

Wednesday, December 14th, Day 18 – Debbie Christian

Welcome – Hello, and welcome to Vespers for the Advent season. My name is Debbie Christian, and today is the 18th day of Advent, Wednesday, December 14th.

Centering – As we begin our time of reflection and devotion, let's take a moment to center ourselves.

Make sure other distractions are quieted for the next few minutes.

If possible, bring your body to complete rest.

As you become aware of the stillness around you, focus on your breathing as we inhale and exhale slowly together.

Breathe in, exhale.

Breathe in, exhale.

Breathe in, exhale.

Responsive Prayer – As we continue in prayer together, speak the words of this responsive prayer.

LEADER – God of love

RESPONSE – May this season remind us of your steadfastness

LEADER – Christ of hope

RESPONSE – May this season remind us of your promises

LEADER – Spirit of peace

RESPONSE – May this season remind us of your comfort

LEADER – As it was from the beginning,

RESPONSE – So now, may the joy of this season burn in our hearts

TOGETHER – Amen

Lectio Divina – For the next few moments, let's dwell in God's Word.

Our reading today comes from Paul's letter to the Philippians, Chapter 2.

I will read the passage through 3 times - each time with a different way for you to experience the scripture.

1st Reading

Hear the Word of God

Read Passage

After 1st Reading Prompt

As we read through the 2nd time, take notice of what word or phrase stands out to you and hold onto it. If you would like to write your reflections down or tell someone else your findings, feel free to pause the video after this 2nd reading.

Read Passage

After 2nd Reading Prompt

If a word or phrase caught your attention, what, if anything, do you sense God saying to you about the JOY that Advent brings? Listen for that invitation during this final reading. If you would like to write your reflections down or tell someone else your findings, feel free to pause the video after this 3rd reading.

Read Passage

After 3rd Reading Prompt

As we conclude this time of reading together, let me offer this question as a challenge to be aware of as you go about your Advent season:

Question – Have you ever experienced joy made complete?

How is the JOY of Advent best displayed in Paul's words about Jesus?

Reading – Philippians 2:1-11

2 If, then, there is any comfort in Christ, any consolation from love, any partnership in the Spirit, any tender affection and sympathy, 2 make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. 3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others. 5 Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

6 who, though he existed in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be grasped,
7 but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,

assuming human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a human,
8 he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

9 Therefore God exalted him even more highly
and gave him the name
that is above every other name,
10 so that at the name given to Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
11 and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Benediction – Thank you for spending time with us today. As you continue this week, may the JOY of the Advent resound in every part of your life. If you will, speak these words with me as we conclude:

ALL – Lord of hosts,
Who breathed the words of creation and
spoke the Word of the Incarnation
Ignite our imaginations
Fill us with awe and wonder
Prepare the way for the Messiah, within and without
For unto us, a Child is born
Unto us, Emmanuel is given
Bring us Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace
As we receive, once again, Your greatest gift to the world
Amen, and amen

_____ – Join us every day of Advent for a time of reflection and devotion.
May God go with you through this season of JOY.
Blessings, dearly beloved.

