

What's the Source of Our Joy?

Sermon Notes for Dec 17, 2017 at Brentwood

Ps126 (532) & Isaiah 61:1-11 (678)



**For I the Lord love justice;
I hate robbery and wrongdoing.
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
(Isaiah 61:8)**

Provocative Ponderings that Call Forth Our Potential in Christ

- You may have noticed that we've been using questions for sermon titles for some time now – I find questions the most inviting way to invite deeper consideration – they activate all those processes within us that form our attitudes and behaviours – the gut, the heart, and the brain – instincts, emotions, and intellect – all working together to form the wisdom of joy, the wisdom that makes you dance with delight – like Snoopy
- In 1965, the year I started my university studies, Robert L Short published *The Gospel According to Peanuts* – it has sold over 10 million copies since then – *The Christian Century* said it succeeded in making theology enjoyable – that's where I first ran across this image of Snoopy dancing and it's been a favourite of mine these 52 years – it captures the response God invites to the Trinity's steadfast love and salvation that we focused on last week – barely constrained joy – so that's the source of our joy – the faithful and enduring love of God, constantly pursuing us to draw us into the joyful dance of creation as God intends it
- And true joy comes when we align ourselves with that intention – when we open ourselves to what God loves – when our loves and God's love come into sync – it's a life long process that takes daily practice – but in the midst of those days, there are moments, sustained at times, of barely constrained joy – Snoopy moments
- I've got the kind of personality that gravitates to this Snoopy image when I think of joy – but I was reminded this week that it's not the only way to enjoy things – I ran across a poem by Anne Sexton that wonderfully expresses the joy we meet in simple things, in simple routines – it's called 'Welcome Morning' and comes from *The Awful Rowing Toward God* (1975)

*All this is God,
right here in my pea-green house
each morning
and I mean,
though often forget,
to give thanks,*

*Notes for a sermon preached by Brian Fraser,
minister with Brentwood Presbyterian Church, Burnaby, BC*

*to faint down by the kitchen table
in a prayer of rejoicing
as the holy birds at the kitchen window
peck into their marriage of seeds.*

*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.*

Sexton committed suicide before this collection of poems was published – hers was a truly tortured and troubled life – but in the midst of her wilderness darkness, there were flashes of light like this poem, shared with millions unknown – a seed of God's joy spread with wild abandon into the fields of our fears and futilities

So, what are we going to do with this ...

So, let's paint a thank-you on our palms this morning for the laughter of God and share that joy with all who we meet this week – and remember also what lies that the core of Isaiah's witness = that God's joy arises when we do justice

Your Notes ...

Today's Framework for our Prayers

Thanks – for the many reasons you give us to be joyful, despite all the troubles and traumas that beset us ...

Help – to be mindful of your encouragement to share the joy that you give us through your everlasting covenant of love, justice, kindness, and companionship ...

Awe – at the everlasting nature of your loving intentions for us and for our participation in your justice ...