

Advent – Week One - JOY!

Resource of the United Methodist Church. Written by by MaryJane Pierce Norton

Sunday, December 3

Read **John 1:6-8**.

Consideration: Think about a time or a situation when things were dark. This could mean things were literally dark – in the middle of the night when a noise scares us, for instance. Or it could be we *felt* darkness, such as times when we are frightened and feel alone and hopeless. Talk together about a time of darkness. Now remember how it feels to have light – either physically experiencing light that breaks apart the darkness or feeling comforted and joyful because our feelings of darkness have ended. How would you describe those feelings? Is *joy* a word that you would use at this time?

Who in our world need God's joy? What are our hopes for joy in our world today? How do we help others know that God gives joy?

Prayer:

Dear God: Thank you for your son, Jesus. Thank you for the joy remembering Jesus' birth brings to us today. Help us live in such a way that our words and our actions help others know of the joy you give. Amen.

Monday, December 4, 2017: Today read again John 1:6-8. Make a list together of the things that bring light to our lives and make us joyful. Paint or draw a picture of something that makes you joyful.

Tuesday, December 5, 2017: Is there someone you know who needs to hear words of joy? Make or select a card for that person and mail it today.

Wednesday, December 6, 2017: Joy is something we need in our city. Think about different leaders of our city. Select one leader of our city. Pray for that leader today.

Thursday, December 7, 2017: As we get ready to celebrate again the birth of Jesus, we sometimes get very busy. Today, take a ten-minute break. Sit quietly. If it helps you to concentrate, look at your Advent wreath. Pray, asking God's help to bring quiet and calm to a busy world.

Friday, December 8, 2017: Think about your family. Some may live with you. Others may be far away. Who in your family needs God's joy? Pray for this family member today.

Saturday, December 9, 2017: There are people in our neighborhoods, in our church, and in our community who need to know of God's joy. Select someone to visit today. Visit by phone or in person. Go as a family or by yourself. It doesn't necessarily have to be a visit to a home. Maybe there is someone you see in a place where you go to eat. Stop by today and talk with that person. Tell the person you visit one way he or she brings joy to you.

Advent – Week Two - Hope

Sunday, December 10

Read **Isaiah 64:8**.

Consideration: Think about a potter. A potter takes clay and forms it in a way that is pleasing. That is what God is able to do with each person. We are reminded that we are all the work of God's hands. Consider about how we are formed by God. Remember together the gifts and talents of each person. How do we use these gifts that God has formed in us?

Prayer:

Dear God: Thank you for your son, Jesus. Thank you for the words of the Prophet Isaiah that remind us that you are the source of our hope. Help us to live each day, allowing you to form us in a way that brings about your kingdom here on earth. Amen.

Monday, December 11, 2017: Today read again Isaiah 64:8. Memorize this verse. How do you think this verse gives hope to people?

Tuesday, December 12, 2017: Is there someone you know who needs to hear words of hope? Make or select a card for that person and mail it today.

Wednesday, December 13, 2017: Hope is something we need in our world. Today, pray for the president and the members of congress. Pray for their leadership for our country and for the world.

Thursday, December 14, 2017: As we get ready to celebrate again the birth of Jesus, we sometimes get very busy. Today, take a ten-minute break. Sit quietly. If it helps you to concentrate, look at your Advent wreath. Pray, asking God's help to bring quiet and calm to a busy world.

Friday, December 15, 2017: Think about your family. Some may live with you. Others may be far away. Who in your family needs God's hope? Pray for this family member today.

Saturday, December 16, 2017: There are people in our neighborhoods, in our church, and in our community who need to know of God's hope. Select someone to visit today. Visit by phone or in person. Go as a family or by yourself. It doesn't necessarily have to be a visit to a home. Maybe there is someone you always see at the library. Stop by today and talk with that person. Tell the person you visit one way he or she helps you feel hopeful.

Advent – Week three – Love

Sunday, December 17

Read **Isaiah 40:1-8**.

Consideration: When we think of God's love, we might not always think of the words of the prophets. And this verse might not be one that comes to mind. But the image of God comforting people is a loving image. The image of God making the rough way smooth is one of love. When have you felt comforted by God's love? What makes you feel that rough times are made easier because of God's love?

Prayer:

Dear God: Thank you for your son, Jesus. Thank you for the words found in our Bible that help us remember your love and care. Help us see how we can bring God's message to the people we meet in our schools, at our jobs, and in our neighborhoods. Help us be messengers of God's love for everyone. Amen.

Monday, December 18, 2017: Read again Isaiah 40:1-8. Create a picture that shows God's comforting love. Include words or prayers that help you remember God's love. Give thanks for the world and all people in the world.

Tuesday, December 19, 2017: Is there someone you know who needs to hear words of God's love? Make or select a card for that person and mail it today.

Wednesday, December 20, 2017: Love is something we need in our church. Think about the people in our church. Select one person in our church. Pray for that person today.

Thursday, December 21 2017: As we get ready to celebrate again the birth of Jesus, we sometimes get very busy. Today, take a ten-minute break. Sit quietly. If it helps you to concentrate, look at your Advent wreath. Pray, asking God's help to bring quiet and calm to a busy world.

Friday, December 22, 2017: Think about your family. Some may live with you. Others may be far away. Who in your family needs God's love? Pray for this family member today.

Saturday, December 23, 2017: There are people in our neighborhoods, in our church, and in our community who need to know of God's love. Select someone to visit today. Visit by phone or in person. Go as a family or by yourself. It doesn't necessarily have to be a visit to a home. Maybe there is someone who waits on you at the grocery store. Stop by today and talk with that person. Tell the person you visit how you are reminded of God's love because of what that person has said or done.

Advent – Week Four – Peace & Christmas

Morning Meditation
Sunday, December 24

Read **Luke 1:47-55**.

In the Scripture, we hear Mary's song of praise. There must have been times when Mary was frightened, worried, fearful, and sad. She may not have felt very peaceful as she considered her future. Yet her words help us see the peace that comes when we trust in God.

Consideration: How privileged we are to have this beautiful song of Mary. Can you imagine her singing the words written in Scripture? It is a testimony to her faith at being chosen as God's servant. And because she embraces God's future for her, she faces the future with the assurance of God's peace.

Who are the people in our world who need God's peace? What are our hopes for peace in our world today?

How do we help others know God's desire for peace in our world?

Prayer: Dear God: Thank you for your son, Jesus. Thank you for those in our world today who seek to act for peace. Help us look for ways to be peacemakers at home, at church and at school. Amen.

Christmas Eve

Read **Luke 2:1-20**.

At the time when Jesus was born, shepherds weren't considered to be very important. They had important work to do, but they weren't people that others might necessarily invite to their homes. Yet they were invited to meet the baby Jesus.

Are there people in your family or community who might not be invited to a Christmas celebration this year? Name those who come to mind that on this Christmas Eve are alone and forgotten. Together, think of a way you can recognize and remember some of the forgotten people. Together, pray for the forgotten people in your home, your church, or your community.

Christmas Day

Read **Matthew 2:1-12**.

Consideration: It's amazing to think of these persistent travelers who were determined to find Jesus. They traveled with hope and faith in the promise that they would find the new king. Who are the people in our world who need to know of God's promises?

What are our hopes on this Christmas Day for our world?

How can we help people remember God's promises after Christmas Day is over?

Name one thing you are willing to do in the days following Christmas that will help you and others remember God's promises.

Prayer:

Dear God: Thank you for your son, Jesus. Thank you, God, for sending Jesus for ALL people, not just those in one place at one time. On this Christmas Day, help us remember and rejoice again because Jesus was born. May we live every day remembering your love and care and showing that love and care to others. Amen.