

12-14-25 FOR THE JOURNEY THIS WEEK

“Let us claim the gift of joy, even in the struggles of a difficult world, even as we pray for those who are hurting, who are grieving, who are lost and alone. We celebrate; we are joyful because our God has promised healing and wholeness.”

Derek Weber



James 5:7-8 + Matthew 11:2-11

Questions for Reflection —

- How does joy differ from contentment or happiness? What in general sparks joy in you? In what is your joy rooted? What does it mean to rejoice in God our Savior? For what in your life right now do you wish to praise God? What does mean to live life with joy? What does it look like for you to rejoice and glorify God from the depth of your being, with your whole self?
- When in your life have you experienced a time of deep joy? In what ways have you encountered unexpected joy in this particular Advent season? How will you share your joy with others? Have there been any impediments to your experiencing God’s gift of joy? In what facet(s) of your life are you seeking more joy? What spiritual practices might help to cultivate joy in the midst of challenges? How can we as a congregation embody joy, especially for those who presently cannot find joy in their hearts?
- How has the season of Advent been unfolding for you? For what are you waiting and watching as Christmas approaches? What healing and wholeness do you seek for yourself, your loved ones, our congregation, the community, the world? What does patient waiting look like in view of hopes yet to be realized? How can you wait without becoming complacent or apathetic? What will keep you awake to God’s ongoing renewal and restoration?

Daily Household Prayer

Holy God of Joy, we rejoice in the reality of who You are. We live within the joy of Your love for us. Our contentment comes and goes. Our happiness ebbs and flows. Our feelings depend upon our circumstances, our physical health, our brain chemistry. But our joy is deeply rooted in our identity as your beloved children.

Merciful God, we confess that we have often placed our hope in people and things that can’t fulfill our every need. We have searched for peace in shallow places. We have mistaken joy for temporal pleasure and artificial exhilaration. We have put limits on the ways we love, excluding those who need our loving kindness the most.

God, when we have lost our way, show us Yours. Guide us to the hope in You that will renew our strength. Lead us to Your peace that transcends all understanding. Fill us with a joy we can only experience in your presence. Remind us that you have always loved us with an everlasting love, so that we may share that love with others. Amen.