

From Archdeacon Glen Miller's Desk

11 December 2020

Hello,

In many of our Churches the four candles of the Advent wreath have been used to focus on some aspects of the Christian Faith. Contrary to some opinions there is no one pattern even though for many congregations the: Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love pattern has entered into the realm of tradition. In this Parish we have been using this traditional pattern and so this Sunday will have a focus on Joy as part of our gathering. I have been thinking about that theme as I prepare my weekly messages, Facebook posts, and short reflection for shut-ins and through it all has been the words of a song recommended in our Sunday School Curriculum. The words that stick in my mind are: 'This joy that I have, the world didn't give it to me. The world didn't give it, the world can't take it away'. During this pandemic it can often seem that we have lost our joy and some fear it will never come back. But if that little song is correct and the world didn't give us joy what did? In the 15th Chapter of John's Gospel Jesus describes his relationship with his Father in heaven and with his disciples using the example of a grape vine. "I am the vine, you are the branches", Jesus said. He also described his Father as the vine-dresser. Within that bit of teaching are the words "my joy will be in you and your joy will be complete". From other references we can see that our joy comes from God and it is God's desire for us to experience that joy. I have found it very interesting this week to explore the concept through the scriptures and I commend that activity to all of you. If you feel you have lost your joy it will be very worthwhile to find out ways of recovering that joy - scripture has many suggestions. The world around us is not the source of joy - God is. If we abide in Jesus joy comes as part of the package and 'the world didn't give it (so) the world can't take it away'. As we approach the celebration of the birth of our Saviour may we be blessed with joy in our hearts. Glen +

A prayer

"O most merciful Father, we humbly thank thee for all the gifts so freely bestowed upon us. For life and health and safety, for power to work and leisure to rest, for all that is beautiful in creation and in the lives of your people, we praise and magnify thy holy Name. But, above all, we thank thee for our spiritual mercies in Christ Jesus our Lord, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. Fill our hearts with all joy and peace in believing; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." (BCP p. 736)