

DECEMBER 17, 2017  
THIRD SUNDAY  
OF ADVENT



*Advent is a time for joy as we look to the birth of Jesus.*

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>John 1:6-8, 19-28</b>	<b>John's witness to the light</b>
<b>Monday</b>	<b>Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11</b>	<b>Good news of deliverance</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>1 Thessalonians 5:16-24</b>	<b>A call to rejoice</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Luke 1:46b-55</b>	<b>Mary's song of praise</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Psalms 63:1-8</b>	<b>In God's presence I sing for joy</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>Acts 16:25-34</b>	<b>A jailer is filled with joy</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Psalms 126</b>	<b>A people who dream</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Luke 1:26-38</b>	<b>The birth of Jesus foretold</b>

### SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

**1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NRSV)**

### PRAYERS AND BLESSING

#### **A Prayer for the Week:**

Lord Jesus, we are joyful because of you. Help us to be thankful no matter what happens each day. Amen. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

#### **Mealtime Prayer:**

Lord God, you fill the hungry with good things. With all my heart I praise the Lord, and I am glad because of God my Savior. Amen. (Luke 1:46-47, 51)

#### **A Blessing to Give:**

May the God of peace make you completely holy; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thessalonians 5:23)



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### HYMN OF THE WEEK

*Joy to the World*



### CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home or small group:

- What does it mean to be joyful? Tell about a time you were filled with joy.
- How does the birth of Jesus bring joy to the world?
- Which image in Isaiah 61:1-4 helps you to understand the feeling of joy?

### DEVOTIONS

December 17 is the third Sunday in Advent. Continue to use an Advent wreath with four blue or purple candles and a white center candle. Light the first, second, and third candles, and use the following words:

*Say:* The third candle on our Advent wreath is the joy candle because "the Lord has done great things for us, and we rejoiced" (Psalm 126:3). The coming of Jesus our Savior and Lord gives us joy. [Light the first, second, and third candles.]

*Read:* Psalm 126:1-3. *When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then it was said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them." The Lord has done great things for us, and we rejoiced.*

*Pray:* **Dear God, in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ you have done great things for us and we rejoice. Lead us to give thanks in all circumstances, believing this is your will for us in Christ Jesus. Amen.**

### SERVICE

John 1:7 describes John the Baptist this way: "He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him." As followers of Christ, we too are to serve others by being a witness and directing our attention to Jesus. How can you be a witness to Jesus in your thoughts, words, and actions as you prepare for Christmas?

### RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Advent is a time to slow down, savor, and see things in the light of Christ. In many homes setting up a nativity set is a memorable tradition. Hold or imagine one piece of your nativity set each day. Think what it was like to be that character in Bethlehem. What did that character see? Experience? Hear? How was that person changed? How are you changed? Talk about your thoughts with family and friends.

Conclude by singing this traditional hymn, *Away in the Manger*.



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: [www.milestonesministry.org](http://www.milestonesministry.org)