

3rd Week of Advent: Liturgy of Joy

Litany of the Advent Candle

One: Divine Delight, in you we are gifted the wonder of joy.

All: We praise you for joy's abundance all over creation.

One: It is there in a baby elephant playing in ocean waves, a family pet's greeting upon their return home, a bear relaxing in someone's backyard hammock.

All: And joy time travels, too. It is present in fond memories and excitement for future possibilities.

One: Yet, in times when we find ourselves feeling far from joy, how might this Advent wreath accompany us in such moments?

All: Perhaps it is in the simple act of lighting a candle together as a community, around the possibility of joy.

One: Perhaps it is in kindling it through noticing even the slightest warmth touch our heart when we witness joy in others. So, let us gather around and light this candle with God's cosmic light,

All: a light that bends and moves and fills beyond the joy we thought was full. Amen.

Prayer of Confession

One: Joy has so much to teach us, and so does its opposite too.

All: Thoughts and actions of resentment tell us something about our longings and needs that have gone unmet.

One: Possibly, that our ego is running the show, with entitlement, power, or privilege that takes others, and ourselves, down. As Proverbs says, "a joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones."

All: O God of Abundant Joy, help us to listen deeply to what is wrestling within us, that we may tend to our desires and celebrate those of others. Let us make way for joy! Amen.

Words of Assurance

Spirit of a Joyful Noise, sing to us your song. May your melody meet us where we are so that we may harmonize with you. We praise you for the ways the suffering of this world are nothing compared to the glory to be revealed in you, our true joy. Help us to find the healing that makes this so. Amen.

Invitation to the Offering

The poet Mary Oliver once wrote that, "if you suddenly and unexpectedly feel joy, don't hesitate. Give in to it...perhaps this is its way of fighting back, that sometimes something happened better than all the riches or power in the world." And so may we offer up the joy we have worked hard for and the joy we couldn't foresee, the time we give to this community and the rest that restores us alone, the resources we have at the ready and those that are a worthy sacrifice to give. And in so doing, may the joy of the Gospel be felt and experienced in this place. Amen.

Prayer of Dedication

The prophet Isaiah says that God increases joy. So, may you grow this diversity of gifts offered up to you, O God of Abundance, that they might bring an ecosystem of giving and receiving alike. May they be dedicated to this love that satisfies, that brings us back to you and to ourselves. Amen.



"...THE GLORY OF GOD SHONE AROUND THEM..."

LUKE 2:9