

## Hudson Church Epistle

### Tuesday, December 8, 2020

Hello Church!

My day yesterday did not go as expected. When I went to bed on Sunday evening, I was looking forward to a morning researching **joy** as a topic for this Church Epistle. When I woke up on Monday morning, clearly I was coming down with something viral and could not taste my coffee. Given our confirmed positive exposure on Sunday 11/29 and the constant monitoring our staff is doing on current COVID risk management and health practices, I did what needed to be done. Rather than spending my morning writing about joy and hoping my whatever-it-was bug would go away; I called the Hudson Physicians nurse triage line and then headed over for my rapid COVID test.

The good news is that I tested negative and whatever was making my nose run is clearing up nicely on its own. According to the attending physician as I was tested that I began my confirmed exposure quarantine immediately, coupled with my risk management practices related to essential shopping (wave if you see me waiting curbside delivery at County Market), my rapid test was considered a retest, and I was declared negative with no need to retest. The other good news is that whatever triggered those symptoms yesterday morning., today my coffee is in the okay range for the new store brand I am trying—no where near as good as Joe To Go—and I am getting caught up from a morning doing my Christian duty to love my neighbor by getting tested yesterday ASAP with the earliest of symptoms.

The other related good news is that Barbara Hill writes well and on time for our DCE submissions which allowed me to have my more immediate writing—I always write the morning of the day I am published—to move from Monday to Tuesday. Thank you, Barbara. Also, the building will be able to be open for office work and the Bread Give Away tomorrow, Wednesday.

As lovely as it would be to say the Thursday Bible Study and Sunday sanctuary worship are back on, we are now back to the present normal. This means we are again waiting to see what the Hudson School Board decides tonight and announces tomorrow. It is not likely, but if they move the entire school district to Level 4, all virtual, we will remain all virtual. And finally, just for good measure no one knows yet what the snowstorm that is forming will hold for Friday and Saturday. That too needs to wait until the Thursday morning weather report. Therefore, if you want to attend sanctuary worship this Sunday, 13 December, please make your reservation with Kathy who will be back at her desk on Wednesday morning. She is always off on Tuesday afternoon, and she will get your message on Wednesday morning.

**Business done, now let us get back to growing in our relationship with God.**

In random feedback yesterday at our Lay Pastoral Care Team Zoom meeting, one member shared how the pandemic has helped them draw closer to God in large part because of these Daily Epistles. What a blessing to hear that word of encouragement! It was always my goal to encourage you to embrace this wave of time freed from the constant demands of our high achieving culture to draw closer to God. It was lovely to hear one person share how that pastoral goal was met.

But just like a motorist who happily uses a AAA Trip-Tic and pulls into a motel with a reservation for a good night's safe sleep, I am aware that today's journey still needs to be made

“and the road goes ever on.” Like the happy road tripper I will someday be again, traveling through this pandemic with you, I took “motel time” to review our DCE for topics we have not written about. I used *Anivid oitcel*. Memory refresher: that is *Lectio divina* backwards and the Wikipedia article on *Lectio divina* is good. Also, we have past DCE posted on the web page from early in the pandemic when I focused on teaching this practice. There are no Wikipedia articles on *Anivid oitcel*, it is my own invention. By it, I mean being quiet and listening what word from God comes to your heart.

In this case the Scriptures were two. First from Galatians 5:22 “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness (generosity), gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control.” You can check me, that was by memory and thanks to Dan Dick for teaching me that the Greek word usually translated “goodness” is also validly translated elsewhere in the Bible as “generosity.”

The second was just a fragment. “Be full of joy. . .” And while I thought that might be Paul writing someone, I was not sure. So, I used the Bible Gateway search engine, [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com), and typed in that phrase. It wasn’t Paul. It was Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 5:11,12: “Happy (or blessed) are you when people insult you and harass you and speak all kinds of bad and false things about you, all because of me. **Be full of joy and be glad, because you have a great reward in heaven.** In the same way, people harassed the prophets who came before you.”

Now, that is interesting. What does Paul’s use of joy to name a fruit of the spirit have to do with Jesus instructing us to “Be full of joy and be glad, because you have a great reward in heaven”? I think I just found another sermon for another day.

But not a longer Church Epistle. So, here I stop. This will be continued on Thursday, Lord willing and COVID leaves me to my work. In the meanwhile, I invite you to do this little two part assignment to help you grow in grace and a prayer request.

The first assignment is to practice *lectio divina* with Matthew 5:11,12. I have a hunch most of us do not currently experience persecution because of our Christian faith. I could be wrong but given where we live it is not likely. Second, there is still spiritual truth in these verses for you to ponder. What grabs you as you ponder them knowing your pastor is planning to keep writing about joy as a spiritual fruit in our lives?

The second assignment is to help you grow your own Bible study skills. If you are reading this on-line, you are invited to [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com) and type “joy” into the search engine. To the right of the search engine is a scroll bar where you can pick various translations in many languages, it will give you English first. Choose any and click the search button. How many times does “joy” appear in your favorite translation? Is it the same in the NIV (their default) as it is in the King James Version or The Message? I will give you the correct answer for The Common English Bible in my next epistle—now planned for Thursday.

Finally, please pray for Hudson especially the hospitality businesses on WI-35 extending from the I-94 bridge at Exit 1 all the way up to the Stillwater crossing on WI-64/MN-36. Minnesota’s current strict regulations on in-person dining have many people who want to eat out crossing those

two bridges to come to St. Croix county. Friends, this is not new—I was doing it as a college student in 1976 when I first started drinking.

What is new is that last weekend violence broke out, including three people being stabbed at First and Walnut near a bar on Saturday night/Sunday morning. One man, Cain Solheim, died there. We need to pray especially for the three restaurants with direct ties to Hudson UMC, The Village Inn, Urban Olive & Vine, and LOLO. FYI, I put them in the order my college student self would have found them. Our patchwork of municipalities' in that stretch of WI-35 will mean varied regulations—what Hudson City Council decides will not impact Village Inn's closing hours directly but it probably will impact their sales. We need these three businesses and their colleagues in our local tourism industry. We need to pray for their safety and wisdom in these troubling times. God knows best what each business needs. We know that we are called to pray “. . . Your kingdom come. Your will be done.”

Amen.

Grace always, rev. dawn