Joy in Action:

This week, create a moment of shared joy—sing along to something, share a joke, or simply laugh with someone else. Joy has this wonderful property: it grows when given away.

Learning Joy Each Day

Sunday: Consider	Monday: Ask Yourself	Tuesday: Notice Something
What brought an unexpected smile last week?	Share one moment of lightness with someone else.	Notice Joyful music around you—even in everyday sounds.

Wednesday: Practice	Thursday: A Thought for the Day	Friday: Remember This...
Do something that makes your body feel alive.	"Wisdom grows when we delight in moments of Joy."	Winter ends. Flowers do bloom in Deserts. Music brings joy to the heart. It's just the way of things.

Saturday: Rest
Rest in whatever small joys appeared this week.

A Tiny Journal For The Week:

Find more Advent resources at www.HopeForNiagara.org

One Week at a Time: A Coloring & Reflection Guide For Advent

Community Missions of Niagara Frontier, Inc.

Advent Week 3

(Dec 14 – Dec 20)

This weekly Advent resource from Community Missions is a companion for your journey toward Christmas. Each week includes a short Bible passage, a reflection, simple daily practices, and a coloring page—all free to use and share. Visit HopeForNiagara.org to download the 11x17 single-page or 8.5x11 three-page version, plus other helpful Advent resources. ***Share your finished coloring page at Facebook.com/cminiagara !***

Advent Week 3: Joy

Text for the Week: Isaiah 35:1-10 & Luke 1:46-55 – Joy in Unexpected Places

Isaiah: The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy... Then will the eyes of the blind be opened ... The mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert. The burning sand will become a pool... In the haunts where jackals once lay, grass and reeds and papyrus will grow. ...Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Luke: And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. ... the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name.... He has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. ... just as he promised our ancestors."

A Summary of the Text:
Isaiah makes this remarkable promise: silent tongues are going to sing and the desert—the actual desert!—will bloom with unexpected life. Then there's Mary, young and pregnant in what was, let's face it, a pretty dangerous situation. And what does she do? She sings about God lifting up the lowly and filling the hungry with good things. Here's what's striking: neither Isaiah nor Mary deny the desert or the danger. They don't pretend everything's fine. Instead, they find joy breaking through anyway. Joy isn't about having perfect circumstances. It's about recognizing life insists on happening, yet Joy still comes despite everything.

Reflection:
Joy often arrives when least expected and with other people—in shared laughter, in humming a song, in reconnecting with someone after months of silence. Joy multiplies when it's shared. That's just how Joy works. Think about it: Mary sang while unmarried and pregnant—not exactly ideal circumstances in her day. Isaiah's people sang in exile. In exile! We don't need to wait until everything is *fixed* to experience joy. Sometimes—and this is important—feeling joy reminds us we are still capable of feeling something beyond our current sorrows, anxieties, and struggle. When we sing, talk, or just gather with others, that is when Joy most often appears—unexpectedly! It proves that harmony (in music and life in general) is possible even while everything feels broken. It's like Joy has a life of its own, and no matter the circumstances, Joy makes a point of showing up and say "Here I am... just for you!"

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