



Advent Joy

"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people." Luke 2:10

Dear Friends,

This coming Sunday we will light the Advent candle of JOY. So often in the church we talk about 'good news.' The word gospel literally means good news. But I wonder if we in the church have forgotten that this joy the angel is proclaiming is for ALL people and that our Joy as followers of Jesus is not limited to just the Christmas season. Our faith should bring us joy all year round.

My calling as a pastor is to grow the church. That being said, I tell folks "if your church doesn't bring you joy, you need to find another church. If your faith doesn't bring you joy you probably need to question your faith!"

The dictionary defines joy as "the emotion of great delight or happiness caused by something good or satisfying." I guess one of the challenges for us Presbyterians is we tend NOT to be very emotional, so maybe it is challenging for us to express our joy or happiness. I know that sometimes when I look out at the congregation, almost everyone is looking so serious. On Christmas Eve we will celebrate the sacrament of the Lord's supper. The liturgy says "this is the joyful feast of the children of God. They will come from north and south and from east and west." To me, that means the table is not limited to a special group of people and it also means we don't have to be so somber looking when we share the bread and cup! My charge to you this week is to be intentional about expressing your joy, letting others see the joy of Christ in you.

This Sunday there will be a service of lessons and carols.... Lots of good music and readings followed by a very short homily instead of a sermon. I suspect that is sure to bring joy to some folks in the congregation!

Know that it is a joy for me to be your pastor.

Blessings,
Mike