*

### Re-Collection

Today we celebrate the joy of Advent. Mary has a song: not so much about what she has agreed to do, but more about the nature of the kingdom to be born.

What song will you sing this week?

### Blessing

Rejoice always. Pray continually. Give thanks, and more thanks, and more thanks.

May the God of Peace surround you, and keep you blameless and sound, as God continues to come.

Rest assured, God is faithful.  
The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you all.

*Rev. Jennie Gordon, Rev. Dcn. Wendy Elson,  
Rev. Ian Turnnidge (Reflection)*



<sup>1</sup>TIS 210 Used with Permission .i Charles Wesley 1707-88 alt. k LYNGHAM

<sup>2</sup>Used with permission CCLI 241 739 .i Timothy Dudley-Smith 1926- based on Luke 1:46:55 in The New English Bible Words © 1962, renewal 1 .k WOODLANDS

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### Daily Devotions for Advent - December 14 to December 19, 2020

#### MONDAY

**Phrase:** Bring Good News (Isaiah 61:1)

**Wonder:** Those who feel oppressed, broken hearted, captive, and in any form of prison hunger for Good News? Who are they in your life?

**Meditation:** "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me"

**You:** Do one thing today to bring Good News to one who is broken hearted or captive.

#### WEDNESDAY

**Phrase:** Proclaim liberty and release (Isaiah 61:1)

**Wonder:** What is my single, small voice worth in the fight for justice and human rights?

**Meditation:** To stand against the powers that oppress people is dangerous. Bless those who do with courage and a circle of steady companions.

**You:** Explore the Amnesty International website and find out what you can do: <https://www.amnesty.org.au/10-ways-can-change-world-today/>

#### FRIDAY

**Phrase:** Pray without ceasing (1 Thess 5 v 17)

**Wonder:** Prayer is our joy and our privilege. But how do we do it without ceasing?

**Meditation:** Draw us ever closer to you O God, so that the time we spend in prayer is deep communion.

**You:** Spend three minutes in silent prayer in a quiet space today.

#### TUESDAY

**Phrase:** To bind up the brokenhearted (Is 61: 1)

**Wonder:** So often, do I wonder how to do this! We all know people who are brokenhearted. And have been so ourselves

**Meditation:** Soothing and healing God, we long to end suffering and take care of the hurting. Help us be balm to the wounds of others, let it be so.

**You:** There will be some brokenhearted people along my path today. What does being the Good News ask of me?

#### THURSDAY

**Phrase:** Rejoice Always (1 Thess 5: 16)

**Wonder:** What if every bell, siren or car horn was a call for you to pray this day for why that sound is made?

**Meditation:** "Pray without ceasing: give thanks in all circumstances". Sometimes prayer is silence.

**You:** Hold fast to all that is good today.

#### SATURDAY

**Phrase:** Do not quench the Spirit (1 Thess 5:19)

**Wonder:** Where is the bright spring of the Spirit bubbling up in my life and the life around me?

**Meditation:** God of beginnings, let me say "Yes!" when you want to birth something wonderful within me and ditch the excuses that quench the flame.

**You:** How can you shelter the Spirit-flame of another this week, so that it might not be quenched, but be alight with God's glory?

