

WEEKDAY WORSHIP

December 11-17, 2017

Worship as encounter with the living God cannot be limited to one hour per week. "Weekday Worship" invites you to extend your worship beyond the sanctuary, to hear the story of the Bible as your story, lived out each day of each week. Feedback is appreciated and should be directed to Rita Boyer.

BIBLE READING

This week's reading is: Psalm 126 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?q=377777275>).

Other readings are: Isaiah 61:14, 8–11; Psalm 126; 1 Thessalonians 5:16–24; John 1:6–8, 19–28

The theme is: Shout with Joy

The third Sunday of Advent is often known as "Rejoice Sunday". The first two weeks focus on the need and the longing for God's presence. The candles that are lit are purple, the color of penitence (think Lent) as well as royalty. On the third Sunday of Advent the candle to be lit is pink, symbolizing joy. Even when there is evidence to the contrary, we can rejoice in God's presence and promises. Psalm 126 is from a collection of psalms that were collected by the exiles after they were given permission to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. It is one of the "ascent psalms," so called because the people sang these songs as they climbed to the top of Mount Zion, the place where the temple stood. The returning exiles sing with joy, even though there is much work ahead of them! There are references to water, seeds, and a bountiful harvest in this psalm. Living in the Negeb desert, experience had taught those who sang this psalm that such bountiful harvests were rare. When it did rain, it did so with such force that the dry soil was washed away from the river banks where seeds were planted. The psalmist rejoices with the image of returning exiles who "shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves" (verse 6). God has restored their fortunes and their hope.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

"Questions to Consider" enable you to connect your story to the biblical story. Rather than easy questions to be answered at first glance, these questions or reflections can be returned to and meditated upon throughout the week.

Happiness is circumstantial; joy is not. How can you experience joy in the midst of challenging circumstances?

Continue to reflect upon the worship theme of December 10:

With the exception of Native Americans, we are all immigrants. What family stories do you know about the journey of those who came before you?