

Service 23rd April 2023 -  
Celebration of Joy – led by Ann Kader

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Lula ( cello) - Ode to Joy 2.58 mins  
Welcome and Chalice lighting words

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May the God of diversity draw us close  
To each other here today  
Old, young, weak and strong,  
Wise and not so wise  
Let us be bound together by your love  
May it be so

1st hymn

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Purple book no. 33 Enter rejoice and come in  
We sing the joy of living

Native American prayer gratitude prayer

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Creator, open our hearts  
To peace and healing between all people.  
Creator, open our hearts  
To provide and protect for all children  
Of the Earth  
Creator, open our hearts  
To respect the Earth, and all gifts of the Earth.  
Creator, open our hearts  
To end exclusion, violence and fear among all.  
Thank you for the gifts of this day and every day.

Mi'Kmaq prayer

Prayer for happiness

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Divine Spirit,  
Help me to rest in happiness  
To allow a smile to linger on my lips  
To dwell in a wonderful memory  
To walk back through sunlit places.

Please help me to awake with hope,  
To engage with life in all its variety,  
To take in the beauty of others' joys,  
To touch the souls of those I meet with thankfulness.

Please help me to sing with faith,  
To carry the truth close to my heart always,  
To rejoice at new life  
And have peace as I age.  
Please help me to indulge in love  
To taste the kindness of friendship  
To feel the warmth of a hug  
Please help me not to miss a single drop and catch each moment of the great  
joy of life.

#### Story - The Knight of the World

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There once was a heroic knight. He was one of the knights whose triumphant deeds are still recounted in the old stories, in all languages, everywhere. His bravery was great, and his sword was feared, but he was tired of hunting for dragons, ogres and minsters in story after story. He decided to abandon that fairytale world, and come and test out his bravery and skill in the real world.

However, when he arrived here, he found no terrible creatures and no evil wizards to wave his sword at.

It was very strange. All he saw were worried people, with the same looks on their faces as he had seen on the faces of people he was rescuing from dragons and monsters.

It didn't seem like there was anyone to put them in such fear, or to make them live in a state of anxiety. Everyone hurried here and there, not speaking to anyone, as though something terrible was about to happen.

But at the end of the day, nothing ever really happened.

And so it was, day after day. The knight thought that maybe this could turn out to be his most heroic adventure ever, and he decided to totally devote himself to finding the source of this mysterious worry in the real world.

He searched, he inquired, he investigated, he sailed, he climbed ..... but he

found nothing.

Not willing to give up, he returned to the fairytale world to speak to the Wise Old Man.

“ Tell me, wise one. What is the great invisible enemy that strikes fear into the hearts of people in the real world? I still haven’t found it, but I won’t rest until I have defeated whatever it is, and freed everyone. Just like I did here, for so many cities.”

The wise old man was quiet for a long while, then finally said: “you have neither the strength nor courage to win this battle. The enemy does not exist, yet it is powerful and as numerous as the stars in the sky.”

“ What?” protested the knight, “ Is that even possible?”

“ in the real world, because they have no dragons or ogres, they invent their enemies, and carry them inside. Each person there has an enemy made to measure, which lives inside their heart. For some it’s called greed, for others envy, for others selfishness or pessimism. They have sown seeds of negativity in their souls, and take the fruits with them wherever they go. It is no easy task to uproot all that.” Said the wise old man.

“ I will do it, I will set them free” said the knight.

And so the knight returned to the real world, bringing with him all his weapons. Everyone he met, he would offer to free them from their negative life. However, no one paid him the slightest attention, all he found was indifference and looks of surprise.

Finally, exhausted and confused, he threw down his weapons and went over to a rock at the side of the road, to rest. On his way there, he tripped over his sword, and fell to the ground, knocking his head against a cockerel which had been crowing in the vicinity.

A sad looking little man was passing by, and when he saw this, he burst out laughing so much that he could hardly stay on his feet. The knight was angry, but on looking closely at the man, he could see in his eyes a joyful shine that he had never yet seen in the real world.

And so it was, that the knight had found the solution to the deep sickness of the people of the real world. They only needed a smile, a laugh, a little help to banish their negative feelings and finally enjoy life.

From that day on, the knight, armed with a big smile, started recruiting an army of liberators: a large and growing group of people able to remind anyone of the joy that is life.

He then was able to eventually return to fairytale world until needed

somewhere else.

Music by Suzanne 5 mins.

Poem " Everyday Joy" by Caroline

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We are different this afternoon  
Set apart from the straining shoppers, with eyes only for the 2p off.  
Blissfully unaware of the shifting queues.  
Grumbling that the bus won't come and the rain will.  
Today, we are searching for joy.  
Like fledglings we test our newly awakened power of observation  
At the wrought iron flowers of manhole covers  
Bloom under our gaze  
Would we ever look up  
And can see those windows  
High above the road  
Windows carved and curved  
Dreaming of halcyon days  
Of distant fields  
And passing horses  
Round the corner, we lean on the churchyard wall  
Crushing the lichen as we admire the symmetry of the arching doorways. We  
are all guilty of neglect.

2nd hymn green book no 3 - Joy of Living  
Readings

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"Others Look to you" by White Eagle  
From the Book The Quiet Mind

Do not be beguiled by the attractions of materialism, or by the sorrows and anxieties which your karma brings. Have courage, for many depend on you, your thoughts, your attitude; they are looking to you and unconsciously recognise in you a light. They know that you have something which is helpful and good. Keep the light shining in your heart and mind, and remember the great privilege which has been given to you to help lead them onward and upward to the glorious morning star.

What do we mean by sending forth the light? Give out the love you feel in your heart, and it goes forth as a light. If you could see yourselves when you are truly sending forth the light, you would see a great radiance flowing from your heart. Your aura would be shining. You would see the rays penetrating to a

limitless degree, touching the heart, the understanding, even the physical life of all.

### Fancy and Fact by Richard Gilbert

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Let us learn to play with life,  
For we seem to work too hard at it.  
Let us learn to sing when we have only spoken.  
For the melody casts words on winds of hope.  
Let us learn to enjoy cadences of poetry instead of pages of prose,  
For they may be closer to the rhythms of life.  
Let us make room for fancy while we give fact a rest.

Let us learn to smile when we are tired with the work we have to do.  
Let us laugh when our tensions give rise to anger.  
Let us learn to be merciful when we want to be judgemental.

Let us play in the fields of myth and legend,  
For news and facts will always be there.  
Let us sample the whimsical words of the poets  
More than the studies words of the scholars.  
Let our thoughts roam in realms of imagination  
Rather than linger in quagmires of reality

May hope find it's way into our hearts  
Even when our minds tell us there is no hope.  
May charity speak to us even when we have nothing to give.  
May loving kindness be with us when our store of love is exhausted.  
Let it be so for a time, for a season,  
And perhaps that season will linger and take hold.  
Never to let us go.

Quiet meditation followed by  
Whistle played by Delphine

## Address on Joy

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I wanted this service to be a celebration of our beautiful congregation. Matthew Fox the theologian says "To celebrate life is to celebrate God."

I get a daily online inspiration from Daily Om . Recently they talked about the inbetween times and how it's during those times we are most in tune with life's profound, albeit simple joys. It goes on to say between birth and death, triumph and sorrow, beginnings and endings, we enjoy innumerable experiences that often happen unnoticed. These times are just as worthy of celebration. So I thought this day, this inbetween day, not one of our major celebrations, this day needed to be celebrated.

I've been practising a death awareness buddhist meditation, you meditate each day as though it will be your last. When you come out of your meditation, you really appreciate every minute of that day. Joy is the spirituality of being alive and of being happy for other people.

The late Desmond Tutu said we are meant to live in Joy. This does not mean it will be easy or painless. It means that we must turn our faces to the wind and accept that this is a storm we must pass through. We cannot succeed by denying what exists. The acceptance of reality is the only place from where change can begin. The Archbishop had said that when one grows in the spiritual life " you are able to accept anything that happens to you, " you accept the inevitable frustrations and hardships as part of the war and woof of life. The question , he had said, is not, how to escape it? The question is how we can use this as something positive.

He says , acceptance, whether we believe in God or not, allows us to move into the fullness of joy.

Memories can bring great joy. C.S. Lewis in his book "Surprised by joy" says: "As i stood beside a flowering currant bush on a summer day, there suddenly arose in me without warning, and as if from a depth not of years but of centuries, the memory of that earlier morning at the Old House when my brother had brought his toy garden into the nursery.

He says the feeling was like enormous bliss.

I felt the same walking through Dartmoor and seeing the wonderful yellow of the gorse. The blossom was beautiful but it was the gorse. It brought back memories of a day trip to Epping forest when I was little. I didn't realised then that they were bushes. I thought they were the most beautiful flowers I had ever seen and I broke some off to take a bunch of these back to my mum for a present.

Of course I wouldn't damage them now. But oh the joy when I see them.

Joy is a gift given to us, whereas happiness we can try to pursue that. Joy is pure and can be the simple delight of being alive and we often experience joy in being of service to others.

Rabindranath Tagore says " I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy."

We all feel happy when we give a little, even just passing a hymn book or doing the teas or even the dreaded rotas.

But joy, I think is mainly about wonder.

Joy doesn't have to be big, it can be in the everyday, if only we can recognise what's been given to us by God. We go through the days not really appreciating the beauty that surrounds us but like the Native American prayer, let us be grateful for these gifts that if we think about it, do give us joy.

The wonderful Maya Angelou says, " Joy is a freedom, it helps a person find his or her own liberation. The person who is joyous takes responsibility for the time he or she takes up and the space they occupy. You share it. That is what joy is. When you give it away, you will still have so much more of it."

Sorrow ( remember the reading from last week) May be the price we pay for joy. If you experience sadness and tears, remember they can be a stepping stone to joy.

I go back to the book by C.S. Lewis and finish with what's called a vow or a blessing from the book. It just consists of 4 lines:

1. Passing a smiling person in the street is my cue to practice joy.
2. Whenever I see people dancing. I am reminded to release the joy in me.
3. Knowing how much pleasure there is in making others happy. I vow to practice joy.
4. It is Lady Wisdom who draws an abundance of joy from our souls.

Closing hymn

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Purple book no. 155 The Day will come

Benediction from the Book of Runes

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Divine Spirit, grant us weak eyes for things of no account and strong eyes for all thy truth.

May it be so

Closing music

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Harry Secombe - Song of Joy 2.58 mins