

A Word on Wednesday from Pastor Tonia

"Joy and Love Abound" 12/13/23

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined.

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:2, 6)

Strengthened in the dark with hope, at peace with the season, we find joy and share the love of God with others. During this season we are blessed by the light which was born unto us in God's Son. Jesus the Christ. This Sunday we light the candles of Joy and Love.

Christmas is almost upon us. We both can't wait and try to hold it off. In fact, the season is often filled with anxiety as people rush hither and yon to shop for the perfect gift, they rush around the house preparing for guests, do we have enough napkins, is that dust under the couch, what if I run out of eggnog. Hoping all the preparations are complete and everyone has a good time, is that turkey big enough. AHHHH. Not peaceful in the least.

Is this really the reason for the season? Where's the joy and love?

Hear this again, "For unto us a child IS born," born not in a palace but in a stable, just outside of town. It was beautiful, for sure, but a little messy, somewhat scary, especially for a young girl alone, in a stable, is this even sterile? But there was joy and love. A beautiful baby, a bright star which seemed to light up the world for her son. Finding joy and love in the unexpected, in spite of the unknown, even when one is not sure what is really happening.

During advent this is what we prepare for, God coming to us as a human, coming to us in the Messiah. Isaiah tells us God shall be born as a child. He is to be the Word made flesh, come for all of us sinners. He is to be born of a virgin, the one spoken of by the prophets, awaited by Simeon and Anna; Immanuel, God with us.

This surely is a cause for great joy, a light shines in our darkness, come in love to abolish the bondage of the sin which separates us from God.

The Word which was in the beginning with God, He who created all things. He who loved us before the foundation of the world. This is the joy and love given to us. Now we pause to reflect upon them during this Advent Season. This is the basis of the joy we feel as we sing Christmas carols, as we decorate our trees, as we welcome others to come and break bread with us. This is the love which warms our hearts as we give and receive gifts. This love which we have been sent to share with others.

Please pray with me:

Thank you, Lord, for this time of waiting. Remove our anxiety and our impatience and help us to hold on to the hope we have in Your coming. We thank You for Your presence and for the peace it gives to us. Continue to fill us with Your joy as we wait. You bless us with Your love and it keeps us secure as we await Your arrival. May we focus on Your Son through this Advent Season.

Amen.