



Raquette Lake Chapel Sunday Blast

December 20, 2020 -- 4 Advent

“Joy to the World”

In a few words...: Joy is not a word we hear or use very much, and yet it is crowning theme of Advent and the Christmas season. If we look up synonyms for joy, we find words like “happiness, elation, thrill, pleasure...” Those fall far short of how to express the feeling we have at Christmas. I suggest **Joy** is a special word, one most appropriate for expressing our connection with the Divine, with God.

(Nativity Stories: Matt 1:1-2:19, Luke 1:5-2:40)

“Good news that will cause great joy...”

It’s amazing that so much can be said in those few words. The short passage of the angel visiting the shepherds (Luke 2:8-11) is truly a mini-Gospel, that is, a concise summary of Christianity, our faith.

Undoubtedly, after the shepherds heard these words, they were bewildered, but they went to see for themselves and visit the child lying in a humble manger. We, too, may be bewildered at the Nativity. Yet we must see for ourselves. But where do we look 2000 years later, where is that star for us to follow?

I suggest we have already experienced that emotion which is so hard to name – **Joy** – in many places already. Helping a stranger. Listening to a child talk about their day, their hopes, their fears. Walking alone in nature. That feeling that is so hard to describe – yet we know instinctively that “it is good” – is our connection to the Divine. Our **Joy**. We will continue to find it if we will just look.

That is the purpose of our preparation during Advent, to let go of the day-to-day, and to accept the invitation to look and see for ourselves and experience that Divine **Joy**.

As we gather in these unique days of social distancing and quarantine, we also may happily sing as Mary did: “Our hearts honor and praise the Lord, and our spirits rejoice at the remembrance of God’s mercy and promises to our ancestors and to us!” May it be so this Christmas season. Amen.

Special prayers this week: Blessings to all who welcome the invitation to experience Divine Joy of Christmas! Hear our prayers O Lord!

A recorded Christmas Eve Service will be available the evening of December 24 at www.raquettelakechapel.org