

Oh I do wish you joy And I wish you happiness

Dolly Parton, *I Will Always Love You*



LIVING
COMPASS
outfitting for the journey

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“A que le preguntaran si él era de veras el que había de venir, o si debían esperar a otro. Jesús les contestó: ‘Vayan y díganle a Juan lo que están viendo y oyendo. Cuéntenle que los ciegos ven, los cojos andan, los leprosos quedan limpios de su enfermedad, los sordos oyen, los muertos vuelven a la vida y a los pobres se les anuncia la buena noticia.’” —Mateo 11:2-11

The Third Sunday of Advent

December 11, 2022

Being Present to Joy

by Amy McCreath

Oh I do wish you joy

And I wish you happiness

—Dolly Parton, *I Will Always Love You*

“Let’s go!”

Twice a year, my colleague Paul would show up in the doorway of my office at 9 a.m. and issue this directive. I would drop whatever I was working on, and walk with him to the office of our colleague Johanna, and together we would stand in her doorway and exclaim, “Let’s go!”

The three of us would leave behind whatever we thought we were going to do that day, climb into Paul’s enormous Buick, and drive up to the coast, listening to Dolly Parton songs all the way. We would eat lobster rolls for lunch, which Paul always insisted on paying for, and stop at a famous fudge store on the way back.

Paul’s “Let’s go!” always came in the middle of months that felt overwhelming. They interrupted me when I was struggling to trust that I could truly be the vessel of love and justice that God was calling me to be. They came when my hands were weak and my knees feeble. They came when everything felt too complicated and my skills inadequate.

Paul’s “Let’s go!” was a simple invitation, and the day away was a simple activity. It was a spiritual practice, really: Step away. Be present to the possibility of joy today. Simple. But a powerful practice.

The third Sunday of Advent arrives like a hearty, “Let’s go!” offered by a generous companion. Three weeks into a season of watching and waiting in hope for the coming Light, Love, and Truth that is the incarnation of God in Jesus, we are weary. If we are living in northern climes, the days are growing shorter and chillier, and our calendars are overcrowded with responsibilities as the holidays draw near. On this third Sunday of Advent, the church invites us to rejoice—*gaudete* in Latin—and refreshes

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

our hearts and eyes by adorning itself in the color rose. Refreshed for the journey still ahead to Christmas, we can rejoice now because we know that God is faithful to God’s promises. Jesus is coming soon.

Mary, the mother of our Savior, is the voice of Gaudete Sunday, the one standing in the doorway saying, “Let’s go!” Her spirit is rejoicing, because she knows in her very body that God is fulfilling all those promises announced by Isaiah so long ago. God is showing mercy, casting down the mighty, and lifting up the lowly. And God is doing that within her and for her and within us and for us, now and always.

So sing along with Dolly Parton today, or sing the Magnificat, or just let out a big “Hurrah!” For God is good and present and doing more than we can imagine.

Lined writing area consisting of 20 horizontal lines.

Worship

Advent Day 15

Imagine the faces you'd like to see at church – an all-star list of folks you want to worship with. This could be people you know from summer camp when you were a kid, people who might have already died, people you work with – all your favorites. Commit to pray for those folks this week. And make a commitment to ask one of your all-stars to come to church with you in the next month.

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The Way of Love

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