

# Notes for Brian's Sermon at Brentwood Presbyterian Church

Sun, Dec 16, 2018

## How Do We Make God Known? – Advent 3 - Joy

(Isaiah 12:2-6)



**And you will say in that day:  
give thanks to the Lord, call on his name;  
make known his deeds among the nations;  
proclaim that his name is exalted.  
(Isaiah 12:4)**

### A lesson from Isaiah's prophetic poetry

I think we saw it with Parker and Chole, our youngest grandchildren, who I think most of you have met – it's become a family tradition – they come on a Saturday afternoon – they do a treasure hunt around the apartment that Jill has devised - we have dinner, then go to a movie – then home to bed, with Parker in our big bed, Chloe on the couch, and Jill and I in the murphy bed in the office – the movie was called *Inside Out* and dealt with the confused emotions of a 12-year old girl forced by her parents to move to a new city – showered with awards, including a Golden Globe and an Academy Award – brilliant depiction of the dynamics of our emotions – it drew on the work of psychologists Paul Ekman and Dacher Keltner, both of whom have focused on how emotions structure our social interactions – and as we in those interactions, joy provides the catalytic guidance and ordering to reach a positive participation and contribution to the common good – that's Isaiah's core vision, at the core of all his various expressions of it – God in our midst, God with us, God vividly and vivaciously engaged with the world – reconciling the world to our original mission = blessing God's world with joy – that is the intent of all the 'deeds' to which we are called to witness – how might **Joy** as God's name shape that witness?

### Provocative points to ponder – as always, too many to cram into one sermon



- Our joy, with all its power to order our lives, arises from the fact that our lives have been reconciled into the heart of God – Christians understand that reality through God's coming to the world (us included, but not just us) in Jesus of Nazareth, the human incarnation of God's purpose and power – so, our joy arises from the heart of God's joy – we live in that joy – it is the controlling dynamic in our lives, no matter how dominant our other emotions seem to become at times or how confused that makes us feel – joy is always there, inviting us to return home, into joyful alignment with the justice, kindness, and humility that are core elements God is combining in bringing about the Commonwealth of God

- If we can develop a new and constantly renewed way of seeing the world that focuses on God's presence in its midst, animating everything that has the potential for being part of God's reconciling blessing, then life takes on a new order and a new delight – our gratitude for the joy that God has given us in Jesus Christ, the joy of being reconciled with our Creator, Redeemer, and Transformer, becomes the organizing emotion in our witness to God's reconciling love at work in the God's world – God's world, not 'our' world or 'the' world – the importance of those small words in shaping our witness

### **How does this all relate to our witness as a fellowship of the friends of Jesus?**

We make God known by doing what Jesus did – and we are enabled to do that by God's constant guidance into a greater awareness and appropriation of the gift of God's joy – because it is gift – in this season of gifts, what would happen if every thing we gave, every card we sent, every email message we wrote, every good wish we posted, was offered with a short prayer that it would carry with it the joy of God's reconciling love – “May this gift make known the joy of your reconciling love” – quietly repeat that with me – consider way of witnessing as we move further into the joys of Advent and Christmas – who knows how the Spirit will use such a witness to increase the power of joy in God's world?

### **My Notes**

### **My Prayers**

