

111th Annual Reunion Service, Central Mine Methodist Church – July 30, 2017

Minister: Rev. Dr. Daniel Rosemergy

Organ Prelude Father Corbin Eddy

Greetings & Announcements: Carolyn Martin Meyer

****Introit** Come, Let Us Tune Our Loftiest Song (West & Hatton)

Call to Worship

Hymn: Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

Invocation and Lord's Prayer

A Time with Children/Youth

***Children's Anthem** We Are Family (Stewart & Martin)

****Anthem:** Let All Creation Praise the Lord (Charles Forsberg)

Responsive Reading: 42nd Sunday First Reading – Unfaltering Trust

Hymn: All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name (Diadem)

Scripture Readings: Verses on the theme JOY, including:
Psalm 67 Be Glad and Sing for Joy
John 15:7-12 That Your Joy May Be Complete
Romans 15:4-6, 13 Fill You with All Joy and Peace

Special Music: Over My Head
Carolyn Meyer, Deanna Martin, Pete Manderfield, Dan Rosemergy

Pastoral Prayer and Moment of Remembrance Charles Henry Heikkinen, age 87
Mary Margaret Kump, age 74

Offering and **Offertory Anthem: The Image of God (Susan Boersma & Craig Courtney)

Doxology

Sermon: **The Fullness of Joy** (Abridged)

Contemporary Reading: Poem "Mindful" by Mary Oliver [*Devotions*, pp. 173-174]

Every day
I see or I hear
something
that more or less

kills me
with delight,
that leaves me

like a needle
in the haystack
of light.
It is what I was born for—
to look, to listen,
to lose myself
inside this soft world—
to instruct myself
over and over
in joy,
and acclamation.
Nor am I talking
about the exceptional,
the fearful, the dreadful,
the very extravagant—
but of the ordinary,
the common, the very drab,
the daily presentations.
Oh, good scholar,
I say to myself,
how can you help
but grow wise
with such teachings
as these—
the untrimmable light
of the world,
the ocean's shine,
the prayers that are made
out of grass?

I love this poem—"to instruct myself / over and over / in joy" A congregant many years ago gave me a beautiful calligraphy that hangs above my desk: "Joy is the most infallible sign of the presence of God" [Pierre Teilhard de Chardin]. I love and believe that; it is a part of my daily affirmations. We live at a time when it is easy to slip into moods of discouragement, despair, and deep concern about our world and collective life, when it is more important than ever to hang onto our faith and the strength that helps us rise above it all.

Some of you may have seen a t-shirt I wear, which reads "A child should know some joy in each day, and look forward to some joyous event for the morrow" [Nicholas Hobbs, Re-ED program]. I try to travel with joy. What about you? How are you doing with joy?

Pope Benedict XVI wrote, "Something I constantly notice is that unembarrassed joy has become rarer There is a moral attitude at work here. But this attitude is nonetheless wrong. The loss of joy does not

make the world better—and, conversely, refusing joy for the sake of the suffering does not help those who suffer. The contrary is true.”

Let’s pause to ask ourselves to think of a time in which we’ve known joy, e.g., beauty of nature, relationships, service, new learning, challenges, music, art—ordinary moments that give us a sense of the beauty and goodness of life. At its core, experiencing joy is about (a) mindfulness of the world around us, (b) attention to our part in creating and maintaining the goodness at the heart of things, and (c) living in alignment with our faith. “The spiritual life is a journey into the fullness of joy” [John S. Mogabgab, *Weavings*]

Joy in Sacred Writings. The word “joy” is found at least 116 times in the Bible, and many more if you add “rejoice” and “be joyful.” Joy is central to the Biblical message and forms the groundwork of our faith stories. Regrettably, it is often overlooked. We need to reclaim it and make it central to our faith journey once again. This morning’s scripture readings capture the importance of joy over time.

Psalm 67. All nations are called to praise God. This is a communal song of thanksgiving and a prayer for God’s blessing, which is inseparable from God’s presence. It is a blessing to be shared by all families of the earth. “Let the nations be glad and sing for joy.” God creates and is in creation. God calls us to harmony and love, to the fullness of joy.

John 15:7-12 “That Your Joy May Be Complete.” This passage is preceded by the metaphor of the true vine and branches, “I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit. This is my command—love each other. I have said these things to you so that your joy may be complete.” The unity and mutuality that love makes possible is symbolized by the unity of vine and branches. Love leads to joy. Living in community, in mutuality, raises a strong challenge to Western models of individual autonomy and privatism.

Romans 15:4-6, 13. “May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another in accordance with the love of Jesus so that together you may with one voice glorify God. May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abide in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Hope is sustained, then, by “joy and peace” with which the God of hope will fill the community.

God’s presence in creation calls us to sing for joy, calls us to community, harmony. In love we find the fullness of joy.

I find meaning in the sacred writings by recognizing the ways we live them out in our daily life and experience them in others. Cecil Lutey was a person who believed and lived the scriptures we’ve just heard. He was a florist, a lay preacher, camp counselor, and mentor who was an important part of my life over many years, from Camp Michigamme to the University of Michigan. He was one of the most joyful persons I’ve known, with his love of the Gospel’s Good News, a love of life and people, a love of community (church and town), and full of hope.

Expressions of Joy: Stories of Central. In *The Story of My Life*, Alfred Nichols recounts his arrival in the Copper Country and draws out a number of themes: his abiding Christian faith, his devotion to his family, his commitment to education and children, and his empathy with the life and work of miners. He captured stories of Central in *More Copper Country Tales*. One can’t help but be struck by his joy, despite the difficult times he endured following his mine accident and loss of use of his left arm. Returning to Central after completing his education, he writes, “Ah, joy untold! It was more than I could contain ‘My soul doth magnify the Lord, my cup runneth over.’ I had a job, could provide for family. What greater

happiness could one desire?" He was among the original leaders of this Reunion, which he and his wife attended. "We would gladly, reverently take our place in the choir, and the joy it gives us cannot be expressed in words." His entire life here was centered in the God of creation, a life lived with love for this community, lived with the hope of finding the fullness of peace and joy.

Seek Again and Again, Find Joy in Our Contemporary Lives. In Oliver's poem "Mindful," we are encouraged to find joy again and again in "the ordinary, / the common, the very drab," in "the ocean's shine," in "prayers that are made / out of grass." In our wedding ceremony, Jan and I shared Ann Sexton's poem "Welcome Morning" [*The Awful Rowing Toward God*, pp. 58-59]. The poem details the "joy in all"—the ordinary elements of a morning routine—"in the Cannon towel," "in the chapel of eggs I cook," "in the spoon and the chair," "in the godhead of the table." She says, "All this is God" and though she often forgets, this day she remembers "to give thanks, / to faint down by the kitchen table / in a prayer of rejoicing." The poem concludes:

So while I think of it,
let me paint a thank-you on my palm
for this God, this laughter of the morning,
lest it go unspoken.

The Joy that isn't shared, I've heard,
dies young.

I suggest that this gratitude, this joy, be a part of our spiritual practice.

The *Book of Joy* captures a weeklong conversation between the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu in which they outline Obstacles to Joy and the Pillars of Joy. Obstacles include: fear, stress, anxiety; frustration, anger; sadness and grief; despair; loneliness; envy; suffering and adversity; illness and fear of death. The Pillars of Joy are: Mind—perspective, humility, humor, acceptance; Heart—forgiveness, gratitude, compassion, generosity.

We can find and reclaim joy. Here are a few suggestions: (a) everyday do something that affirms beauty and joy in living; (b) get to know your neighbor(s); (c) laugh; (d) start and end each day on a positive note; (e) don't allow anger and rage to rule your life; (f) before getting out of bed, think of something to make you smile.

Share the joy of our living.

Hymn: For the Beauty of the Earth

Benediction

Response: God Be With You Til We Meet Again

Organist: Father Corbin Eddy

Choir Director: Carolyn Martin Meyer

***Children's Choir (& ages):** Kaidyn Bryant (5), Payton Bryant (8), Aurora Bryant (6), Grace Ford (9), Peyton Ford (7), Zinnia Meyer (6), Richard Probst (13), Taylor Probst (11), Kate Probst (8), Lucy Westlake (13), Jack Westlake (11), Samantha Wiesner (10)

****Choir Members:** *Sopranos:* Carole Bard, Tacy Flint, Connie Martin, Nancy Molloy

Altos: Phyllis Bergh, Joanne Bollinger, Marcia Goodrich, Deanna Martin, Lani Poynter

Tenors: Peter Manderfield, Ramsey Meyer, Larry Molloy, Gerald Rowe

Basses: Chuck Meyer, Graham Meyer, Jack Porritt, Rodney Westlake

Board of Directors: James R. Brooks, Gary A. Bryant (*Pres.*), John T. Bryant, Lynn C. Bryant (*Sec.*), James K. Curto, Jeffrey Nicholls Curto, Pete Manderfield, John W. Markee (*Vice Pres.*), Carolyn Martin Meyer, Lawrence J. Molloy (*Treas.*), David H. Thomas, Dr. Brian D. Wake, Dr. Joan P. Wake, Laura Wake Wiesner