

## Joy in advent

You are the God of Joy who brought light out of the darkness,

the early morning sun that warms new days,

the full moon in the night sky, with the stars that twinkle.

You said it was good and took delight in all things, light and lovely. For this we are grateful.

You are the God of Joy who formed the earth,

lifting mountains up,

flattening the desert soil.

Filling the earth with spring boks, hopping rabbits and laughing doves.

You said it was all so good and took great delight in it. For this we are thankful.

You are the God of Joy who created each one of us,

uniquely and intricately.

You breathed life into human form and said it was very good.

For this we dance and sing of the wonder of human life sharing in all of creation.

You are the God of Joy who Was and Is and will be forever.

God Immanuel is with us, and nothing can separate us from Your glorious and Joyful love. For this we give you thanks.

Yet we stumble around, unable to fully appreciate this one small precious gift of life.

We turn our backs away from the gifts of light and Joy, and so often choose to stand in the dark.

Forgive us for our stubbornness, stuckness, selfishness, silliness to receive the many gifts that you offer generously.

Forgive us for looking for Joy in ways that do not give life,

for pretending that the ways of superficial jollity suffice

and standing outside of Your festivities is okay.

Forgive us for our childishness,

for thinking that I am more favoured than others.

for taking away from others,

for not sharing what we have with others,

Help us in our fear and set us free to know your Joy.

Calm us with Your love and that you take great delight in each of us.

Open our hearts to a childlike faith much like the father of the prodigal son who

Had long ago let go of his ego and knew what is of value

Watched and waited for a home coming

Opened his heart to all that was lost

Spontaneously started a celebration that welcomed all

And embraced hurt and distress with a fine robe

Such is the God of Joy

The surprise of Joy in the midst of loss and anguish.

The Joy of Your presence in times of disruption and chaos.

The Joy of every single small moment, flower and bird.

The God of Joy is with us as we wait for a new way of living and kin-dom.

Give us grace to hear your invitation to Joy

Give us grace to choose the ways of Joy

And may we know that each and every time we choose Joy, the heavens rejoice and dance on earth.

Amen