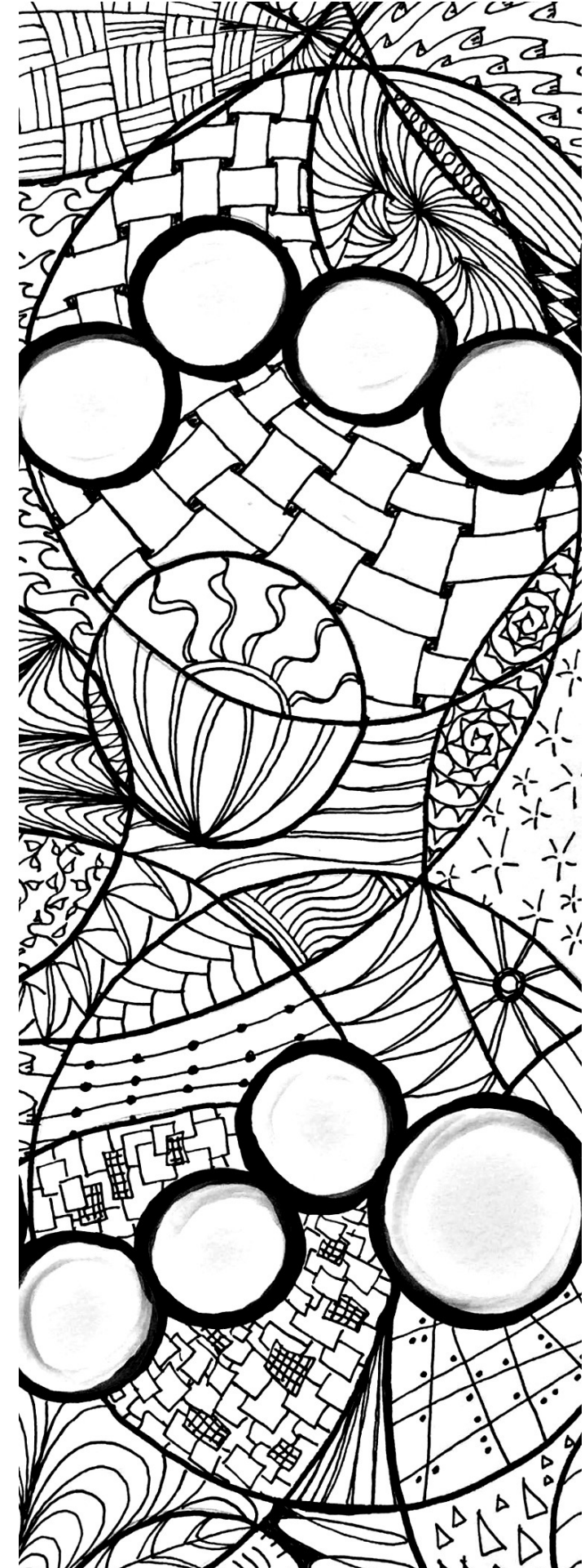




Advent Meditation: Week 3

Bring Us Focus, God of Joy

Fill us with Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love

"May the God of Hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

Romans 15:13

Invocation

God of joy, come into our focus today so we can feel how close you are to us. When we realize how near you are, we feel great hope and peace and joy. Rejoice with us this day as we prepare for the day of incarnation.

Confession

Lord, you know us. You know we often confuse the joy we find in a feast with family and friends, a cheerfully trimmed tree, or even in the carols sung at church with the joy the angels sing about. Help us to focus on the things that bring *you* joy – justice for the oppressed, courage for the fearful, welcome for the excluded, comfort for the grieving, companionship for the lonely. Teach us that what gives you joy is seeing us rejoice in the well-being of others. May we bring you joyful moments. Amen.

Isaiah 35:1-10

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you." Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Prayer

Leader: Lord, we rejoice that we are aware of you. We rejoice that you have chosen to be one with us and walk with us. We rejoice that you have a plan for us.

People: *We come to you singing in everlasting joy.*

Leader: Lord, we rejoice that we can be your hands and ears and feet. We rejoice that we can comfort and share meals and show love and respect to everyone who needs it.

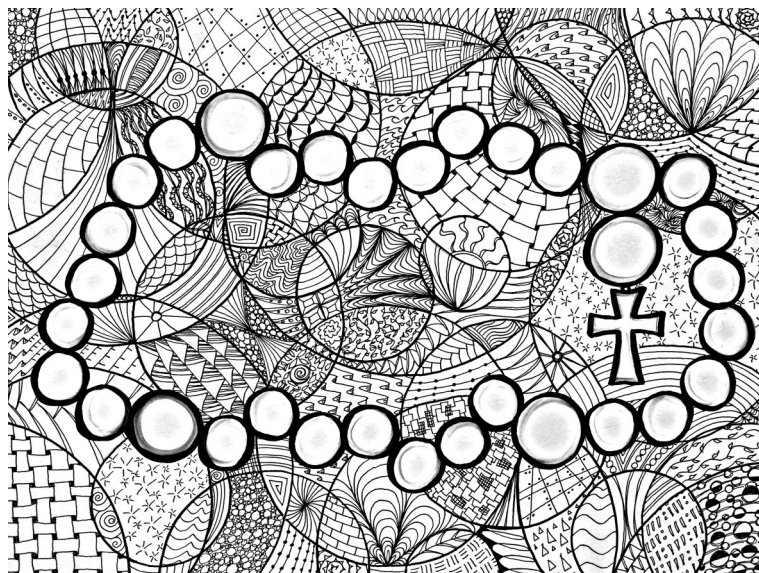
People: *We come to you singing in everlasting joy.*

Leader: Lord, we rejoice that this good earth can bring us such joy. There is beauty everywhere we look, if we bring our focus to it.

People: *We come to you singing in everlasting joy.*

Leader: And Lord, we rejoice that you have promised to be with us always. We rejoice that you are with us in good times and bad and that you really care about what brings us joy. Help us to pause and focus on what it would look like, and feel like, and sound like to bring you joy.

People: *We come to you singing in everlasting joy. Amen.*



*Toward hope beyond measure
We travel a circle of beads
Infinity without beginning or end*

A time to be still

You are invited into a time of inner stillness. Breathe deeply.

The beauty of prayer beads is that they can help us focus on our conversation with God.

When you are ready, write "joy" in the larger bead. Write something you believe will give God joy or that brings you joy in the 7 smaller beads. God loves to hear about our joy. Then feel free to sit with those prayers or to color the background as you hold those prayers in your heart.

*(If you have a string of prayer beads, hold the cross and pray "**Come oh come Emmanuel.**" Hold the invitation bead and pray "**We come to you singing in everlasting joy.**" Hold the first cruciform bead and pray, "**God of joy, hear my prayers.**" Continue to the right. On each of the smaller beads pray one word for someone or something that brings you joy. God loves to hear about our joy. When you come to the next cruciform bead repeat "**God of joy, hear my prayers.**" Continue telling God your joy. When you get back to the invitation bead, pray "**We come to you singing in everlasting joy**" and finish with the cross "**Come oh come Emmanuel, Amen.**")*

A blessing

May God bless us with mornings when we find joy in aligning our ideas with God's ideas.

May God bless us with noon times when we find joy in aligning our work with God's work.

May God bless us with evenings when we find joy in reflecting and giving thanks to God.

Advent 2016 Week 3

*A gift from WayToLead.org and
GrnewaldGuild.com*