

The United Church of Canada
Lennoxville United Church

St Francis Manoir & Grace Village & Manoir Stanstead

A service of Advent meditation for at home

December 2021: Week 3 Joy

Grounding Prayer

(Take a deep breath, center yourself within the love of God)

God, You are present, may I/we be transformed by this encounter.

Opening Prayer:

Holy One, our hearts are filled with anticipation. The promise of new life is proclaimed. Our hearts are overflowing. Take any jadedness that we hold on to and set it free, so that we might fully embrace this wondrous time of year. May the joy of this blessed season be experienced by all people, especially in gentle ways for those who are hurting and lonely. Grant life-changing peace and love to your beloved ones. We pray, focusing on the stable of Bethlehem. Amen.

Advent Wreath Lighting Liturgy

(as the first candle is lit) On the first Sunday of Advent we lit a candle for Hope.

(as the second candle is lit) Our second candle was lit for Peace.

(as the third candle is lit) Today we light a candle for Joy.

This is the Joy we search for:

the Joy that comes when we go out of our way to help others,

the Joy that overcomes fear and repression, the Joy that Jesus brought to the downtrodden and despised, the Joy that chuckles out from a young baby, the Joy that is in the energy of a street-

hockey game, the Joy that comes with a new job and is found in a purposeful retirement, the Joy of compassionate friendship, a Joy to release us, a Joy to delight us, a Joy to encourage us, a Joy to challenge the despair in our hearts,

in our city, and among the hopeless of our world. Amen.

Hymn: A Candle is Burning (VU6) (tune Away in a Manger)

A candle is burning, a candle of joy,

A candle to welcome brave Mary's new boy.

Our hearts fill with wonder, and eyes light and glow

As joy brightens winter like sunshine on snow

Prayer of Illumination:

Open our hearts, O God. Open our eyes. Open our lives. As we hear the scripture today and as we see the message acted out, open us to the message of Christmas. Help us to live that message all year. Amen.

A Reading from the Gospel of Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

The Living Word, I listen with my heart, my mind and my spirit.

A Short Reflection:

Think about a time that you laughed really hard...

(Did you feel safe? Did you feel free?)

Thinking of something that gives you joy...

How can you share joy with others?

Prayers of the People:

Compassionate God, I humbly come before you trusting in your deep love for all your children, and your deep love for me. I thank you for your gifts in my life (pause to reflect on your blessings). I am faced with challenges and struggles, and so I ask for your courage and strength (pause and reflect on your concerns). I know that you hear me when I call, and I ask that you remind me that you are with me in the challenges and joys of living. Inspire me with your love and empower me with your hope. I pray using the words Jesus gave to his disciples;

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Blessing & Commissioning

Thanks be to God, for the Word-Made-Flesh. Go now, celebrating the Light of the World in this season of Advent.

Expand the Light. Announce the hope. Spread the peace. Join the joy. Offer the love! May the word of God continue to be alive through you and me. Amen.

Prayers by:

OP: Laura Turnbull, Gathering A/C/E 2020-2021 (Year B), 31.

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