



Heartbeats along the way: The Grateful, Joy-filled Heart

"You turned my wailing into dancing; You removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing Your praises and not be silent. Lord my God, I will praise You forever." Psalm 30:11-12

As I looked around in worship this morning I thought there's hardly a pew that doesn't have one of "us" sitting in it - one of "us" who would surely have died, had we been born just a few decades earlier - one of "us" whose hearts beat today, thanks to recently advanced medical technology. We live with that special reminder to be grateful for the miracle of life, don't we? But are we so unique?

Thousands of years ago, long before even aspirin, the Psalmist wrote our song - "You turned my wailing into dancing and clothed me with Joy!" He knew! He, along with St. Paul (who wrote from prison) that we should rejoice in all things. He knew too! They all knew what each of us remembers now and then - that the life we live is a miraculous gift far beyond our understanding, wildly outstripping all the joy we can express and all the gratitude we can ever give back.

So we praise Our Lord and struggle to find ways to sing back the joy - not the Pollyanna "joy" that comes from putting on blinders to the real world, but the real joy of living IN the real world - quite like the boys in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace, who found Life and God Himself INSIDE the fire that this world thought would destroy them; as surprised as the father in Jesus' great story who finds himself joyfully running toward his returning prodigal son - joy as surprise, joy as a gift, joy as the hallmark of God's persistent love for us all!

Let us pray together to be open to God when God calls us to new paths, to new buildings, to new ways of singing back in joy!

Lord, "Be Thou our vision," O Joy of our heart! Thank you for all your steadfast love and care for us. Show us now new ways we can run after You in Joy! Amen.

~ Don Schoeps

Please consider attending one or all of the services at CUMC this week:

The CUMC Holy Week morning services and breakfasts.

- Beginning at 7:00am with Worship in the Chapel, followed by a hearty breakfast and fellowship in the Multipurpose Room
- Worshipping on Friday morning in the Sanctuary, with Holy Communion and the combined CUMC Adult choirs

The March 29 Maundy Thursday service at 7:00 PM in the Sanctuary

The Friday March 30 Community Cross Walk from Noon - 2:00 PM, beginning at New Life Community Church, North & Bedford streets (the original First UMC building)

The Easter Sunday Services

6:45am - Sunrise Service on the Spring Garden Campus, 333 South Spring Garden St

8:15am - Traditional Service (Sanctuary); 9:45am - Contemporary Service (MPR); 11:00am - Celebration Service (Sanctuary)