

Community of Christ

Fairbanks Branch Happenings

November 11, 2004

Sunday, November 14th – Pancake Breakfast – 9:00 a.m. – A family Advent activity is being planned. Each family will be able to make an item that can be used during the Advent season. Lots of fun- You don't want to miss!!!! This year we are making Advent Calendars out of felt. This would be a great opportunity to invite someone to share with us. Good food, fun project, great people- **Bring scissors** or cutting wheel to use to cut the felt. If you have “**tacky glue**”, that would be helpful. If you plan on inviting a guest, please let me know so that I can have adequate supplies.

Sunday, November 14th – 5:00- Congregational Planning Meeting (CPM)-Leadership Meeting – All are invited. Be active in your congregation.

The theme for this Sunday is “**Shout for Joy**”

Joy
Our gift from
You

Joyful, joyful we adore Thee, God of glory, Lord of love ... All Thy works with joy surround Thee, Earth and heaven reflect Thy rays ... Thou art giving and forgiving, Every blessing ever blest ... Teach us how to love each other, Lift us to the joy divine.

Psalms 5:11-12 But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; Let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; Let those also who love Your name Be joyful in You. 12 For You, O LORD, will bless the righteous; With favor You will surround him as with a shield.

Isaiah 61:10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

From the song to the psalm do you get the idea that “joy” and being “joyful” hinges on something greater than just you or me being happy.

The questions are endless and the answers empty when all we are looking for is a little happiness. Why? Because we tend to equate being happy with what is happening to us externally. Happiness depends on me being able to either control my circumstances, or have someone alleviate me from them. If we cannot control or alleviate ... we become unhappy.

On the other hand, if we are looking for “joy” as the song and psalm speaks of ... we have to learn to seek the “Source” of joy from outside our circumstances. To be satisfied in God ... produces “joy” ... regardless of the circumstances. But let's not leave “joy” in God as some ... catch all whatever you want it to be. Joy in God is to know Christ in ... justification, salvation, sanctification, and ultimately glorification. And it is not just a matter of being justified from my sin, saved from my sin, and set apart from my sin ... but even more so, that I can have a glorious relationship with God through His Son Jesus Christ both now and forever!

- ◆ Joy is a fruit of the Spirit ... Galatians 5:22
- ◆ Joy is the work of God ... Romans 15:13
- ◆ Joy is the effect of Grace ... 2 Corinthians 8:1-2

John 15:11 "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.

This divine joy connection is why ...
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James could write ... Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, (James 1:2 NIV)
Paul could declare ... And not only that, but we also glory (joy; rejoice) in tribulations, (Rom 5:3)

How do we become this “joyful?” It has to do with “seeking first the kingdom of God” ... “denying yourself and taking up the cross” ... “praying without ceasing” ... “turning the other cheek and going the second mile.” **Being joyful is all about what God is doing in us, not what is going on around us.**

Take the days of Habakkuk ... the circumstances of the people were terrible ... the bad boys of Babylon were coming to “kill, steal and destroy.” Habakkuk spoke to the people not concerning their happiness, but their joy ... and the Source of it.

Habakkuk 3:17-18 Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls; 18 Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

Was it a “happy” time ... no, but Habakkuk had connected to the Source of his joy. So what gives when I don't feel joy? It might be you have disconnected from God, the Source of your joy and there is ...

- ◆ unresolved conflict, unexamined lifestyle, unconfessed sin

All of these will disconnect us from joy ... and cause us to seek happiness of self-fulfillment ... which ultimately leads to unhappiness and un-fulfillment.

Consider King David ... he sought his own happiness ... and tried to fulfill it with lust and adultery with Bathsheba. From there he tried to control his circumstances through manipulation and finally murder.

Psalms 32:3-4 When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long. 4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah

There was no happiness ... for David or his entire family! There was no joy, for he had disconnected with God the source of his joy.

Have you disconnected? Take a moment to examine your life pursuits ... is it for happiness or joy? Is there sin blocking the flow of God's joy in your life? Are there unresolved relationships pending in your life? Is it time to reconnect to the God who is the Source of our joy? Let us ... examine, resolve and connect!

“We are chosen for joy. However hard the Christian way, it is both in the traveling and in the goal, the way of joy. There is always a joy in doing the right thing. When we evade some duty or some task, when at last we set our hand to it, joy comes to us. The Christian is the man of joy. A gloomy Christian is a contradiction in terms, and nothing in all religious history has done Christianity more harm than its connection with black clothes and long faces.” – William Barclay, The Gospel of John, Vol 2

As David examined (by force of Nathan) his life circumstances he came to God to confess his sin and there he found the reconnection to the joy of God.

David prayed... Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, (Ps 51:12a)

Prior to this reconnection of joy he prays ... forgive me, wash me, cleanse me ... all as a means of confession.

Psalms 32:11 Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous; And shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

God is ready to reconnect us to His joy ... are you? Let's sing ...

Joyful, joyful we adore Thee, God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flowers before Thee, Opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; Drive the dark of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness, Fill us with the light of day!

Above excerpted from a sermon preached by Robert AuBuchon at First Baptist Church Camdenton, Missouri

The **worship and nursery schedules** have been **posted** in the family center for October through December. Please check these.

Sunday, December 5th – Business Meeting - 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, December 5th – Christmas Cookie Exchange – Details to follow but start thinking about what recipe you want to make for this. Recipes should be e-mailed to Martha Romig for inclusion in the recipe book. The cookie exchange rules follow:

COOKIE EXCHANGE RULES

1. Each person will bring 5 dozen homemade cookies.
2. Cookies should be brought on a platter.
3. Each person should bring a container for the cookies they will take home.
4. Recipes should be e-mailed (mharman1979@yahoo.com) or given to Martha Harman

If you do not wish to bake, please come and enjoy the fun. There will be refreshments for everyone.

H.O.T. Wrapping Night – To be announced, but make plans to go to H.O.T. and wrap gifts that will be distributed to needy children.

Ongoing –

H.O.T. Christmas Gift Drive – It is not too early to bring unwrapped toys, games, etc. appropriate for boys and girls up to age 16 to the church. Items should be new or “very” gently used. Toy guns, knives, swords, etc. cannot be accepted. A table has been set up in the Fellowship Hall to collect the presents.

Anyone interested in **changing the sign** for a few weeks???? If so, see **John Reimer** to be scheduled.

Please review the prayer list in the Sunday bulletin. If you have added someone to the list please update Leo Caesar with any new information and current status of the prayer concern. Please contact Leo Caesar if you wish to add/remove someone from the list...

Calendar & Mission Center News:

The Coastal Bend Mission Center is proud to announce that the Coastal Bend web site is up and running! You can visit the site at www.coastalbendmc.org

November 14th- Pancake breakfast and Advent Calendar Activity 9:00 a.m. - Fairbanks

November 14th- Congregational Planning Meeting (CPM) 5:00 - Fairbanks

December 5th – Business Meeting- 10:00 a.m. – Fairbanks

December 5th – Christmas Cookie Exchange

January 7-9th – Silent Retreat – Cenacle House

Silent Retreat - January 7-9, 2005

To be held at The Cenacle Retreat House 420 N. Kirkwood, Houston, TX 77079

January 7-9, 2005-Sponsored by Live Oak-Community of Christ Marlene Krueger-Retreat Spiritual Director

Anyone interested is invited to participate in this opportunity to experience the Spirit of God in new ways. This will be a silent retreat except for discussion of experiences during a Saturday evening activity. Some direction will be given on how to direct your thoughts, but the most important thing is that you allow the Holy Spirit to direct you. You may bring inspirational

reading materials, Bibles, journals, or other materials that you feel will help you to be in a deeper relationship with God as you meditate during the day. There is an outdoor labyrinth for mediation. Spiritual Directors from the Cenacle will be on hand for individual spiritual counseling to those desiring and administration will also be available. A free yoga class and/or massage therapy (\$35/half hour) may be provided based on advanced interest.

Silence is sometimes a difficult thing for us to do in this busy world of ours and it can be a little scary. The reward can be a quiet reflective time between you and God. You can use the silence to listen for that still small voice or to rest in the Lord. The weekend will be what you make of it and can be a powerful tool for healing and restoring the spirit, if that is what you seek.

Check-in will be at 7:15 PM on Friday, January 7th and the retreat will conclude with a Sunday morning communion service followed by lunch.

Registration forms can be found at:

<http://mail.coastalbendmc.org/docs/2005-silent-retreat-registration.pdf>

The following is a schedule of those that are currently scheduled to deliver the message for the 4th quarter. This is not the “official list” and is for informational purposes only. Please refer to the worship schedule in the fellowship hall for changes.

November 14th – Dick Davies

November 21st – Sue Turner

November 28th – Leo & Carole Caesar

December 5th – David Romig

December 12th – Doug White

December 19th – John Reimer

December 26th – Leo & Carole Caesar

I will be sending out periodic e-mails letting everyone know what is “HAPPENING” at Fairbanks. Please let me know if your e-mail or other contact information changes.

Mark your calendars and **participate, enjoy, reach out!!!!!!** I pray that everyone have a safe and happy week.

Martha Romig