

Holding Space, Advent III: JOY

This liturgy (worship service), was crafted by a small group of individuals who were part of a larger group of Lay Worship Leaders who gathered to learn about EPIC (Experiential, Participatory, Inclusive/Image Rich, and Connective) worship leadership, reflect on the theme of **holding space** in Advent, and collectively prepare for the season.

Based on the readings of the Revised Common Lectionary for Year B, the resource offers prayers and hymn suggestions, and, as time and energy permitted, reflection ideas. Where the authors have used or adapted material written by others, credit is offered at the bottom of the document. The left-hand column identifies the portion of the liturgical element. The middle column contains the words that may be shared. Spoken text for one voice is in regular font. The text for many voices is in **bold** font. Text that is to be shared in unison or responsively is offered in sense lines. The right-hand column offers any guidance for participation or movement.

This resource is offered to you as a gift by all of those who had a hand in preparing it. You are encouraged to adapt it for use in ways that fit your context, with the prayer that it may assist you in creating and **holding space** for hope, peace, joy and love to enter.



Liturgical Element	Content	Guidance
Word of Welcome	Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord”. <i>Luke 1:46</i> Welcome everyone. We are happy you are here. If you come weary and tired and doubting you have come to the right place. God is present here. God is always with us. And so we welcome the guiding light of Christ.	
Candle Lighting Litany ¹	Come gather in the light. The light of HOPE (light first candle) The light of PEACE (light second candle)	

¹ Lloyd Bruce, FSLDW Regional Minister

	We gather this day as a people of God. Come gather as a people of joy! We gather as ones who choose to pause. We gather as ones who choose to hold space. When grief and brokenness linger we recognize the quiet joy that coexists with our tears. We hold space for joy, and for one another. We gather in conviction of joy that runs deeper than circumstance. We hold space in holy waiting. <i>Pink candle of joy is lit.</i>	
Sung Response #90 More Voices (adapted)²	Don't be afraid through Advent's waiting for joy is stronger than our fear. Keep holding space for joy to enter... For God has promised, promised to be always near.	
Gathering Prayer	Loving God, we gather to worship and adore you. Shine your light upon us. Open our lives to see the light of your truth As we experience the warmth of God's love; We wait in darkness as we hold space, longing for the joy of a baby's birth. AMEN	
Hymn/Song	Mary, Woman of the Promise VU16	
Illumination	Holy Spirit, open our hearts and minds to hear God's word.	

² Jennie Delmotte, Music Director at Sackville United

Ancient Wisdom	Psalm 126 and/or Luke 1:46b-55	
Modern Wisdom		
Reflection		
Hymn/Song	Never Ending Joy MV 40	
Prayers of the People (4 voices)	Voice 1 Loving and merciful God, You are ever worthy of our praise; you are the source of our joy. You offer grace to our waiting hearts; fill us with your Spirit.... Let joy not be dependent on our circumstances But rooted in your promise to make all things new through the coming of Jesus Christ. Voice 2 You offer mercy to those in every generation. We pray for our leaders to govern with compassion, integrity and wisdom, respecting the rights and dignity of all, as they make decisions that affect many lives. Help us to elevate the voices of all who are marginalized, Immigrants, unhoused and forgotten. Voice 3 Teach us to see Your presence in the wind, the soil, the rivers, and all living things. Forgive us for the harm we have done to our common home and awaken in us a deeper care for the world You entrusted to us. For a world starved of laughter break through our anxieties and the rigid serious-mindedness of our age. Restore to us the wonder of a child:	

	freedom to praise, and the capacity to celebrate the small holy glimpses of your kingdom breaking through. Voice 4 May our lives echo Mary's song, magnifying your goodness so clearly that the world cannot help but join the melody. We wait. Holding space in joyful expectation for the birth of the one who turns our sorrow into joy.	
Prayer of Jesus	Our Father,* who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.	
Hymn/Song	Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You VU 232	
Commissioning	Go out seeking joy To strengthen our resolve to make a better world.	
Benediction	May God the Source of Joy, bless you now and go with you into each new day. Amen	

