

Fourth Sunday of Advent - 18 December 2011
The Candle of Joy
Mary the Mother of Jesus

Leader: Light and peace, in Jesus Christ our Lord
All: Thanks be to God

Leader: Last Sunday we lit the Candle of Love. We light it and the Candles of Hope and Peace again as we remember that Jesus, born in Bethlehem, will come again to fulfil all of God's promises and bring us everlasting peace and joy.

A person lights the Candles of Hope, Peace and Love.

Today we light the Fourth Candle of Advent, the Candle of Joy. When the angel Gabriel told Mary that a special child would be born to her she was filled with joy. She sang a song that began with the words: "My soul magnifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour. Just as the birth of Jesus gave great joy to his mother, so his presence in the world gave joy to those who had none before. He healed them and gave them hope and peace when they believed in him.

From hope, peace, and love grows joy.

We light the Candle of Joy to remind us that when Jesus is born in us we have joy and that through him there will be everlasting joy on earth.

A person lights the Fourth Candle, the Candle of Joy

Leader: Joy is like a light shining in a dark place. As we look at this candle we celebrate the joy we find in Jesus Christ.

Let us pray:

All: Thank you God for the joy you give us. We ask that as we wait for all your promises to come true, and for Christ to come again, that you would remain present with us. Help us today, and everyday to worship you, to hear your word, and to do your will by sharing your joy with each other. We ask it in the name of the one who was born in Bethlehem. **Amen.**