

Shouts of Joy and Weeping Together.  
Advent 2023

Advent, which begins our Christian year together, is a time of preparation and remembering the ways that Jesus came among us as a tiny, vulnerable child.

This is such a magical season. Our neighbor's homes are lit and inflatable Santas adorn lawns. Trees are placed in living rooms, adorned with all sorts of nostalgic ornaments and blinking lights. Under the tree are gifts, wrapped lovingly. Stockings are hung on the mantle, and there are cookies baking in the oven.

That's the way we're told it should be. And isn't it wonderful when this season of preparation feels magical?

But, some years it's not. Some years, instead of joy, we weep; instead of Christmas carols, there's silence; instead of lights on trees and adorning houses, there's darkness.

As a community, we can hold all of those things together—joy and weeping, singing and silence, light and darkness.

In Ezra 3, one of our Advent texts for the season, we hear the story of people returning to their homeland after captivity and re-building the temple. Some were weeping, and some were shouting for joy. And those competing sounds, mingled together, were indistinguishable.

This is how it is for us as we prepare. Sometimes advent is joyful, and sometimes it's a painful reminder that our hope is dim, while other years it's a confirmation of the joy we have and that will come. All these things are held together as we watch and wait, and as we prepare for this season.

Friday, December 1, 6:30pm Greening of the Church  
Sunday, December 17, 6:30pm Christmas Program  
Thursday, December 21, 7pm Longest Night Service on zoom  
Sunday, December 31, 9:30am Christmas Hymn Sing during Worship