

# Take Joy

*The Lord your God is in your midst—a warrior bringing victory. He will create calm with his love; he will rejoice over you with singing.*      Zephaniah 3:17

**This Sunday is the JOY Sunday of Advent**—pink candle on the Advent wreath! This does seem to be the one Sunday that we never swap around the other words of love, peace, hope, and so on. On this coming Sunday in worship we will use two readings from the prophets, from Zephaniah and Isaiah. They describe the *big* joy of God’s forgiveness, reconciliation, restoration, gift of life. The very definition of the joy is our joy in the Lord.

I love the verse from Zephaniah, above, which is not only about our joy, but God’s. The *big* joy of God’s redemption is a two-way joy. We have joy in our salvation, and God the shepherd rejoices over gathering up the sheep and cuddling the lambs. (Who are, by the way, not very cuddly.) God takes joy in the people. I recently saw a posting from a friend with a video of her little boy singing “I love you, Lord, and I lift my voice. . .take joy, my king, in what you hear. May it be a sweet, sweet sound in your ear.” In our worship, song, and life we can give God joy.

I believe that a necessary part of the life of worship and praise is for us to *take joy*. Our pink/rose candle this week is also a candle of the shepherds. The shepherds went away from seeing the baby Jesus praising and rejoicing. They took joy. We do not often use that phrase, which is a bit archaic. I ran across it in a novel I was reading—an older book. A woman advises her friend to “take joy.” She means for him to take joy in little things: his beautiful watch, friendship, a child he befriends, warmth on a cold day. Little joys.

This is my Advent encouragement for you, my friends: take joy. I need the reminder myself. Take joy in all the *little* joys that surround us, which are equally gifts of God. Christmas lights. A reindeer antler headband with blinking lights (Rhonda gave me one this week.) Soup. A rose-colored frosty morning. Birds at the bird feeder. Christmas cards. May they be a sweet sound in your life that brings you closer to a God who rejoices in us.

*by Rev Karen Oehl*

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definition of JOY  
is our joy  
in the Lord*

## STAFF:

Pastor: Rev Karen Oehl  
revoehl@gmail.com

Assistant Pastor: Rev Bob Alexander  
reverandrla@yahoo.com

Admin Asst./Financial Secretary:  
Rhonda Williamson,  
officegaystumc@gmail.com

Treasurer: Sherri Pembrook

Organist: Bob Hendrickson

Wesley Ringers Dir: Mary Kepple

Chancel Choir Dir: Mary Kepple

Youth Bells Dir: Heather Stewart

Kitchen Mgr: Karen Pritchard

Custodian: Keyaira Daniel