

REMEMBERING CHRIST'S FIRST COMING, WHILE LONGING FOR HIS SECOND

# Advent



*THE PEOPLE WHO WALKED IN DARKNESS HAVE SEEN A GREAT LIGHT; THOSE WHO DWELT IN A LAND OF DEEP DARKNESS, ON THEM HAS LIGHT SHONE. - ISAIAH 9:2*





## JOY TO THE WORLD

**THE JOY CANDLE** | The third candle of advent is the Candle of Joy, and it reflects the joy that comes through the arrival of Jesus and through the salvation He brings. The candle you light tonight also has a change in color. History has offered differing reasons for this candle being pink. Some traditions include the use of pink in display around public worship spaces, and worn by clergy, to represent brightness and delight. In the midst of waiting and longing for advent, the pink says to also rejoice and celebrate! Interestingly, this candle historically is also known as the “Shepherd Candle.” The shepherds were the recipients of this message: *“Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people...”*

### READ & RESPOND | Psalm 98

- Does any part of Psalm 98 sound like a Christmas Carol to you?
- Isaac Watts wrote *Joy to the World* in 1719, based on this Psalm. If you notice, there are no shepherds, no wise men, no angels, and no manger. This is because Watts actually wrote the song, not to commemorate Christmas, but in longing for Jesus’ second Advent. When He comes again, even the rocks will cry out in joy! In 1839, the lyrics of Watts’ song were married with the melody we now sing.
- What does it mean to “Sing to the Lord a new song” and why does the Psalmist encourage this?
- Reflecting on vv3, 6, and 9, what three titles does Jesus rightly hold? How have you experienced Jesus in those three ways and what motivation does that give you to rejoice?

It is important to not forget that in the midst of the chaos of the year and the solemnity of Advent, there is joy! We rejoice that we stand as those between the first and second advent, recognizing that Christ has come incarnate into this world (*imagine, or even discuss what it would be like now if He never had come*), and celebrating with eagerness that He will come again.

- **Sing or recite** lyrics to the song, Joy to the World with a consciousness towards Jesus’ second coming. Viewing the lyrics in light of His final reign often brings my heart to overflow with joyful expectation.

**PRAY** | Instead of offering you words of prayer, allow me to encourage you to lead a prayer time that focuses on joy in the midst of waiting. Share praises and celebrations that allow the church to rejoice in the Lord.