

Children and family talk for 13th December 2020.

Good morning, and welcome to the children and family worship from Christ Church URC, Rayleigh. Lets' begin by reading the words from Psalm 121:

I look to the mountains – does my help come from there? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth! He will not let you stumble; the one who watches over you will not slumber. Indeed, he who watches over Israel never slumbers or sleeps. The Lord himself watches over you! The Lord stands beside you as your protective shade. The sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord keeps you from all harm and watches over your life. The Lord keeps watch over you as you come and go, both now and forever.

Today is the third Sunday in Advent so we are going to light three candles. Advent is the season of waiting. The candles today are hope, peace and the third one is joy! We particularly think of the joy at Jesus' birth. The Joy that Mary had when she sang her song of praise when she realised how she had been blessed to be chosen to carry God's baby. We light the candle of Joy.

Our Bible reading today is from Luke 1 verses 46b to 55.

“Oh, how my soul praises the Lord. How my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour! For he took notice of his lowly servant girl, and from now on all generations will call me blessed. For the mighty one is holy, and he has done great things for me. He shows mercy from generation to generation to all who fear him. His mighty arm has done tremendous things! He has scattered the proud and haughty ones. He has brought down princes from their thrones and exalted the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away with empty hands. He has helped his servant Israel and remembered to be merciful. For he made this promise to our ancestors, to Abraham and his children forever.”

Let's praise God now as we sing: Like a candle flame

Like a candle flame, flickering small in our darkness.

Uncreated light shines through infant eyes.

Chorus: (Men) God is with us, alleluia.

(Women) God is with is alleluia.

(Men) Come to save us alleluia.

(Women) Come to save us,

(All) Alleluia!

Stars and angels sing, yet the earth sleeps in shadows;
Can this tiny spark set a world on fire?
Yet His light shall shine from our lives, Spirit blazing,
As we touch the flame of His holy fire.

Let's talk about the bible reading:

In our reading today, Mary was pregnant with baby Jesus, and had found out just a few days earlier when the angel Gabriel had visited her. She had rushed over to her cousin Elizabeth who was pregnant with John (the Baptist). Elizabeth lived in the hill country with her husband Zechariah. Elizabeth felt her baby leap inside her when she heard Mary calling through the door, and she was filled with the Holy Spirit! Elizabeth was very pleased Mary had visited her and told her she was blessed because she believed what the angel had told her. And then Mary is filled with song and praises God with the words from our reading today. Have you ever been so filled with joy that you wanted to sing or even dance and jump for joy? Mary is so happy she can't stop saying everything that is in her heart.

Actually, Mary was in a difficult position as she wasn't yet married. But she puts all her faith in God, knowing that he will look after her and the baby inside her, which is God's own Son. How wonderful to have such faith in God and be filled with such joy! And there was more joy to come – from the angels and shepherds, the wise men and those who got to know Jesus later, his special friends. There would be sadness too later, but in the end, Joy wins as Jesus comes back to life, to save us. And this joy is for all of us to grab hold of, in the knowledge that God protects and looks after his people – just as Mary knew this, so we can know this too – this is the true joy that Christmas brings. Thankyou God for giving us your Son to save us.

Lord God, only you can give us the joy in our hearts that makes us want to leap and dance and sing, knowing you are there for us, protecting and keeping us safe from harm, so we need never be afraid. Thankyou Lord, Amen.

Let's all do the Grace together, follow me for the actions

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (Hold out hands as if expecting a present)

And the love of God (Put your hands on your heart)

And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (Hold hands)

Be with us all now and for ever. Amen! (raise hands together on the Amen)

The children's sheet from Roots:

<https://www.rootsontheweb.com/media/21503/13-dec-2020-childrens-sheet.pdf>