



Third Sunday in Advent, December 14th, 2025

The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Call to worship & Lighting the Candles



Here we are!
Gathered in the Advent waiting room.
Longing for a sign.
Searching for a whisper of wonder.
Straining to hear a newborn cry.
Come, Jesus, come,
already and not yet,
into our world, into our hearts.
And all the people say: **Amen**

We light the candle of hope

We light the candle of peace

We light the candle of joy.
Into a world
where the deep joy of gratitude and contentment
are threatened by the constant desire
for cheap pleasure and easy happiness,
we bring this light of joy.

*There's a candle-lighting song here you can use
each week to the tune DIX TiS 314 "As with
gladness":*

[*'Light a Candle Bright and Tall' A Hymn for
Advent | Singing the Sacred*](#)

Acknowledging



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander
Christian Congress

The Ancient of Days breathed life into this land
and her peoples. From time beyond our reckoning
the *(please name the people on whose land you
gather)* People, the Traditional Custodians, have
blessed this place through their law and customs,
their care and life. We pay respects to their Elders
and leaders past and present, and pray for the
future of their communities. May we walk gently
and respectfully on this Land.

Singing - O for a thousand tongues to sing TiS 210

OR: All people that on earth do dwell TiS 59

OR: At the dawning of salvation TiS 392



Prayer

Responsive - Psalm 146:5-10,

Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the LORD their God,
who made heaven and earth,
the sea, and all that is in them;
who keeps faith forever;
who executes justice for the oppressed;
who gives food to the hungry.

The LORD sets the prisoners free;
the LORD opens the eyes of the blind.
The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;
the LORD loves the righteous.

The LORD watches over the strangers;
he upholds the orphan and the widow,
but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

ALL:
The LORD will reign forever,
your God, O Zion, for all generations.
Praise the LORD!

Are you the one, Jesus, really? The prophet looked
for judgement and punishment: axe and fire and
winnowing shovel. There are those of us who still
long for such a time when corruption, oppression
and evil will be brought to account.

Still today in the face of such hopes you invite us
to see you as you are, and what you still do in our
world: for you are the healing, forgiving and
reconciling judge of all the earth. For that mission
you were prepared to suffer ridicule, hatred, the
judgement of men, and the shame of the cross.

Still you give what you gave then, and you invite
us to hear and see what you do: vision is given to
the blind, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed,



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the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, the poor hear good news, and happiness comes to those who do not stumble over you.

Your new age brings forgiveness, reconciliation, renewal and peace. You called your disciples then and now to learn from you and stand as examples to the world of your saving power.

Grant us grace to reflect your healing, saving love to others, in the kind of people we become and in what we do for others, may we hear your word: Your sins are forgiven:

Thanks be to God!

(Prayer written by Rev. Ron Gordon - from the book *Dad & Daughter - Prayers and Poems on the Gospel Years A, B & C*, 2012)

Passing the peace

May the Peace of God dwell with you:
and also with you.

Listening

Read: Isaiah 35:1-10,
Matthew 11:2-11

For these words of faith
and for Jesus the Word

Thanks be to God.

Reflecting - Rev. Deacon Wendy Elson

Do you know what these terms are? (answers at end of reflection)

1. ROFL 2. ETA 3. GOAT 4. LMK 5. LOL
6. NVM 7. IMHO 8. JK 9. NGL 10. POV
11. YW 12. YOLO 13. TY 14. TTYL 15.
SYS 16. WYKYK 17. L8R 18. TTFN

More on that later.

Can you hear the pure and unbridled joy in these three lectionary passages? They positively quiver with it.

The Psalmist sings it, calling on the sea, the vast oceans, as evidence of God's creative presence, and claiming the basis for such uninhibited joy. God's unfailing provision of care for those who are marginalised by poverty, impairment, imprisoned and oppressed. Those who carry the heavy burdens of life and are bowed by their circumstances. Those who are lonely and grieving, those who are 'other', the foreigners, the refugees and migrants, those seeking safety and sanctuary. I can get on board with that; such a world brings me joy also.

Isaiah similarly speaks of a world of healing and beauty. The blossoming and flourishing, the strengthening of weak hands and feeble knees (I would really like that), strengthening of hearts that fear. And I say this one carefully, healing (different to curing) is offered to people with impairments through an invitation into full and joyous communion. Rivers will flow, highways will beckon us into dancing along their thoroughfares, and joy will replace sorrow forever.

The presence of Jesus amongst us is the embodied fulfilment of these expressions of joy. What a world it would be if we too were to bring these things to fruition in our own lives, in our communities. We are all called into this sort of loving action, to be the joyous hands and feet of Jesus and to live out his way, both as individuals and as the living, breathing body of God, the Church. When society and politics tells you these people, those who are in minority groups, are the least important, you know otherwise because the evidence is clear in Scripture. And when all these things are lived out and the values of God's Kingdom are our priority, there is JOY. These passages tell me politics should really wrap around those on the margins, weaving a safety net, a warm blanket of inclusion, justice and compassion.

You may have heard the word WOKE discussed lately, everyone has a different opinion on it. I do not know where it came from but in my mind it's a shorthand word for awakening. We need one of



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those. If you know of it, I wonder what you think it means. (WYKYK). Seems to me that caring for the poor, hungry and displaced, reaching out in welcome to the stranger (whoever they are and wherever they are from) is a joyous God thing. That's just IMHO, my own POV, (NGL).

What a privilege it is to join with Jesus in bringing JOY to the world, the sort of joy that clears highways for dancing! Perhaps there is room there for us all.

SYS. I will TTYL. TY.

L8R

ROFL

TTFN

ANSWERS

1. Rolling on floor laughing
2. Expected time of arrival
3. Greatest of all time
4. Let me know
5. Laugh out loud
6. Never mind
7. In my humble opinion
8. Just kidding
9. Not gonna lie
10. Point of view
11. You're welcome
12. You only live once
13. Thankyou
14. Talk to you later
15. See you soon
16. When you know, you know
17. Later
18. TTFN

Singing - Joyful, joyful we adore you

TiS 152

OR: There's a light upon the mountains TiS 276
OR: Long ago, prophets knew TiS 283

Offering

May all the offerings we give,
Maker of all, Spirit of life,
be made with joy.
Our offerings of money, time, energy, patience,
doubt and duty;
may they all be given with the joy that comes from
dwelling in your love.

Bless these gifts and bless us all
in joyful connection with you,
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Prayers for World & Community

Joy

The response is from Isaiah 30: verses 1 & 2a

God of all that is, and was, and is to come
we pray for the earth,
bearing the cost of our greed and ignorance.
Help us to find ways to live lighter,
to cherish the sounds of joy around us,
to support the healing of the environment,
to preserve precious habitat
and reverse alarming extinction rates.

**The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus, it shall blossom abundantly
and rejoice with joy and shouting.**

God of all that is, and was, and is to come
we pray for all nations;
where there is war, bring peace,
where there is famine, bring food
where there is disease, bring healing,
where there is oppression, bring liberation
where there is barren emptiness,
bring the fullness of your love and joy.

**The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus, it shall blossom abundantly
and rejoice with joy and shouting.**



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God of all that is, and was, and is to come
we pray for our communities and each other;
Bless those who come to this time of year
with deep sadness
and a keen sense of loss.
Be with them in the wilderness of grief.
Bring them comfort and company,
silence and solace.
Let them taste the sweetness of your joy
amidst the bitterness and sorrow.

**The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus, it shall blossom abundantly
and rejoice with joy and shouting.**

God of all that is, and was, and is to come,
we pray for ourselves.
Whatever our circumstances,
help us to bask in the blessing
of your generously outpouring joy.

In the quiet,
we bring to you the prayers of our hearts:
(keep a time of quiet)

We pray together then as Jesus taught us:

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 forever. Amen.

Singing - Joy to the world TiS 268

OR: Hail to the Lord's anointed TiS 275
OR: Lord of all hopefulness TiS 613

Blessing

Go out from this gathering
singing the ceaseless song of hope,
with all you are and in all you do.

And may the carols in the supermarket
become signs of promise
and fall gently on your ear this year.

May you see threads of the fabric of peace
in tinsel trimmed decorations,
woven through families, communities and nations.

May the jolly red Santas and unseasonal snow
be signs of outrageous joy.

And may nativity scenes remind you
that love is born,
that love is always born.

And all the people say: **Amen.**

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