

## Week 3: Heaven and Joy



### Introduction

Advent is not only about waiting—it's about joyfully anticipating heaven breaking into our lives. This is reflected in our Eucharistic proclamation: "Heaven and earth are full of your glory."

### Opening Prayer

**God of joy, open our eyes to your presence and to the signs of your kingdom among us. As we anticipate the joy of heaven, may our hearts be filled with the gladness of your presence and the promise of eternal life. Fill us with hope and laughter as we seek your presence and celebrate the promise of heaven in our midst. Amen.**

## Film Scenes

The themes this week of Heaven and Joy overlap in the scenes from the movie, revealing how these two themes often overlap in our own lives.

### Heaven

The feast and abundance of the *Ghost of Christmas Present*, full of celebration, generosity, and the foretaste of God's kingdom. This is also a time filled with laughter and generosity, capturing the joy that comes from shared life and open hearts.

**[The Ghost of Christmas Present, It Feels Like Christmas \(46:02-50:58\)](#)**

### Joy

The joy that comes from a shared life and open hearts.

**[Christmas Morning, Thankful Heart, When Love Is Found\(1:11:55-1:21:45\)](#)**

### Reflection

The transformation in Scrooge's character leads to a newfound joy, symbolizing the joy of heaven that awaits us. The film's joyful conclusion reminds us of the joy that comes from living in alignment with God's will, a central theme of Advent.

Heaven, in the Anglican imagination, is not an escape, but the fulfillment of God's dream for creation—a banquet where all are welcome. The *Ghost of Christmas Present's* exuberance embodies eucharistic joy. Fred's inclusive party echoes the open table of Anglican worship, where joy is not the absence of sorrow but a presence stronger than grief.

Advent joy is a defiant proclamation: even as we wait in darkness, we taste heaven breaking in.

C.S. Lewis described joy as the "serious business of heaven." Anglican worship—especially in singing and feasting—reminds us that joy is a foretaste of God's kingdom.

The visit from the Ghost of Christmas Present is a burst of colour and celebration. Feasting, music, and generosity fill the scenes at the Cratchit family's table and throughout the city. Even in hardship, there is joy: "God bless us, every one!" exclaims Tiny Tim. The film reminds us that heaven's joy breaks into ordinary life—a key theme of Advent, as we rejoice in God-with-us. Anglican worship celebrates this foretaste of heaven each time we gather at the Lord's Table, sharing bread and joy together.

## Scripture and Tradition

**Luke 2:10** But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people.

- **Psalms 16:11** You show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy; in your right hand are pleasures forevermore.
- **1 Peter 1:8** Although you have not seen him, you love him, and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy,
- **Revelation 21:1-5** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples and God himself will be with them and be their God; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more for the first things have passed away."  
And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true."
- **The Eucharist** is called a "foretaste of the heavenly banquet"—a present sign of joy and abundance in Christ.

## Discussion Questions:

1. What does Fred's expression of joy reveal about the power of radical hospitality in our lives and communities?
2. How can we intentionally cultivate joy within ourselves and those around us during Advent, especially in difficult or dark times?
3. In what ways do you glimpse 'heaven on earth'—both in your ordinary life and as depicted in the film?
4. How does the Ghost of Christmas Present embody joy, and what barriers might prevent us from truly experiencing joy?
5. How can joy shape our Advent preparation, worship, and daily living, even when circumstances are tough?
6. What does Advent teach us about the practice of waiting with joy and hope?

## Closing Prayer:

**Joyful God, help us to recognise your presence in our celebrations and in our struggles. Give us courage to rejoice, and to share your joy with the world. Amen.**

