

## Joy

*The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom.  
Isaiah 35.1*

*My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. Luke 1. 46*

On this third Sunday of Advent we shift **from** the purple candles of hope and peace representing repentance **to** the pink Candle of \_\_\_\_\_ representing celebration. The mood is shifting as we prepare to celebrate our Savior's birth. Purple is also the sign of royalty to which we will return next week as we continue to prepare for the birth of the King of kings.

Our focus today is more particularly on the first part of Mary's song: **My soul** magnifies the Lord, and **my spirit** \_\_\_\_\_ in God my Savior.

Heart and spirit are two words used for the \_\_\_\_\_ of the human personality.

Congregations in the early church wanted other congregations to read letters that contained rather revealing criticisms.... That's really amazing, and speaks to the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Holy Spirit transforming the hearts of believers in the church, so much so, they willingly shared their lives, warts and all, with others.

This \_\_\_\_\_ power of the Holy Spirit appears to be radically lacking in the church today. In the flesh we tend to cover our foibles, sins and mistakes.

Almost all of life is a \_\_\_\_\_ to respond to the consequences of sin.

We can \_\_\_\_\_ the consequences of sin all around us: racism and gun violence in America, the war being waged by Russia against the Ukraine, and other like deeds on a grand scale.

On all \_\_\_\_\_ the human heart needs to be transformed, and the church needs to wake up to the need for this transformation. This is the greatest failure of the church today; we want to do the work of Christ while ignoring its most important work, the transformation of our hearts.

Our hearts are made up of our bodies, minds and souls each of which play an integral role in the \_\_\_\_\_ we make.

Mary was quick to discern the will of God because her heart was already in \_\_\_\_\_ with the will of God already revealed in scripture. Even though she was going to face a life threatening situation, when the crisis came she was able to respond with joy; *my heart rejoices in God my Savior!*

So what is this joy \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord?

The joy of the Lord is grounded in the \_\_\_\_\_ of our salvation, a God of steadfast love and faithfulness ultimately revealed on the Cross!

When dependent upon our material circumstance or physical well-being joy will be elusive. But when grounded and rooted in Christ, joy is \_\_\_\_\_. Come to the Table of the Lord and celebrate this great salvation through Jesus Christ, and **know** the joy of the Lord!