



WORSHIP for December 13, 2020

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 1) To watch **sermons recorded** on Zoom on our YouTube Channel, go to the FPCP website: <https://www.fpcpataskala.com/> and click on WORSHIP or follow us on Facebook from the homepage. To potentially increase subscribers & views,  like and  share!
 - 2) Please invite family or friends, who want to join us for live worship on Sundays @10:45am, to request access by emailing their name, email, & phone number to fpcofpataskala@gmail.com
- Zoom live worship** attendance: 10/4 50, 10/11 58, 10/18 46, and 10/25 58.
- 3) **Give to FPCP** while shopping for Christmas or for any time at smile.amazon.com. .5% of purchases go to FPCP, when you register once for FPCP by going to this link: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/31-1143651>
Then keep shopping @ **smile.amazon.com** thru your amazon account.
 - 4) **A memorial fund for Sally Seiberling** has been established for the purpose of handicapped accessibility. To contribute, denote Seiberling memorial in the memo area of your check and/or on your envelope.
 - 5) **Blue Christmas & Communion service** 7pm on the longest night Monday 12/21 on zoom for those grieving the loss of loved ones & other losses in 2020.
 - 6) Bring baby Jesus from your manger scene to share on camera at the start of **Christmas Eve 7pm** worship on zoom. Also bring a candle for your neighbors to see during "Silent Night" and the postlude. Be prepared to stand at a window or even to step outdoors to sing out loud, sharing the joyful news of Jesus' birth! "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." *John 1:5*

3rd SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Lighting Candle of Joy: including the names of Jesus in every book of the Bible
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VZVT_kaiQsc

Light a candle and meditate on the Advent Candle of Joy

Call to Worship: Psalm 95:1-3 *Responsively*

Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.

Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song.

For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods.

Opening Hymn: "**Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee**"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZD4B9Q6nTo0>

Prayer of Confession: Psalm 27:1-3 *Unison*

The psalmist exhorts us to bow down in worship, to hear God's voice, and to not harden our hearts. The season calls us to joy from you. Yet we pursue happiness instead, busying ourselves with tasks in the noisy hustle and bustle of the holidays, rather than turning our

hearts in these holy days to your holiness. Hear our confession in Jesus' name. Amen

(Pause now for a time of silent confession.)

Assurance of Forgiveness: *Responsively*

Joy comes in the good news of Christ's forgiveness from the cross and his resurrection from the tomb. We believe the good news of the gospel.

In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

"The Gloria Patri"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dgcYD_m4OhU

Hymn of Preparation: "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=82sn7L0yPc>

Call to God's Word: *Unison*

"Scripture cannot be set aside... What does Scripture say?" John 10:35 & Romans 4:3.

Prayer for Illumination: *Unison*

Lord, through your Spirit enable us to consider your Word, and to enact it in our lives to bring you glory and praise. Amen.

Anthem played by Brent Miller, "Angel Eyes"

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b6rKr44eyuY&list=PLAdy2hvW6PL8_1itXDbTRrCeI331DmVVU&index=1

Scripture Readings: Philippians 1

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+1&version=NIV>

SERMON: "Prayer of Joy" by The Reverend Dr. Janet Hufford

Watch sermon on: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLAdy2hvW6PL93B6hbgswTxf93Evs575yd>

We repeat our introduction for Advent. Advent is the time we consciously wait in hope for Jesus to come again. In the meantime, Advent has as its themes: hope, peace, joy, and love, words which we long to hear in a year such as 2020. Yet Paul's letter to Philippi with all these hopeful themes was written while he was confined to prison in Rome. The 1st Sunday of Advent focuses on and all of Advent corresponds to the theme of hope. The 2nd Sunday of Advent focuses on peace. As we have already seen how chapters 3&4 of Paul's letter to the Philippians bears witness to hope and peace.

Themes of hope and peace are also alluded to in the 1st chapter of Philippians our passage today, which we hear now. *Read Philippians 1.* In v. 20 Paul expresses the hope of Advent in v. 20, where he writes, "I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death." Paul's salutation begins in Philippians 1:1-2. Paul extends "grace and peace." In addition, Paul's prayer in vv. 9-11 conveys love, which will be shared next week when the Advent focus is love.

But the 3rd Sunday of Advent focus is joy. The spiritual fruit of joy is a major topic of Paul's entire letter to the church in Philippi. For example, last week we read Paul's encouragement in 4:4: "Rejoice in the Lord always, I will say it again: Rejoice!" Paul's focus on joy is clear. The first clear mention of joy comes in Philippians 1:3-4, where Paul writes, "In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy." In the middle of the chapter, in v. 18 Paul assures his readers, "I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice." Near the conclusion of the chapter, Paul further encourages in v. 25, "Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, & I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith."

While these referenced verses give a clear indication of Paul's exhortation of joy, there are further allusions to joy that are not as clear to us in the English language. For example, Paul's starting salutation extends blessings of grace and peace. Joy is a part of this common greeting, for the word "grace" has at its language root "joy." In Galatians 5:22, joy is the first attribute of the spiritual fruit of love, the topic for next week.

However, the Greek word that has "joy" as its root that occurs often in Philippians and especially in chapter 1 is "gospel." Gospel means literally "good news" or, translated another way, "joyful" news. The word "gospel" occurs 6 times in chapter 1. With this frequency, we discern the focus of joy in chapter 1 of Philippians. The Gospel is the reason for joy.

Gospel is also the root of word "evangelism," which in English may be translated as "proclaim" or "advance" of joyful news. The action of evangelism, proclamation, or advancement of the gospel has joy at its root. Therefore, proclaiming the Gospel is reason for joy!

I (*Pastor Janet*) remember how at my new found faith in Christ, after reading the gospel message in Scripture, I could not help but share the joyful Good News of Christ with everyone I possibly could. As a youth, I shared with students in school. As a young adult, I shared with people with whom I worked. As a mother, I shared with fellow parents and people in my community. In fact, sharing the faith brought such joy that I resisted going into the ministry, when I felt an increase to the call. Why? Because I was concerned that I (*she*) would lose an edge in evangelism. I knew that my circle of influence would actually narrow, since my main contacts would be those who were already Christians. As a lay person I had many secular contacts with whom to share the faith. Furthermore, I knew that secular contacts would see me as a professional paid to spread the faith rather than doing so freely with joy and love as the pure motivations. In addition, I knew that those in the church might count on me as "the hired hand" for evangelism and maybe even neglect their own obligation to Jesus.

Many Christians dread and fear evangelism, choosing to try to pass it off to professionals like pastors and missionaries. This fear has actually been previously addressed in recent sermons from Matthew's Gospel. For example, in the parable of the sower we learned that only 1 out of 4 occasions of sowing the Gospel may bear fruit, showing that our fear of proclaiming the Gospel being rejected is real. However, that is beside the point. Jesus in Matthew 28:16-20 commissions his followers to go and make disciples and teaching them to obey all that he commends. It is not up to us whether sowing bears fruit. That is up to God. It is up to us to obey all that Jesus' commands, including his commission from Matthew 28!

Fear of rejection is mild compared to the fear that Paul and disciples in the early church

had to face with persecutions, which led to arrest, public beatings, and even death. Paul knows this full well, as he writes his letter to the Philippians, while under house rest. But fear of persecution does not deter Paul from proclaiming the gospel. Instead Paul gives bold assurance against fear in vv. 12-14, “Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.” In other words, fear of persecution should not be a deterrent to proclaiming the Good News. In fact, Paul’s circumstances of imprisonment due to persecution further advanced the gospel!

Therefore, Paul prays with joy about the Philippians who in vv. 4-5 are in partnership with him and in the gospel. He is also confident in v. 6 that their good or joyful work of advancing the Gospel will be carried on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. We only have a limited time to advance the Gospel and the kingdom. At most, we have only until the day when Christ Jesus comes to earth for the 2nd time.

Proclaiming the Good News of Christ is the assignment of all his followers, whether human or angelic. At Jesus’ conception and birth, the angel Gabriel proclaimed the coming Good News to Mary and Joseph. To shepherds in the fields, the angel proclaimed in Luke 2:10, “I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.”

Proclaiming the Good News of Christ is also the assignment of creation! The star of Bethlehem proclaimed the Goods News of Christ, such that when the Magi in Matthew 2:10 “saw the star, they were overjoyed.”

Proclaiming the Good News came through Christ’s preaching and teaching, in the last blessing of the beatitudes from Matthew 5:11, “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Such persecution was suffered by Christ himself, who for our sake gave up his life upon the cross for the forgiveness of our sin. But Good News showed up at Christ resurrection, when he rose from the dead. And when the Good News of his resurrection came from the same angel, who announced his birth, to the women who visited his tomb, in Matthew 28:8 “the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.”

Fear is not a reason to stop spreading the Good News. The women may have been afraid, but they were also filled with joy. Fear did not win. Joy won. Joy won too with Paul. Neither did the threat of death nor the condition of imprisonment stop the Good News. His time in prison only furthered the Gospel. He exhorts those in the western church of Philippi and subsequently other churches in the west such as FPCP.

Paul concludes in chapter 1 of Philippians in vv. 27-30: “Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved – and

that by God. For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.”

No threat, no suffering, no persecution, nothing halts the Good News. The Gospel is joyful news. With all the bad news around, let the joyful news of the Gospel abound! Alleluia! Amen!

Hymn of Response: “Good Christian Men Rejoice”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HR7ZdtWQAFE>

PRAYERS of Joy and Concern, followed by:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Please Continue to Give in Dedication to Our Lord and Savior, Jesus

Prayer Of Dedication: *Unison*

In view of your mercy help us to offer ourselves as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to you, O God. Amen. *Romans 12:1*

Doxology

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HqpXWF15avU>

Closing Hymn: “Joy to the World”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MpgaWm2pnNs>

Benediction: *Responsively*

Go forth with joy into the world to proclaim the Gospel of Christ, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**