

Advent Planner

Metairie Church

- Week Three: Joy

- We are in a season in the life of the church known as Advent, when we remember the coming of our savior, Jesus Christ, to earth, and we wait, with joy, for his coming again to earth to reign. We, at Metairie Church, are celebrating this season by, each week leading up to Christmas, reading part of the story of Christmas and asking everyone to participate in a responsive prayer around four common themes of advent: hope, peace, joy, and love. We would encourage you to invite your friends and families to come celebrate this season with us.
- We light this candle as a representation of God's joy. [*Light the Candle.*] So many things in this world offer us joy and happiness, only to leave and disappoint us in the end. God is the only spring of joy that won't run dry, and he will never leave us. We, each, and all of us together, are called to spread his joy. May our joy be undeniable, and our laughter abundant enough to share with those around us. Our reading this morning is from the book of Luke, chapter 2:

- [*Read Luke 2:1-21*]

- This is the word of the Lord, and we thank God for it. At this time, we would ask you to join us in a responsive prayer—It will be up on the screens. We will start, and then you say the parts that are in bold as a means of praying together with us. Pastor Augustine is going to lead you in this, so join in whenever he does.

God, my joy,

May my soul rejoice in you, in your grace and goodness,

You are like a spring in the desert,

like a parent to an infant,

like food to the hungry.

and even if I don't rejoice in you, if I fail,

I know that you cannot fail, and you will not leave me.

You are the only source of unfailing, unfading joy.

May my heart be happy in you and in nothing else,

May I expect real happiness from you and from nothing else,

You are the ground of my faith, and so you should be the substance of my joy.

Amen.¹

¹ Prayer adapted from "A Colloquy on Rejoicing" in *The Valley of Vision*.