

Week 3: Joy

Opening prayer

God of all,
may we bear witness to your light
and share your joy with others
as we seek to build a better world. Amen.
(Light the third candle in your Advent wreath)

Scripture (John 1:6-8, 19-28)

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered "No." So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord', as the prophet Isaiah said."

(Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) They asked him, "Then why are you baptising, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" John answered them, "I baptise with water, but among you stands one you do not know, even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie." These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptising.

Reflection

John the Baptist resists the attempts of the priests and Levites to make the conversation about him and steadfastly points towards the one who is coming. John is a true witness to the light. He demonstrates this in both his words and his actions.

In this third week of Advent, we rejoice in the goodness of the Lord who is near. Christ who will bring good news to the poor, consolation to the broken-hearted, liberty to captives and salvation for all.

We consider how we can bear witness to this good news in our world today. We can speak up for what is right. We can put our faith into action and show our love for our neighbours, both locally and globally. When we do this, it is not about building up recognition for ourselves, but helping to shine a light for others to follow.

Like John the Baptist, may each of us bear witness to the light of Christ, whose coming we eagerly await.

For discussion

- + Who are the people you see who are bearing witness to the light in our world today?
- + What more could you do to spread Christ's message of healing, mercy and justice in the coming year?
- + How can we find and share joy even in difficult times?

Closing prayer

We give you thanks
for the gifts you have given us,
as we wait in hope for your coming.

Come, Lord, Source of Joy.

Move us to be good news in our world
and to stand alongside
our sisters and brothers in need.

Come, Lord, Source of Joy.

Lead us in your ways
as together we make a change
so all people may rejoice and be glad,

Come, Lord, Source of Joy.