

DECEMBER 14, 2014  
THIRD SUNDAY  
OF ADVENT

# taking<sup>†</sup> faith home

The news of Jesus' birth makes us joyful.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These readings are related to the Lectionary readings for this Sunday. We invite you to take time each day to read the assigned Bible passages.

Sunday	John 1:6-8, 19-28	John's witness to the light
Monday	John 9:1-7	Jesus is the light
Tuesday	John 3:19-21	Come into the light
Wednesday	John 16:19-24	Jesus speaks of joy
Thursday	Acts 16:25-34	A jailer is filled with joy
Friday	Isaiah 51:11-16	God gives joy and comfort
Saturday	Psalms 63:1-8	In God's presence I sing for joy
Sunday	Luke 1:26-38	The birth of Jesus foretold

## SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

The Lord makes me very happy; all that I am rejoices in my God. He has covered me with clothes of salvation and wrapped me with a coat of goodness. Isaiah 61:10 (NCV)

### SAY, PRAY AND BLESS:

#### A Prayer for the Week:

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

#### 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 holy in every way. May your whole self be kept safe and without fault from now until our Lord Jesus Christ returns. Amen. (1 Thessalonians 5:23)

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## CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your household or small group:

- What does it mean to be joyful? Share of a time when you were filled with joy.
- Is there a difference between joy and happiness? Explain your answer.
- The apostle Paul tells Christians to "be joyful always." How can Christians be joyful always? How do we show our joy?

## DEVOTIONS

This week, light the first, second and third candles on your home Advent wreath. The third candle is often pink or rose colored to symbolize joy. In doing so, use the following words:

*The third candle on our Advent wreath is the **SHEPHERD CANDLE**. When the shepherds heard the news of Jesus' birth, they went to Bethlehem with joy. Because of Jesus, we can rejoice in God's love.*

Have a household member read Luke 2:7-14. Then say this prayer together, repeating after the leader:

**Lord Jesus, the good news of your birth makes us joyful. Like the shepherds, help us to come to you with joy this Christmas. Amen.**

## SERVICE

Sometimes the word JOY is used as an acronym for Jesus - Others - Yourself. We show the joy that we have in Jesus by putting others ahead of ourselves. Share your Christmas joy with your neighbors by baking Christmas cookies for them. If possible, use icing to write the word "Joy" on the cookies.

## RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Set up a shoebox as an empty manger in a prominent spot in your home (e.g. on the kitchen table). Next to the manger, place a little bundle of straw (if you don't have real straw, shredded paper will do). Each evening, get together as a household and talk about the good things you've done for others during the day. For every good deed done, the person who did the good deed gets to place one piece of straw in the manger. On Christmas Eve, place a Baby Jesus figure in the manger on the soft bed you've made for him with your good deeds.



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)



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