



BANORA POINTER

Sunday 12 December 2021 | Advent 3



Message from Rev. Aaron Moad

The season of Advent is a period of "Joyful expectation." The third Sunday of Advent is known as Gaudete Sunday or "Joyful

Sunday" because our waiting for the Saviour is almost at an end. In a couple of weeks, we will wish each other a "Merry Christmas" as we share meals, exchange gifts and treasure loved ones. But, for many, the joy of Advent and Christmas is hard to come by. Yes, Christmas can be a time of great joy for some, but it can be a time of sadness for others for a variety of reasons. It is not the same for everyone.

So where then can joy be found?

When we look into the Bible, we discover some important points about the experience of joy.

The first is that joy is a result of knowing God is near. We have a wonderful God who likes to be involved in our lives if we let him. At Christmas we celebrate "the Word made flesh who lives among us". God has visited his people and promised us that we are never alone. He is with us and, he offers the people he loves the fullness of joy for which we were made. When we accept the friendship of God, we experience joy.

Part of the reason why many of us struggle to find joy at Christmas is because we confuse joy with, happiness or feeling good. In the world of advertising which peaks at times like Christmas, we are encouraged to feel good all the time and to get whatever it takes to make our lives happier. But the truth is that no amount of material things, stimulants, or comforts can compensate for a lack of joy that many experience in the depths of their soul. The source of our joy is not in what we have. It lies in "Emmanuel," another name we give Jesus, which means "God is with us".

A second feature of joy in the Bible is that joy comes about through God's saving work. God's presence among his people is not passive. When his people

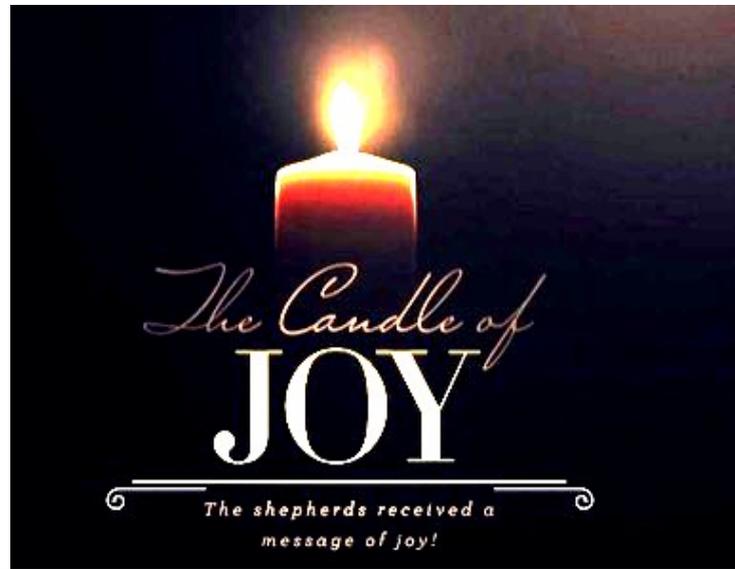
experience his salvation, joy flows in abundance. We see this in Mary whose spirit "rejoices in God my Saviour...for the Almighty has done great things for me" (Lk. 1: 47, 49). We see it in the three great parables of mercy in Luke 15 where the stories of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son all end in a rejoicing that flows from restoration, healing, and forgiveness. What this teaches us is that joy is produced from God's action in our lives. God's spirit is always leading us into a deeper relationship with each other and with him and each other.

A third feature is that the experience of joy from God's salvation leads to worship, which leads to more joy. Here I can't help but think of the lack of joy caused by so many staying away from our communities who gather for prayer and worship. When people say I'm a Christian, but I don't need to go to worship, those people miss the joy found in community. Christian joy cannot be confined to our private life.

I think the most important feature of joy in the Bible is that we learn that God himself is joyful. The source of our joy is in God who is joyful: "Do not mourn or weep for the joy of the Lord is your strength" (Neh. 8:9-10). The prophet Zephaniah says that "God will rejoice over you with happy song. He will dance with shouts of joy for you" (Zeph. 3:17).

These insights raise the questions: how often do we contemplate God's nature as joyful? Are we more likely to image him as loving, but stern and serious rather than overflowing with abundant joy?

I think what we can take out of the third week of Advent is that Christianity is a religion of joy. At its best it truly is "glad tidings" for humanity. As Christmas approaches, we may well experience feelings of melancholy or sadness for many legitimate reasons. But let us also have the courage to rejoice in the Lord—in his presence, in his gift of salvation, in our praise of him, in his ways, in our hope of heaven, and even in his cross. God is the source of our joy, because our God is the God of joy.



Banora Point Uniting Church

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Acknowledgement To Country

The Banora Point Uniting Church acknowledge the indigenous traditional owners and custodians of this land, the Goori people and their Elders, past, present and future.

Our Mission: To love God and love our neighbours

A Message From Elizabeth

"Give me joy in my heart, keep me singing"
(Author unknown)

As we journey into the third week of Advent, do you have joy in your heart? Are you praising God for His indescribable gift? Can I encourage you to sing as you prepare for Christmas this year?

One frustration caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has been the restriction imposed from time to time on singing in church. A service without song is just not the same, not just because singing brings joy, but to let the world know that we really have something to sing about. In our song, we can celebrate what God has done for us personally and also, more generally, the gifts of creation and of sending Jesus for our salvation. It has been said that "those who sing will pray twice, once in words and once in music". (WLW, pg.25: Rev Dr John Miller, Advent & Christmas 2021)

May joy fill your heart and home this Christmas season.

God Bless you

Elizabeth Wells,

BPUC Church Council Chairperson

What's Happening This Week

Monday	Church Council Meeting 7pm
Wednesday	Prayer Meeting 8am Worship Singers 2pm
Thursday	Men's Bible Study group 9am CWC1 Bible Study 10am Evening Bible Study group 6:30pm
Saturday	Men's Breakfast 8am
Next Sunday	Worship Service 9am

Special Times For December 2021

Christmas Carol Service	Friday 24 December @ 7pm
Christmas Day Service	Saturday 25 December @ 9am
Boxing Day Service	Sunday 26 December @ 9am Ray Pascoe Park (next To Kennedy Drive Boat Ramp)

Activities Returning in 2022

Chaira Companions	Sunday 16 January @ TBC
Mainly Music	Early February @ 9am
Craft Group	TBA

Offerings

Please continue to direct debit/credit directly into your nearest Commonwealth Bank Branch or Please contact Neil Rackham if you need any assistance.

Bank details are:

Account Name: The Uniting Church in Australia Banora Point Church (Note: Your Bank website may limit the number of characters you can put into the account name box so "The Uniting Church in Aust" is OK)

BSB No: 062 611 **Account No:** 10120762

Do You Have Old Unused Glasses?

The Lions clubs collect them for use in third world countries, providing clear sight for many. Millions of eyeglasses have been reinvented through this channel. They can be given / left for John Morris any time.

Rosters - Help Needed in 2022

With a new year approaching, please let Janice know if you can help with; Greeting and Signing In, you don't have to use laptop; Cleaning or any other rostered duties.

We really need more people to 'share the load'. The more we have helping, the less we each have to do. Thank you for helping.

Please contact Janice either via phone or email

Many hands make light work – So thank in advance for your help.

Church Roster

	<u>TODAY</u>	<u>NEXT SUNDAY</u>
Organist	Audrey	Jill
Greeter	Judy & Peter	Virginia & Lynn
Bible Reader	Judy & Jill	Georgina & Audrey
Morning Tea	Janice & Patricia	Sylvia & Joan B
Hall Set Up	Peter	Neil
Cleaning	Messy Church	Audrey & Helen P

If you are unable to do your roster, please organise a swap AND let Janice know ASAP.



Men's Breakfast

Day: Saturday 18 December 2021

Time & Venue:

Meeting for breakfast at 8am at the TWISTED FIG Café (Near Bunnings Tweed Heads South), then onto the church for carpet bowls.

All men are welcome.