The four themes of Advent are represented by the candle lit each of the four weeks of advent... Hope ... Faith ... Joy ... Peace. Liturgically, we celebrate each of these themes one week at a time, although there are times in our lives when all four can be celebrated in one day or one week. It was that kind of week for the Wheaton Franciscan community.

On Monday, Sisters, Covenant Companions, staff, and families celebrated the lighting of the courtyard at entrance #5. We are reminded that "the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." (John 1:5). We are a people of hope! We choose to hope even in the darkness of a pandemic that keeps us physically apart and safely behind face coverings.

This week we also said our final (earthly) farewell to our Sr. Mary Patrick Salm. Sr. Mary Pat’s faith and joy brought faith and joy into our hearts as we gathered around Zoom to share memories. We celebrated her life in a live-stream Mass of Christian burial on Thursday and held a small grave-side service following the liturgy. We were “tickled” by the use of technology for the farewell because we could imagine the delight of Sr. Mary Pat as she was both delighted and frustrated using an iPad.

In this time of the pandemic and at times of loss, it may be difficult of find joy. Yet, God gives us reasons, great and small, to find joy in simple ways – the light of a courtyard, a familiar Christmas carol, the chance to grin at one another behind a mask firmly in place. The joy of sharing a memory of a loved one with other loved ones. This joy leads us to peace. To the peace the angels herald on Christmas morning. That deep peace that “transcends all understanding.” (Philippians 4:7)

Following is a collage of photos from the Courtyard lighting and the grave-side service for Sr. Mary Patrick Salm. May these images bring you Advent Hope ... Faith ... Joy ... Peace.
"Hope allows us to enter into the darkness of an uncertain future to journey in the light."

Pope Francis
Farewell Sr. Mary Patrick Salm

Hope

Faith

Joy

Peace

Photo credit to Srs. Fran Glowinski and Melanie Paradis