



Third Sunday of Advent
December 16, 2012

JOY

Today we relight the first two candles of the Advent wreath. The candle of HOPE and the candle of PEACE. Right now we light the third candle for JOY. As the coming of Jesus, our Savior, comes nearer, our joy can build with anticipation: The Creator of the Universe will become human—one of us.

From the Book of Isaiah we read about God's heart for a new kind of "city" for all of humanity:

"But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight."

Isaiah 65:18

From the New Testament, the words of Paul to the people of the church at Galatia:

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit."

Galatians 5:22-25

Let's pray together:

Dear God,
In the height of our Advent walk, grant us the courage to experience deep joy that produces awe and worship!
Joy in the face of everyday existence and apathy; and a sense that You are at work.
Joy in the face of physical and emotional pain; and a sense that You are present.
Joy in the face of a world that seems uncertain and unstable; and a sense that you are up to something beautiful and AMAZING.
And when we begin to see "with the eyes of our heart" that You are on the move—help us not to be afraid to dance (just a little!).
Amen.

Family Questions:

1. Have you ever been so glad that you had to jump up and down (at least on the inside?). Tell about that.
2. Do you know of someone who is discouraged and needs cheering up? How could you help out with that this week?

For Adults:

1. The early church, in spite of poverty, persecution and even torture/death was distinctive in its attitude of joy and confidence in God. Are there ways that you see this being a reality again today? In what ways?
2. How in this busy season could you find space to be filled up with JOY and create space to be filled with awe and worship instead of FRENZY...what would that look like for you (be specific)?



Where the rubber meets the road...

If we slowed down enough to listen and experience God working behind the scenes in December...bringing life and hope and peace... in what ways might we bring more REAL JOY to those around us? What difference would this make?