



## I Wonder As I Wander

*Five Pilgrimage Walks for Advent*

Learning@Redeemer invites all to share the journey of Advent in a series of weekly meditative walks. The themes of the walks will follow the themes of the four candles of the Advent wreath: hope, peace, joy, and love, respectively, and finally, the Christ candle.

A focus for meditation from a member of our community, based on the text of an Advent hymn, forms the basis of the pilgrimage. You are invited to follow the suggested route, on your own time, either in person if you can do that safely, or as reflection from your home.

This week's walk has been prepared by Karen Visser and Craig Spielmacher.

*Church of the Redeemer*

# *Advent Joy*

Our third Advent pilgrimage walk invites us to reflect on the joy that can be found in the simple things that mark our days.

Follow along as Karen and Craig spend time — appropriately distanced — walking through our neighbourhood, reflecting on the hymn *When the King Shall Come Again* (Common Worship #109).

Karen provides the narration for their walk. As you join them virtually, or walk the route yourself, where do you hear God's voice pointing you to see the joy that surrounds us. Even in the midst of a pandemic.

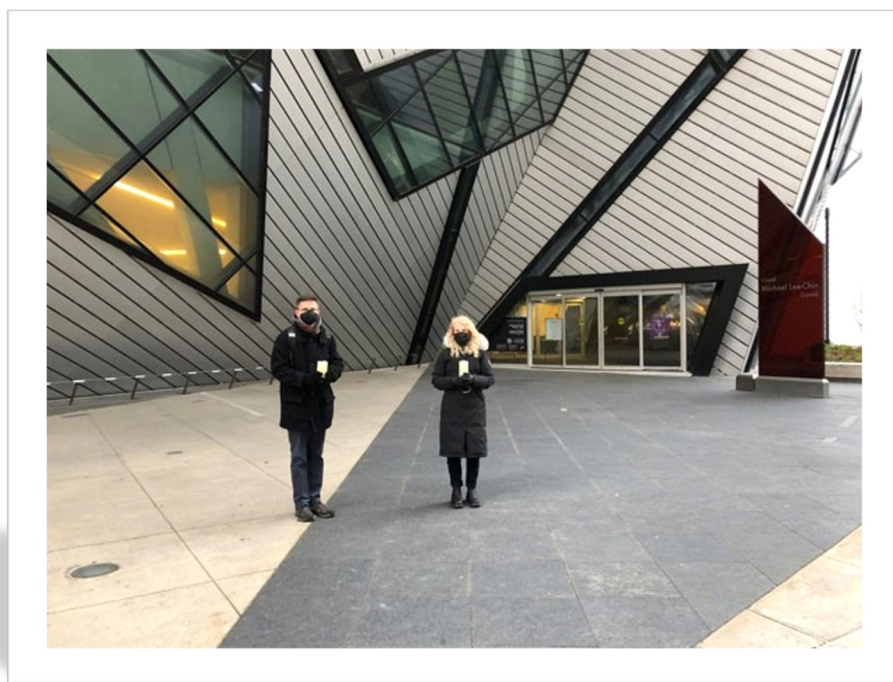
## *The Pilgrimage Walk Begins...*

*This is a year of very simple pleasures and finding joy in relationships.*

*Craig and I decided to do our Advent Joy walk together — it was the most emotionally nourishing thing I've done in a long time.*



*Carrying little LED Advent candles, we began on the steps of our family home, Redeemer, and walked West along Bloor Street, stopping at the ROM.*



*At the gates to Philosopher's Walk we stopped and thought about how fortunate we are to have such beautiful walking trails in the heart of our city and more fortunate still to have this friendship, this Christian fellowship, in a year of isolation...*



*...as we walked along Philosopher's Walk the words of the hymn give form to our pilgrimage...*

*When the King shall come again  
all his power revealing,  
splendour shall announce his reign,  
life and joy and healing:  
earth no longer in decay,  
hope no more frustrated;  
this is God's redemption day  
longingly awaited.*



*In the desert trees take root  
fresh from his creation;  
plants and flowers and sweetest fruit  
join the celebration.  
Rivers spring up from the earth,  
barren lands adorning;  
valleys, this is your new birth,  
mountains, greet the morning!*



Strengthen feeble hands and knees,  
fainting hearts, be cheerful!  
God who comes for such as these  
seeks and saves the fearful.  
Deaf ears hear the silent tongues  
sing away their weeping;  
blind eyes see the lifeless ones  
walking, running, leaping.



There God's highway shall be seen  
where no roaring lion,  
nothing evil or unclean  
walks the road to Zion:  
ransomed people homeward bound  
all your praises voicing,  
see your Lord with glory crowned,  
share in his rejoicing!

~ Christopher Idle from Isaiah 35

*(Really - we're contemplating.  
It looks like we're laughing and talking, but y'know... )*

*Craig wrote this beautiful reflection...*

*A Savior had been promised to God's people for centuries. They longed and prayed for rescue. And then on the right day, in the right place, at the right time, Jesus was born. While God rarely comes at our appointed time, He always comes at the right time.*

*All of us are waiting on something, often wondering if God has forgotten us. In your waiting, let the birth of Christ encourage you. Just because God hasn't come through (as far as you can see), it doesn't mean He has abandoned you. To Him a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years are like a day. This very minute He's working for His glory and for your good. Though circumstances say otherwise, God is going to come through, on schedule, fulfilling His long-appointed plans for you. Don't give up before the time is right.*

*Take hope in the manger and know that you are loved and prized by the God who stepped down from heaven and arrived at the perfect time for you*

*A moment  
to be still,  
think,  
and listen...*



*...then a skip across the street to Queen's Park.*







*And now - an unexpected joy!*

*Craig brought a thermos of hot cinnamon apple tea to refresh us...  
and a little gift. The tea was so welcome on a cold day,  
but his thoughtfulness warmed me through and through.*



*We might not have been as contemplative at this point as we should have been. We were so happy to have a chance to talk and catch up that it became a purely social visit — and that may have been the greater joy. To spend time with a friend in this year of isolation.*

*I invite you to take this walk.*

*it's beautiful,*

*it will fill you with serenity and joy.*

*Bring tea and a snack, so that as you finish your pilgrimage walk, you are ready to go north to the Cenotaph, and head up the street and home to Redeemer.*



*My brothers and sisters,  
whenever you face trials of any kind,  
consider it nothing but joy,  
because you know that the testing of your faith  
produces endurance*