



Joy
December 12, 2021
Luke 3:7-18

Connect

- What is the most joyful part of the Advent/Christmas season for you? Why?
- This Sunday in worship welcomed what has traditionally been known as “*Children’s Sunday*.” The kids and youth of Broadway are still leading aspects of worship this weekend but in modified ways given COVID restrictions. Still – they will dress in the characters of the Christmas story, sing carols, and lead us joyfully in the spirit of Christmas. If you were ever in a children’s pageant of sorts, share your experience. Was it *joyful* for you? For the congregation or those for whom you presented?

Engage

- Read *Luke 3:7-18*. Today’s lectionary reading from Luke’s Gospel follows the birth story of John shared just one week ago. We jump from diapers to ministry as *crowds* (“*even tax collectors and soldiers*” says the text!) come out to learn from John. Many were convicted by his teaching about repentance from sin and asked, “*So what are we to do now?*” Share something you have heard/experienced in recent years for which you were convicted and wondered, “*What do I do about this now that I know what I know?*” What *did* you actually do... and why?
- John spoke what seems to be a very harsh word to the people who have ventured a good distance to hear him. Why do you think people were drawn to what he had to say?
- *REPENT* is the big churchy word shared by John which simply means to turn around. What in your life right now do you feel you need to turn around? What will it take to do so?
- Is joy intended only for the moments where everything is fully resolved or just as we want them to be? If joy is more than a fleeting feeling, how do you maintain joy even in the difficult times?
- The recent classic Christmas Movie, *Elf*, follows Buddy the Elf; a human raised by elves. When Buddy finally accepts the news that he is not an elf himself, he is eager to set off from the North Pole to New York City to find his biological father, Walter. The movie takes many hilarious twists and turns but meets its goal of returning the Christmas Spirit to a world that has misplaced it. Has our world misplaced the Christmas Spirit too? What role can you, us, the Church play in bringing back a spirit of faith, hope, *JOY*, and love?

Next Steps

- Do something this week purely for the joy of it – bringing joy to yourself and also others. See if it’s not a contagious practice worth repeating weekly!

Pray

- “*As kids, O God, many of us sang that the joy was down in our hearts to stay. We confess that sometimes the joy didn’t stay. Sometimes joy vanished or we released it for some reason. Help us reclaim your joy now. May that joy lead us to sing, to rejoice, and to serve you with a joy that has staying power. Amen.*”