

Let There Be Light

Spiritual Journey Tour for Advent

WEEK 3 - December 14-20

Gaudete Sunday invites us to rejoice because the true Light is drawing near, breaking through the darkness of our world and our hearts. Our wreaths are more than halfway lit at this point. Our rose candle of “Joy” reminds us that God is already at work, gently illuminating our path even when we cannot yet see the fullness of His plan.

ADVENT OPENING PRAYER FOR JOY

Lord God,

As we gather together, fill our hearts with Your joy and surround us with Your light. Let Your joy rise within us, lifting our spirits and giving us hope in every moment.

Help us to recognize Your presence in our lives and to share that joy with others, so that our words and actions may bring encouragement, kindness, and peace.

In the midst of challenges and uncertainty, remind us that Your light guides our path and Your love sustains us. May our time together inspire gratitude, strengthen our faith, and deepen our experience of Your joyful presence.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

[CLICK HERE TO READ THIS WEEKEND'S READINGS](#)

Theme: Rejoice in the Lord; share His light and joy.

First Reading (*Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10*): We hear a prophecy about who is coming “the eyes of the blind will be opened.”

Second Reading (*James 5:7-10*): We are reminded not to complain about our hardships.

Gospel Reading (*Matthew 11:2-11*): Reminds us of Jesus' works—opening blind eyes, lifting up the poor, and revealing truth—shine out like a beacon that guides people, just as light dispels darkness and shows the way.

Reflection

Gaudete Sunday invites us to rejoice because the true Light is drawing near, breaking through the darkness of our world and our hearts. Our wreaths are more than halfway lit at this point. Our rose candle of “Joy” reminds us that God is already at work, gently illuminating our path even when we cannot yet see the fullness of His plan. We have enough grace for this day. Tomorrows will come when it is needed, but for today, we have the light we need. How do I share that light? As the rose candle burns, we are called to carry that light outward—becoming signs of hope, joy, and Christ's loving presence to all those we encounter. We are called to bring the light and joy of Christ.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DIALOGUE

Take some time to reflect on this week's message and discuss with your group:

1. Which of Jesus' works in the Gospel brings you the most joy, and why?
2. Do you see and believe in the potential our church community has for a positive impact?
3. Who or what around you is experiencing darkness, and how might you be called to shine God's light in those places? How can you remain "in the world, not of the world" while serving there?
4. Light is attractive. How do you think your good works can attract people to God? In what ways can you intentionally go into dark places to bring light?
5. As a small group, what can you do to bring light to our community between now and Christmas—or starting in the new year?
6. Is there a ministry you could serve with during Christmas liturgies to welcome newcomers?

SCRIPTURE FOR MEDITATION

"The blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them." — Matthew 11:5

PRAY

- Pray for patience in your hardships. Ask God to help you let go of complaining and to face challenges with trust, calm, and a joyful spirit.
- Invite God to show you what needs to be cleared away in your heart so you can welcome Jesus more fully. Ask for the courage to "prepare the way" by turning away from anything that pulls you from Him.
- Light your third candle on your Advent wreath and say a prayer for the gift of Joy.

ACT

- Join us as a small group for our Reconciliation Services (12/15 at SJV and 12/16 at SMIC). If it's your first time, or first time in a long time- you are most welcome to come receive the mercy of Christ
- Sign up to serve in a ministry at a Christmas Mass to welcome those who may be coming back for the first time or after a long absence.

INSPIRE

- Invite someone to join you at Christmas Mass who hasn't been in a while.
- Join a ministry during this busy season and share the joy of Christ.

Are you having a small group Christmas/New Years gathering in the coming week? Please take a group picture and share with the Spiritual Journey Core Team - spiritualjourneywalnutcreek@gmail.com or use [#spiritualjourneywc](#) on your social media post

INTERCESSIONS FOR THE GROUP

Take some time to pray together for the persons or people on the Hearts of your small group members.

CLOSING PRAYER – ADVENT PRAYER FOR HOPE

Lord God,

As we close our time together, we ask: let there be light—Your light—in our hearts, our conversations, and our week ahead. Thank You for the joy, reflection, and connection we've shared in this small group.

Fill us with Your presence so that Your JOY continues to rise within us, giving us strength and hope in every moment. Help us carry Your light into our homes, our friendships, and our daily tasks, bringing encouragement, kindness, and peace wherever we go.

In moments of challenge or uncertainty, remind us that Your light guides our steps and Your love sustains us. May everything we've learned and shared today draw us closer to You and to one another.

We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.