

WESTMINSTER CHURCH

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA

Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario P6A 3B5

*“Trusting God, nurturing disciples for Christ,
being empowered by the Holy Spirit”*

August 21st, 2022

Responsive Call to Worship: Psalm 118:24

Leader – This is the day that the Lord has made

People - **Let us rejoice and be glad in it!**

...Let Us Worship God...

Announcements: We are glad you are with us today and welcome your online voices joining with us in praise and in prayer.

Birthday Train: We celebrate three birthdays this week: Tuesday Aug.23 - Lily McDermid; Wednesday Aug. 24 - Liisa Daoust and Thursday Aug. 25 - Natalie Serré. May the Lord bless each of you with a day full of His joy and delight and much love, Amen.

Offerings and Tithes: Session would like to encourage our members and friends to prayerfully consider your contributions to our ongoing ministry here at Westminster. Contributions may be made in person, by mail, or by e-transfer to office@westminsterchurch.ca. We thank you for your continued support and prayers.

Hymn: Holy, Holy, Holy

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Opening Prayer of Praise and Confession: O Lord, we come before you this morning to praise and worship you. We praise you and thank you for Your Grace to us, unmerited favour. We are so aware of our need for Your forgiveness and restoration. Our hearts grow discouraged when we see ourselves so often falling short.

Lord we want to be your messengers of hope and love in a very broken and hurting world. You stand ready to forgive us – seventy times seven, when we come to you and ask with a sincere heart. We are humbled to be called your children, accepted and forgiven and embraced. You are

victorious over sin. We enter into that victory with you. Evil and all that accompanies it has no hold on us as we live under the covenant of your Love displayed in Jesus, the baby of Bethlehem and Christ, the sacrificial lamb on the cross.

You alone are holy, and full of love.

We adore you Lord and pray now as you taught us, saying..."*Our Father...*"

Assurance of Forgiveness – 1 John 1:8,9 (in unison)

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

...We Listen to God's Word...

Old Testament: Psalm 118:1, 15-29

New Testament: Philippians 1:15-27a

Hymn: O Rejoice in the Lord (see insert)

The Message: "Rejoice!"

In 1988 a pop song called "Don't worry, be happy" captured the world and these four small words in the title, became part of a greeting and were sometimes even offered as a message of encouragement. This instant popularity may have been due to the cheery little melody but I suspect the lyrics that quickly became part of our pop culture also had something to do with it.

The songwriter, Bobby McFerrin, is in fact a virtuoso American vocalist and conductor. He was born in NYC, in 1950 and is the son of an operatic baritone father and soloist mother. This little departure into a reggae genre appears to be a one and only from what I have read. It would be interesting to learn more as to what was going on in his life at the time of his writing of these lyrics.

It is clear that he does not think there is much to be gained by worrying and I agree. I think there is also a message he may have been trying to convey that life is short and one might wish to learn how to be happy in it, even amidst some trying circumstances.

Listen to some of the lyrics:

Don't worry, be happy

In every life we have some trouble

But when you worry you make it double

Don't worry, be happy

Don't worry, be happy now

*Don't worry, be happy
'Cause when you worry your face will frown
And that will bring everybody down
So don't worry, be happy*

When I hear these lyrics, I find myself thinking of the familiar scripture verse that was our call to worship today “this is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it”. In these words of the psalmist, I find myself affirming many aspects of my Christian faith.

First off, recognizing God Creator not only made the day I find myself in, but gave me life to experience it. Next I see a call from God as to what I am to do with the day. Am I to complain or moan about life or am I to be grateful for the day and show it.

McFerrin’s song recognizes what we all know; people worry.

We fret, we dwell and we often get stuck in that place and end up wallowing to the point of not being a lot of fun to be around. He says “don’t worry be happy ‘cause when you worry your face will frown and that will bring everybody down”.

For me as a child of God, I hear Jesus reminding me “do not worry, rejoice in me.”

In Mathew 6:27 we read "Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?".

Surely we can all admit that worry accomplishes very little. Jesus reminds us that doing so will not at all add to our life. David knew this as we read his statement in Psalm 31:5 "My times are in Your hands".

We only have to look around at the level of stress prevalent in our world today, and see that worry is much more likely to shorten our lives. As believers we need to remember God will feed us, clothe us, and take us home when He chooses. Our worrying will not lengthen our lives. And we will not die until God has determined that our work is done.

So how are we going to live our daily lives? Are we going to worry or be happy? Are we going to learn like Paul to be content in all circumstances and further, learn how to rejoice each day, in spite of what we face.

The book of Philippians is often called the Book of Joy. It is filled with Paul’s response to the many challenges he faced following Christ.

There are many lessons to be learned looking at Paul's example of rejoicing in the face of trials and also his rejoicing in the joy and delight he speaks about regarding fellowship from other believers.

Can we say that when facing trials, our response is to rejoice? And what does it mean to rejoice? What does it mean to be glad?

By definition, glad means to experience pleasure, joy or delight.

Rejoice means to be ecstatic with joy; to experience gladness in a high degree; to be delighted.

When I think of being glad, there is also an aspect of gratefulness.

Like I am glad something came about in a certain fashion. So to experience gladness in a high degree would most certainly take it up a notch and I would find myself rejoicing. There is a sense of being SO grateful and at the same time, being aware that choice was involved. Paul begins his letter to the church at Philippi telling them how thankful he is for them and how he prays with joy because of their shared partnership in the Gospel message.

He goes on to tell them with great enthusiasm about his experience while in chains and that even though some are out to get him, he is rejoicing because Christ is being preached.

Listen to Paul's words in Philippians 1:18b– 20.

I will continue to rejoice, (a choice he made)¹⁹ for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. [\[a\]](#)

²⁰ I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

Paul is rejoicing yet he is in a trial. It is clear that he is able to rejoice because he knows two things; other believers are praying for him and God has a plan for him and will provide the means for His purpose to be fulfilled. Paul goes on throughout the book to exhort his brothers and sisters in Christ to conduct themselves as Godly people, to imitate the qualities of Christ, to be examples of people who stand apart in the corruption around them and shine like stars. It is this life of Christian character and purpose that Paul concludes is the high and worthy calling for all who claim redemption in Jesus Christ.

Listen to what he says in Philippians 2:17-18 ¹⁷ *But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. ¹⁸ So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.* Brothers and sisters in Christ, as I read the book of Philippians I find that rejoicing in the Lord is something that is shared with one another. It is a call to our faith.

At Westminster, we gather here on Sunday mornings – now it is in person and on line. Each of us come with matters of the heart; some are matters of joy such as news about the birth of a new baby, or a good test result from a health issue and others of us come with heavy hearts; with a burden from a loss of a loved one, or a health issue with a poor test result. In these last two years, it has been very important to connect even if we are not in person. Charlene’s introduction of prayer on Wednesday nights and the prayers on Sunday for birthdays in our church family, have been an important thread of connection.

We are called to rejoice “*to experience gladness in a high degree*” and the only foundation on which we have to do that is faith in Jesus Christ. So with Paul, our lesson is to learn how to trust in the Lord in all circumstances, to share one another’s joys and sorrows and to be glad that we have a savior who loves and cares for us and has the power and desire to uphold us.

When we come together to worship on Sunday morning, it is right that we inquire with one another and share in where we are at and that we rejoice in our faith in Christ. We need to pray for one another and sing hymns and praise the Lord for His saving Grace. We need to encourage each other to keep on looking to the Lord. Life events will cause us to reflect anew, and affirm our faith expressed in this familiar verse of Psalm 118:24. *This (today) is the day which the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.*

In closing I cannot help but think of my grandmother Myers and her life attitude. Gramma lived to be in her 96th year. In the latter years, she would say “when I get up in the morning and I look in the mirror I say, well you’re still here – it is going to be a good day”. She raised nine children, my Dad being the oldest. She knew many times of joy and a great deal of heartache of course however at the end of her life she had managed to maintain an attitude of grateful rejoicing for life itself as the Lord tarried.

Is that our testimony today?

This is the day that the Lord has made – Let us surely rejoice and be glad in it”. Amen.

...We Respond in Service...

Prayers of the People:

God of the wind and the sea and the storm, so many are weathering the storms of life today, and we lift them up to you now in the silence of our hearts. Heavenly Father, we pray for those who are suffering the effects of real storms. For those who have lost their homes and livelihoods due to flooding, we pray for your strength to comfort them. For those who are living in fear of wildfires that are quickly spreading out west, we pray for rain. We pray that you keep safe all the first responders.

We pray for those who are struggling through personal storms and see very little to be glad about. We lift up those who are doubting, those who are struggling with the everyday weight of depression and anxiety, those who long for someone to reach out their hand and give them hope, something to rejoice in Lord and we know that is you. We pray that your love and compassion would surround each of us as we move through this turbulent world. Show us how to be your servants and messengers of encouragement today.

Lord we lift up our ministers, John and Charlene today and ask for your touch of refreshing rest upon them on their vacation.

We pray for our country, O Lord, for those in leadership and power. That they would seek justice and peace in the decisions they make every day. We pray for our world leaders, that they would reach out in peace to one another, that you would guide them on a path to protect and serve your children. Lord we ask that you would bring to an end, the places where war is happening in our world today.

Lord God, as we reach out to you, crying “Lord, save us,” we know that you have already reached out your hand to us, hearing our prayers and holding us close.

We commit our prayers to you today, in Jesus strong Name we pray, Amen.

Hymn: Rejoice the Lord is King

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Benediction: Philippians 1:4-6

REJOICE IN THE LORD

By Ron Hamilton, child of God, cancer survivor (based on Job 23:10)

Verse 1: God never moves without purpose or plan.
When trying His servant and molding a man.
Give thanks to the LORD, though your testing seems long.
In darkness, He giveth a song.

Chorus: O REJOICE IN THE LORD!
He makes no mistake.
He knoweth the end of each path that I take!
For when I am tried and purified,
I shall come forth as gold.

Verse 2: I could not see through the shadows ahead,
So I looked at the cross of my Saviour instead.
I bowed to the will of the Master that day,
Then peace came, and tears fled away!

Now I can see testing comes from above,
God strengthens His children, and purges in love.
My Father knows best, and I trust in His care;
Through purging, more fruit I will bear.

Chorus: O REJOICE IN THE LORD!
He makes no mistake.
He knoweth the end of each path that I take!
For when I am tried and purified,
I shall come forth as gold.

Prayers - Wednesday Aug. 17, 2022

Romans 12:12 says... "Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer".

Birthdays

Tuesday Aug.23 - Lily McDermid; Wednesday Aug. 24 - Liisa Daoust and Thursday Aug. 25 - Natalie Serre. We pray for these three ladies and thank the Lord for their presence in our church family.

Praise

Lord we praise you for your promise of answered prayers. Even when we do not see we know you are at work and we are grateful; thank you for your faithfulness to us Lord.

We praise you Lord for Dennis who is being treated for lung cancer and not having any side affects. We continue to lift him up before you for a good response to the treatment in extending his life.

We praise you for answered prayer that Josie is now at home and managing fairly well, after five months in the hospital.

We praise you for answered prayer for Beth's friend's son who survived a brutal accident and is recovering and we pray for continued improvement.

We praise you Lord for the excellent response for Sharon's friend Patsy who is finishing up her chemo treatments and it has gone quite well.

We praise you and thank you Lord for a young man who has been suffering with depression and has found good support through Christian counselling and has returned to work.

Prayers

Lord we lift up our ministers Revs. John and Charlene to you as they take vacation and study leave for the month of August. Bless them, keep them safe and well in their travels. Lord, touch

them with renewal and refreshing of the Holy Spirit that will give them rest and a new energy and vision of their service to you. Bless them Lord, we ask in Jesus Name, Amen.

We pray for Ursula Hagen who is in hospital. May she know your presence every day and may the family know that you are with them as well.

We pray for Beth's father-in-law who is dealing with Alzheimer's and end of life issues. We ask for comfort for him and his wife and all of the family at this time.

Lord, we pray for those who are dealing with cancer.

We pray for Carl Meierhoff who has just been diagnosed with lung cancer. Lord please draw Carl to yourself and help him to know you are with him through this journey. We pray for excellent treatment and a good outcome. We pray for people to come along Carl and support him during this time.

We pray for Charlotte and Grayson who continue their living with cancer journeys. Give them strength and courage. We pray for Your on going watch care and encouragement for Charlotte and Grayson and their families.

We continue to pray for Peter's sister-in-law who is still battling cancer. Be with her and be with Peter and his family as they try to support her.

Lord, we pray for those who are facing a variety of other medical issues.

We pray for Joan Van Bentham who broke her leg. May she heal quickly.

We pray for Charity. Lord, continue to heal her body and encourage her heart to know you are there as she seeks you. We pray for complete healing and restoration.

We pray for Les Dool as he recovers from surgery for a couple of cyst removals.

We pray for Jackie and his ongoing health issues. He is doing a little better and really appreciates these prayers for him.

We pray for Noella's son, Guy Thibodeau, who had a massive heart attack. Be with him in his recovery. May he be aware of your presence Lord as he seeks you.

Other prayers.

We pray for Nicole and her 9 year old daughter Hope who face the loss of Bryan who was their husband and father. It will be a difficult summer. Be with them, Lord.

Lastly, Lord, we pray for the churches of St. Paul's and Victoria as they face changes again. May they put their trust in you and experience your presence with them at this time.