

Go and...!

Notes from 8/25/2022 Gathering on Zoom – 23 participants

Planning Team: Pastor Judy Anderson, Pastor Jay Berry, Pastor Jill Collicot, Pastor Maristela Freiberg, Pastor Danielle McCleary, Pastor Courtney Smith, and Pastor Dianne Lewis

Theme: Go and Rejoice!

Welcome and Prayer: Pastor Jay Berry

- How do we rejoice in God's gifts of joy and thanksgiving?

Breakout Room Discussion: What brings joy to your life, to the life of your congregation, and to the life of your community?

- Individual Joy:
 - o Fall foliage
 - o Interacting with children
 - o Feeling accomplished at work
 - o Sunrise, sunset
 - o Family
 - o Vacation (Disney World!)
 - o Gorgeous weather
 - o Beauty of God's creation
- Congregational Joy:
 - o Children participating in worship
 - o When we can help someone
 - o Fellowship: sitting together and sharing a meal
 - After worship
 - Weekly gatherings
 - o Celebrating everyone's joys together: birthday, babies, weddings
 - o New pastors, new life, new energy
- Community Joy
 - o Social ministry and opportunities to work together
- Joy was harder to find in COVID but it feels like it's coming back

Dwelling in the Word: Philippians 4:4-9

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹As for the things that you have learned and received and heard and noticed in me, do them, and the God of peace will

be with you.

Breakout Rooms: What caught your attention? Where do you feel the Spirit leading you? What questions come up from this passage?

- The peace of God... the God of peace (beginning and end)
- Demand vs. Question
 - o “Do not be anxious” “What are you anxious about? What do you need to work through it?”
- Do we really take time to rejoice and give thanks when things are going well
- What is ____ (just, true, honorable)?
 - o What does that really mean?
- Try to be more like Jesus, but that’s difficult
- The peace of Christ allows us to ____ (not be anxious, rejoice, do all the things)
- “Do them” instructions knowing the God of peace is with you

Sharing the Joy of the Gospel with the World: Bishop Tracie Bartholomew

- “We needed this” common phrase heard at gatherings in this next stage of COVID-world
- We’ve been looking for ways to rejoice
- Joy ≠ Happiness
 - o Joy is present with everything, even grief and sorrow
- Joy = Fruit of the Spirit = Gift of God
 - o Flows from the knowledge that we are beloved children of God
- The Book of Joy by Desmond Tutu and the Dalai Lama
 - o Perspective
 - o Humility
 - o Humor
 - o Acceptance
 - o Forgiveness
 - o Gratitude
 - o Compassion
 - o Generosity
- Sharing the Joy of the Gospel
 - o God loved you first and loves you anyway, no matter what
 - This is the good news
 - o How do you bear witness to this good news?
 - When you talk about church, are you sharing God’s love in a way that invites others in?
 - What do we hold onto? This gift from God affects how we see each other and live our lives



8 Pillars of Joy

How do we share this good news through actions and words, personally and corporally/as a congregation?

- Actions:

- Hospitality
- Welcome – how do you welcome?
- Invitation
- “Love Affair” = embracing and showing that loves inside and out, being Christlike
- Joy in vocation
- Collections and outreach to those in need
- Visible presence in community, working together ecumenically (and interfaith)
- Words:
 - Gentleness
 - Not using harsh or demeaning language
 - Not “beating people over the head with the Bible” – interacting with a loving and joyous spirit
 - Relationship building for the sake of relationship building, not to “get butts in pews”

What is one word or action you can do to share joy?

- Church sign: use it as a reminder of God’s love
- Communicating with the community
- Listening to people, hearing their stories
- Prayer picnic: sit on the front lawn at church just to hang out with the community and listen
- How we raise and talk about issues
 - Talking about issues of justice and helping to educate ourselves and others
- Building use for community use – do things not just for ourselves
- Old photos: people always look happy
- Birthday cards or phone calls bring a spark of joy
- Sidewalk chalk: messages of love at church or the park
- House decorating: joyful and festive displays at church
- Lawn signs for milestones, not just to advertise worship
 - “CHURCH NAME is proud of ____”
 - “God loves ____”
- Deepest joy is shared at the communion table when we receive God’s grace

In closing, Bishop shared a story when her niece took communion and shouted “I Got it!”

- We need to have courage and boldness to proclaim the good news of God’s love and the joy of the Gospel with others

Resources: Pastor Dianne Lewis

- The book of Joy by the Dalai Lama:
 - <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/533718/the-book-of-joy-by-his-holiness-the-dalai-lama-and-archbishop-desmond-tutu-with-douglas-abrams/>
- Inside Out (movie), 2015, Walt Disney Studios
 - This is a great movie about a young child learning about her emotions and that joy is the foundation of them all. Joy is not just the happy memories but also the sad

ones. It's a great way to explore feelings and emotions and would make a great movie night at church!

Blessing and Sending: Pastor Danielle McCleary

A blessing to share during the upcoming election season, adapted from Rev. Elle Dowd

God of All People, your borderless kingdom is more powerful and eternal than that of any earthly king. As we discern our decisions this election season, align our hearts with your care for the most vulnerable among us. Liberate us collectively and individually from systems that bind us; capitalism, the patriarchy, and white supremacy. Enable us to attend to the prophets in our midst pointing to the way forward. Open our minds and embolden our creative spirits, that we may dream up new ways of being in community that reflect your boundless love and mercy. In the name of your Son, the slaughtered lamb, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit. One God, now and forever. Amen.

See You Next Month!
November 17th at 7:00 pm, est.

Please note November and December dates are not the fourth Thursday of the month due to the holidays! We will conclude our monthly Go And gathering on December 15th.