

Worship Engagement and Devotion for week of December 13, 2020

LUKE 1:46-55 | ISAIAH 61:1-4, 8-11 | PSALM 126

Sow Joy, Those Who Dream Advent Week 3



Psalm 126 opens with the line: "When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream." What does it look like to live as those who dream? The prophets, the psalmists, John the Baptist, Mary, Elizabeth, Joseph, Simeon, Anna, the shepherds and the Magi—they were all dreamers. They received, discovered, and responded to God's dreams for the world. In Advent, we step into the mystery and awe of God's dreams and pray they shape our reality.

Those Who Dream...Sow Joy

Ultimately, dreams sow joy, even if that joy doesn't immediately spring forth. Sowing seeds into the soil always feels risky and feeble—how can something so small become something so beautiful, so big, and so nourishing? Like Mary, we are called to tend and nurture the dreams God has woven into **US**.

Questions for Reflection:

- What does joy mean for you? What dreams of joy has God woven into you?
- How can we sow joy, even in the midst of challenges and hardships?
- What can we learn from Mary about sowing joy and surrendering to God's vision and dreams?
- Where and how can you sow joy into your life? How is God calling you to sow joy in a hurting world?

Spiritual Practice: Advent Candle Lighting, Second Week of Advent

The tradition of lighting the candles on the Advent Wreath is a favorite element of worship that symbolizes the passage of the four weeks of Advent and the celebration of the Christ Child on Christmas Eve. Advent wreaths are usually circular representing God's never-ending love. At Faith United we use 3 purple candles and 1 pink for the four weeks of Advent. The pink candle is lit on the third week as a symbol of joy. The white candle is the Christ Candle and will be lit on Christmas Eve. Some traditions use 4 blue candles and 1 white.

The Advent Wreath is a tradition you can also use at home by making your own wreath! You can use garland, branches from your yard, clay or other art materials to form your wreath. Reading a scripture and responding to a reflection question with your thoughts, writing, or art can add to your personal or family devotion experience.

Another idea is to imagine the room in your home where you spend most of your time as a giant Advent wreath. As you light the candles each week, place each candle in a different corner of your room. The Christ candle can then be placed in the center of your room on Christmas Eve. Imagine Immanuel, God With Us, surrounding you and your loved ones with hope, peace, joy and love as we celebrate the coming of Christ.

Candle Lighting Liturgy | The Candle of Joy

Written for two voices, this liturgy could be adapted for one or even three or four.

A: I dream of dance parties in the kitchen. B: I dream of laughter that is contagious.

A: I dream of birthday candles and another beautiful year.

B: I dream of family game nights and dinner parties with friends.

A: I dream of homemade Halloween costumes and homemade family recipes.

B: I dream of pillow forts, fireflies, and front porch swings.

A: I dream of every little thing that brings joy; and I know it comes from God.

B: So today we light the candle of joy as a reminder that God's dream for this world involves the end of all tears. *Light Candle.*

A: God's dream for this world involves a joy that overflows and is contagious.

B: So may this fire burn bright, and as it does, may we sing.

A: May we dance. B: May we laugh. A: May we hold onto the people we love.

B: May we sow joy in a hurting world, and may it be an act of holy resistance. Amen.

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