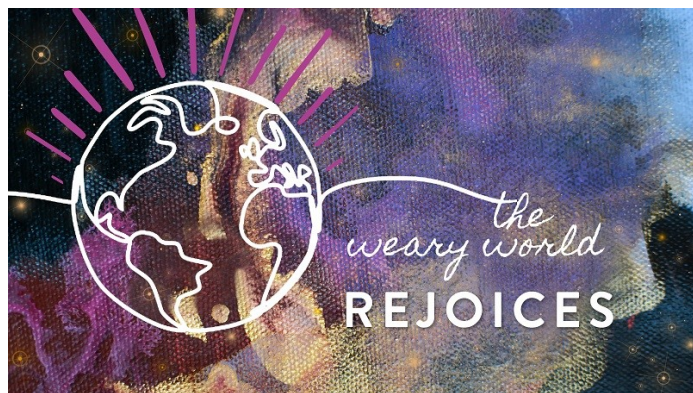


SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



**PRINCE
OF PEACE**
Called to Connect



We Are Beloved

December 30 & 31, 2023

We began our series by acknowledging our weariness, and we conclude with trusting our belovedness; ultimately, our joy is rooted in the fact that we belong to God. When we trust our belovedness, we live and give fully, we are compelled to treat all of creation with tenderness and care, and we have endless reasons to rejoice.

SCRIPTURE TEXT: LUKE 3:21-22

Read the scripture text together as a group.

BACKGROUND INFO

Artist Lauren Wright Pittman writes: "Luke's account of Jesus' baptism is brief and vague. He was baptized among 'all the people' by an unnamed baptizer and, until he prays, the scene is rather unremarkable. During his prayer, however, an iconic scene unfolds with the heavens opening, the Holy Spirit descending in the form of a dove, and a voice booming from heaven."

Some translations of Luke 3:22 read, "in you, I find happiness and delight." An affirming word bursts forth from the clouds...God delighting in God's son. We, too, are children of God and a source of God's joy. When we trust our belovedness, we have endless reasons to rejoice.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Love is all around. Share some scenes of love you have witnessed recently.
- How do you think Jesus might have felt when he held his breath and descended into the river during his baptism? If you were to paint the scene of Jesus' baptism, what would it look like? What details would you emphasize?
- If you have been baptized, share what you know or remember about the experience. Share about a time you felt affirmed as a beloved child of God.
- How are you upheld by the waters of baptism even when - especially when - the surface water of life is choppy and the future is unknown and precarious? What Scripture passages remind you of your belovedness? How do the people in your life remind you of your belovedness?

CHALLENGE: Allow the Spirit to awaken in you the truth that you are God's beloved. And, like Jesus modeled for us, rise up out of the waters of your baptism into a world that is unsettled and unpredictable. Trust that Love is actually all around, and share Love freely in a world which so desperately needs it.