

Enjoying life with Jesus, looking forward to celebrating life in all his fullness, with all his loved brothers and sister; that's our wonderful family in Jesus.

What joy; we're part of a wonderful family that's a chip off the old block; that reflects their Father. What joy; we're not lost and alone, in Jesus, you're loved and precious.

I pray that the Spirit gives us all a spring in our step this Christmas season, as we sense Jesus loving presence, as we see his smile, as

we experience his love this Christmas.

In the madness we've turned Jesus birth into, I pray he touches you in a special way, that your heart jumps for joy, as you experience his presence. I know you bring great joy to Jesus, let him bring great joy to you this Christmas.

Take a moment to stop, and invite Jesus to send the Spirit, so that the joy he brings is made real, in a down-to-earth way for you. After all Jesus came down-to-earth that we might live in the joy of his presence.

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am
Pastor: Tim 0427326553



Jesus' disciples multiplying disciples

23 December 2018

JOY Advent 4



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Here is a devotion I read this week on joy. It began with these words from the prophet Isaiah: "They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away."

"What will it be like to be crowned with everlasting joy? To be "overtaken" with gladness and joy? There is certainly the joy of relief. People who survive accidents often break out in giddy laughter afterward, relief overtaking the fear of the event. But there is also the joy of anticipation, the joy that comes when you know the road has

opened before you and life will now happen the way you've always wished it would. Both shall be yours, the relief, followed by the thrill of anticipation—probably in that order.

It may be a difficult thing to imagine your soul's complete restoration. But perhaps you can get there by thinking of the restoration of the ones you love. Think of the joy it will be to see them young and well, alive and free, everything you knew they were! You always knew there was a shining greatness in there, though they never could quite take hold of it for themselves. And you see it. How many times over will we hear at the feast, "Look at you! You're glorious!"?

Oh, to see again the ones we have lost and know they can never be taken from us again. Imagine the tears of joy and the very long embraces!"

This reminded me that we celebrate Christmas, not because of the joy of a baby being born, but because of the hope Jesus brings.

I just read this from John's first letter we have recorded in the bible: "We proclaim to you the one who existed from the beginning, whom we have heard and seen. We saw him with our own eyes and touched him with our own hands. He is the Word of life. This one who is life itself..." (1 John 1:1,2)

Jesus brings the hope of life, in a

world of death. What great joy we have to look forward to. What great joy Jesus invites us to live in now as we look forward to his birthing of a new and restored world when he returns.

Hope certainly brings joy. And in Jesus we have hope. The one who is life itself has bound himself to us; born our brother. And that has never been revoked.

We have the hope of new life shared with the author of life and all those who have thrown their lot in with him. What a celebration of life we have to look forward to when Jesus returns.

Death won't have the last word for those in Jesus. Death won't have robbed us of the joy of life as it slowly eats away at us. Robbing us of movement, taste, health, sight, hearing, leaving us in a dark

hole. Thank God, in Jesus we have so much more to look forward to. I'd be rather depressed if all I had to look forward to was the lose of my senses, the lose of all that makes life full and passionate. It's a depressing thought only being left with the hope of losing life, slowly but surely.

Hope brings Joy. Jesus gives Hope.

Jesus was born that we might look forward to a life of joy, a life of rejoicing in Father's loving presence. When we are robbed of our physical abilities we are also robbed of the ability to love. And a life without the prospect of love isn't very joyful.

In Jesus, nothing can separate us from the love of God. That's a promise we hear in Paul's letter to the faithful in Rome. He

wrote: "No power in the sky above or in the earth below – indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:39)

What a celebration of life and love Jesus is inviting us to be part of. I guess that's why the first sign that is recorded in John's life story of Jesus is turning water into wine.

And not just a few bottles, hundreds of bottles. Wine is a symbol of joy. Jesus first sign recorded by John tells us of the great joy Jesus is inviting us to celebrate with him. An abundance.

I'm looking forward to a future of joy, a future celebrating the love Father has for me and all his children. Feasting with Father at his family table.

Of course that's part of the imagery of

communion. We are invited to Feast on Father's finest; and it's not food that is here today and gone tomorrow. It's not food that only satisfies for a while.

That reminds me of Jesus promise to a woman at a well. He asked her for a drink, which didn't bring any joy; she was confused why a Jewish man was asking a Samaritan woman for a drink, and in public. That could almost be scandalous. Actually her life was scandalous and not all that joyful. I don't think five divorces describes joy!

Here's Jesus offer to this woman: "Jesus replied, 'If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to you would ask me, and I would give you living water... those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh,

bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life.'" (John 4:10-14)

Jesus, who is life itself, offers himself. Feast on Jesus, feast on that wonderful conversational relationship of love and affection that he births. Drink deeply of that wonderful life

Love brings Joy. Jesus loves You.

giving water; Jesus gift of the Spirit. That's God in person with you, now.

What joy Jesus offers. What joy Jesus invites you to be part of and enjoy living, starting now.

Elizabeth's baby jumped for joy when he heard Mary's voice, because he recognised that she was carrying Jesus. What joy the presence of Jesus brought. I think Jesus wants us all to be

jumping for joy in his presence.

Jesus comes breathing the joy of his presence into us so that, today and all the way into eternity, we can be living a rich and satisfying life. Living, rejoicing at hearing his voice. Living, rejoicing as we follow his lead.

Rejoicing as we discover life, today and into eternity, with the one who is life itself. What a rich and satisfying life Jesus brings with his presence.

I pray that we all jump for joy this Christmas as we again celebrate Jesus birth. Not because we're remembering some past event, but because we're in the presence of the one who was born that day. Because you hear his voice today. Because you follow his lead today, enjoying living life with him today and into eternity.