

**ADVENT WREATH DEVOTIONS for
THE THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT
JOY**

NOTE: Some Advent Wreaths have one pink candle. The pink candle is always lit on the third Sunday of Advent and traditionally symbolizes "joy." If your wreath has a pink candle, light this as the third candle this week.

FIRST READER: This is the third Sunday in Advent. Today, we light the first two purple candles and the pink candle. On the first Sunday of Advent, we lit the candle of hope. On the second Sunday, we lit the candle of love. Today, we light the candle of joy. One thing that sometimes happens as we get ready to celebrate Jesus' birth is that we expect to be happy all the time. Joy is not the same as happy. Joy is a deeper feeling created by knowing that God cares for us. Joy is remembering that God sent Jesus so we would always know of God's care. During Advent, we pray that we may remember again God's gift of Jesus to the world and know the joy that gift brings to all people.

*Light the first, second, and third candles and sing or read together the hymn:
"Joy to the World", hymn #100 in the Hymnal.*

SECOND READER: When we look at the third candle, we remember God's promise of joy. God promised to send a Savior to the people. Today we read from the Gospel of Luke. In the Scripture, we read Mary's song of praise and joy. There must have been times when Mary was frightened, worried, fearful, and sad. But we have these words of joy even in a time when she was unsure of the future. Her words can guide us to look for the joy of God even when things may be uncertain for us.

FIRST READER: Read **Luke 1:46b-55**

DISCUSSION: 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 and joy at being chosen as God's servant. Do I feel joyful when I serve God and other people? Who are the people in our world who need God's joy? What are our hopes for joy in our world today? How do we help others know that God gives joy?

Gracious 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