



## Wednesday Prayer

Third Sunday of Advent – Gentleness, evident to all

**Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**

**Philippians 4:4-7**

Paul writes to the little band of Jesus believers in Philippi facing fierce persecution for their belief in the one who transformed death into life. Meanwhile, Paul is in prison for calling people to live as Jesus lived; gathering all people to his table, doling out God's grace to the least and lost, and bringing justice and healing to all who have been pushed to the edges of society. This did not make any of them popular among the culture's elite. But it was incredibly good news to those who were hurt, broken, and had lost hope.

To this rag-tag, struggling group Paul says – not once, but twice – Rejoice! In the middle of their suffering and pain, Paul says Rejoice! In the middle of persecution and fear, Paul says Rejoice! And then he calls for their gentleness to be evident to all.

The world feels very weary these days. And even as we light candles and sing carols, the weariness of these days can make it feel impossible to even think about rejoicing. But Paul knows something we forget. When we don't have the capacity to rejoice for ourselves, we can carry joy for others. And in that we find the peace of God.

What if our waiting for Christ in this season of Advent looked like that? Carrying joy into places where people don't know if they'll ever rejoice again. With kids at risk of being exploited and with those who have lived through the hell of being trafficked. With the lost, marginalized and voiceless. With the lonely, anxious and addicted.

The peace of God has washed over me in the middle of hardship and loss a time or two and it indeed was a guard for my heart. When have you known that kind of peace and found your way to rejoicing in the middle of hardship and sorrow? Who was with you in those moments? Where are you called to be bearers of that peace and gentleness and how might that shape our Advent waiting?

**Holy God, we give thanks for your transforming presence in our lives and in our world. As we live these days of Advent waiting, give us courage to be bearers of your gentleness and joy for those whose joy has been snuffed out or dulled. Shine the light of your grace into the dark corners of our world and bring forth your peace. Amen.**

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Written by Pastor Liz Eide, Lutheran Church of Peace, Maplewood, MN and member of the Cherish All Children Advisory Board.