

ADVENT DEVOTIONALS WEEK 3 (12/13-19/20)

This week's devotionals will come from the prescribed lectionary for the week, which includes the following scriptures:

- Psalm 126
- Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
- Luke 1:46-55
- John 1:6-8, 19-28
- 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

We will focus on specific verses within these scriptures each day, not the whole texts, so you may want to read the entirety of these passages sometime this week for the full effect.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2020 "DRESSED UP FOR CHRISTMAS"

By Kim Sheard

I am overwhelmed with joy in the Lord my God!

*For he has dressed me with the clothing of salvation
and draped me in a robe of righteousness.*

*I am like a bridegroom dressed for his wedding
or a bride with her jewels.*

The Sovereign Lord will show his justice to the nations of the world.

Everyone will praise him!

*His righteousness will be like a garden in early spring,
with plants springing up everywhere. ~Isaiah 61:10-11 (NLT)*

This third week of Advent, we lit the pink candle, the candle of joy. This is in contrast to the more somber purple candles, which encourage repentance and remembrance of the suffering that occurred while the people of God were waiting for their Messiah. So we get to experience some joy this week in the midst of all of our preparations for the Christ Child!

In this scripture, Isaiah is **overwhelmed** with joy, dressed in God's salvation and righteousness, happily expectant like a bride and groom on their wedding day. The Messiah is coming with justice, righteousness, and bounty, deserving praise!

This year, we have been somberly wearing our pandemic clothes. Admit it, your wardrobe has consisted of pajamas and sweatpants more lately than ever before. You may have even worn the same comfy clothes two or three days in a row. Or more. Who would know?

We have been forced to be creative in 2020 due to COVID-19, and we have learned new ways to commune and to spend our time. Some of our favorite Christmas traditions will likely be withheld from us this year. But that gives us the time and the opportunity to explore new ways of finding and sharing joy this year. We can shed that pandemic wear and get dressed up in creative and joyful new clothes. And I bet we'll each adopt some new traditions we wouldn't have found otherwise. Feel free to share your 2020 Christmas story in the comments. We're all open to new ideas!

Thought for Today: What are you wearing this Christmas? How are you finding joy?

Prayer: Our Messiah: You brought joy to us with your birth. Help us to find joy in new ways in 2020. Amen.