

**Third Sunday of Advent – Joy**  
**Jesus Comes to Bethany – John 11:1-7,17-44**

**Jesus doesn't always come on our timetable**

<sup>5</sup> *Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. <sup>6</sup> Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days.*

Jesus isn't controlled by other people's agendas, even his friends'.

Jesus also has more information about our lives than we can possibly imagine.

But that doesn't really help a broken heart. <sup>21</sup> *"Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died."*

The reality of grief is that we all look for someone to blame.

<sup>22</sup> *But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.* That's the way that faith works for most people, much of the time; we're often sad, upset, angry – at God and at others – and yet, even while we're still angry with God, we can turn to him and ask him to intervene.

**Jesus' coming reveals the depth of his love for us**

Jesus walks into the midst of a crowd of people, weeping over Lazarus' death, and he joins them in their weeping.

The truth of the Incarnation, the truth of Christmas, is that God comes to us in Jesus. We can "see the Father" by seeing Jesus.

God loves you and weeps for your pain and for your grief.

**Jesus' coming restores us to life**

*"Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" <sup>44</sup> The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."<sup>45</sup>*

Jesus changes Lazarus' story from one of grief to one of joy.

**Because Jesus is the resurrection and the life**

<sup>25</sup> *Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; <sup>26</sup> and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" <sup>27</sup> "Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world."*

The reason we can have joy at Christmas is not because a little baby was born, it's because of who that baby is. He is the Christ, the Son of God, who has come into the world to overcome evil and death and to give the gift of eternal life.