

3 Advent Three

LITANY OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

One: So many of us feel grief in this advent season. Blue Christmas. Long nights. Missing lost loved ones. Even annual holiday parties can make joy elusive.

All: We are tempted to be overwhelmed by our grief.

One: And yet, today, God offers something else to us. God seeks to add joy after joy to our lives.

All: We have come to be overwhelmed with joy.

(Three candles are lit)

One: This morning we light three candles: the candles of hope, peace, and today's candle, joy. This candle reminds us of God's will that there might be joy in our lives- from the cozy sound of rain on a window to baby giggles at peek-a-boo, to the wonder of a mountain sunset, we know what joy is even if it is too often fleeting. Today, we allow ourselves to be overwhelmed with joy.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

One: God calls us to be people of joy. And yet so often we are not. Let us invite God's Spirit of love and grace to draw us back again.

All: All: Holy God, sometimes we steal joy from our own lives as we rush on without gazing up to the stars.

One: Sometimes we steal joy from others with cruel words said in anger or an icy silence withholding reconciliation.

All: Sometimes we steal joy from everyone as we collectively build systems that oppress. We protect our own lies and pass down pain to the next generation.

One: Gracious God, forgive us and remind us again that you created us for joy. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

One: The news of Advent is good news! Tidings of comfort and joy! God's gift of the Christ child is for life, and love and joy. May that joy overwhelm us. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

One: The path through Advent, makes this stop on the third Sunday, a pause for joy. So many people don't pause for joy. So many can't pause for joy. The good news is for them most of all. We share what we have now for all who need a pause for joy.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

All: Gracious God, thank you for this community gathered and for all that we share together. Bless these gifts of our labors and our hearts, so that all the world may be overwhelmed with joy. Amen.

