

Today's reflection comes from Rev. Patricia Ludwig. Rev. Ludwig as served in many churches over a long career in ministry. She has served in the United Church of Christ and the American Baptist Churches, USA. She has also served on the Community Missions Board. Pastor Mark



That Your Joy May Be Complete

These are trying time for us as members of a world community, a national community, a state community and in our own community right here in the surrounding Falls area.

So I wonder how others are handling this moment in time...are you doing what I am doing? Taking my husband with me to help me measure how far 6 feet is from another person? I am trying to be funny here since my husband is over 6" tall!

Are you also making a list of the 'important' things you have to do in a day?

Like today, my list included: get up, go downstairs, fix breakfast, eat breakfast, read the morning headlines, jump in the shower (not literally, of course!), shampoo my hair, dry off, get dressed, pick my favorite pair of butterfly socks, walk downstairs, face the day...you get the point.

For the first time in my 48 years of ministry, I have absolutely nothing on my calendar all this week and all next week: no meetings to go to, no sermons to prepare, no people to see, no lunch dates with friends. So I have to make things up...

But I also have taken time to reflect and one of my favorite Bible verses to reflect on when I am in a funk, when I get nervous about the future, when I get scared about Covid -19... is from the Gospel of John, where Jesus says, "I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete." (John 15:11)

I take a deep breath and realize that God's will for us is JOY! Jesus wants us to be happy, filled with the Joy of Jesus, you might say. It's the same kind of joy that Jesus had even though he was facing a situation of horrible proportions when he said those very words. If Jesus wants us to have that much joy, who am I to refuse? And then I will have joy to completion!

I totally get it...even in these crazy times, even when we don't all get the same messages from our leaders, even when others refuse to hunker down, even when I wonder about being in the vulnerable age group, even when I can't get to my niece's wedding, even when life is turned up side down, God wants JOY for each one of us. What an incredible gift!

And a gift we can pass on to others:

So I take seriously the quote from J.M. Barrie when he says, "Always be a little kinder than necessary." And another wiser Person said, "Love one another as I have loved you."

In these uncertain moments that we are all in right now, it would be the right thing and the kind thing and the loving thing to remember these words.