



Pastoral Update—December 4, 2020



“Shout for joy to God, all the earth! Sing the glory of God’s name; make God’s praise glorious.” Psalm 66:1

Joy is a gift at the heart of Advent, the 3rd candle of the Advent wreath, and our Desert Cross December Playlists theme. Joy surrounds us even in difficult times. Joy is steadfast and drives us forward even when we don’t feel happy. Advent 2020 is a good time to stir up some joy in our hearts by connecting with things we enjoy.

My daughter, Nicole, recently reconnected with her artist roots. She started drawing in preschool and had a sketch pad with her from primary school through college drawing to her heart’s content. But once “adulting” began along with motherhood and work, the joy she found in drawing was lost in more practical, pressing matters.

2020 has given Nicole a new opportunity, and she decided to start doing things that bring her joy again! She recently shared this drawing of “Shadowfax” completed after a long break from being creative. Doing something that brings her joy has really made a positive difference in the many challenges of the pandemic. And it has also brought joy to our family!

Most of us are challenged by stress, worry, anxiety, depression, and sadness due to all of the losses, cancellations, and changes in routine, social distancing, and concern for those who are sick. It is important to acknowledge our feelings of sadness and grief. We have a lot to grieve with all the closed doors. But closed doors mean an opportunity to open new doors. I believe we grieve, but not as those without joy. Even if we can’t feel it, joy is there waiting to be discovered.

What brings you joy? Advent 2020 is a good time to reconnect with something that has brought you joy – it could be music, art, reading, hiking, baking, knitting, sports, woodworking – there are countless possibilities. Maybe it’s a good time to try something you’ve always wanted to do! Take some time to discover joy as a thread weaving through the difficult times.

To spark some joy: check out our Joy Playlists: [Adult](#), [Youth](#), & [Children’s](#); subscribe to our [Stories of Joy](#) blog; sign up for the global daily devotional [#AdventWord](#); worship with us through Advent on Wednesdays at 7pm on YouTube, try a meditation or daily bible verse app ... the sky’s the limit!

This Advent, I hope you can reconnect with your gifts or try something new, and make time to stir up some joy in your heart!

With joy,
Pastor Andrea