

King of Glory Lutheran Church
Pastor Ruth Ann Loughry
December 14, 2025
Isaiah 35:1-10, Luke 1:35-46
Joy Can't Wait!

Barbara Lundblad

'Chuck Campbell taught preaching at Columbia seminary in Decatur Georgia. He required students in one of his classes to lead worship and preach at the Open Door Shelter for homeless people in downtown Atlanta. One day he was leading worship in front of the shelter, amidst the noise of rush-hour traffic. After the call to Worship and a song, Chuck's plans were interrupted. "I noticed one homeless man waving to me and pointing to himself. I was surprised when I saw him for the man can either hear nor speak and is normally very reserved.

But there he was, eager to do something. He stepped into the middle of the circle, bowed his head in silence, and began to sing a hymn for us. It was beautiful, like a dance. In that moment, our notions of "abled" and "disabled" were turned upside down. The rest of us had been shouting to be heard, but the noise was no problem for our friend. Our Worship became a token of the resurrection in the midst of the powers of death, a glimpse of God's beloved community.'ⁱ

Joy can't wait! Say that with me? Joy can't wait! Yes, Joy doesn't wait to show up even in the midst of busy, loud streets, or being tight on money, gang wars, national wars, or worrying about who will take care of you when you grow old.

How does joy come to you? Watching your dog leap in the V air to catch the frisbee? Your baby's laughter at being tickled. The news of an engagement in your family. Your favorite TV sitcom that whatever the day brought, can always make you smile. Joy can't wait.

It bubbles up like a mountain stream. It is as contagious as the spontaneous singing of happy birthday in a crowded restaurant or a flash mob downtown. Joy doesn't bide its time or hold back. When it arrives, it's like Santa throwing the door open with a "ho, ho, ho!"

Surprisingly, even in parched places, little joy has a way of peeping around the corner or humming from behind the closet doors. Have you ever noticed that around a deathbed, tears and laughter come together while family tells stories of Uncle Larry.

Or down the hall from where a Dr is meeting with a newly paralyzed patient, there are peals of joy from a patient taking an assisted first step in the therapy room.

While a beloved church lies in smoldering ashes, the saints begin to sing, "Amazing Grace."

It's Advent, the third Sunday. We lit the candle for Joy! Joy in the Lord, Jesus is on His way. (Singing) **Joy to the World the Lord is come!**

The text that we heard Kathy read from the book of Isaiah, is filled with joy! It is a poem about God's exiled people, written by grandchildren or great grandchildren. Brought over as captives

of war and after decades of living in servitude, they are finally returning to their homeland, Jerusalem, under Persian rule. Some of the language about physical disabilities, is a reflection of the collective trauma of this people.

The key to the poem comes in verse 4b, “here is your God!” who comes to save... (salvation) Not at all something that pertains only to individual souls, but rather a transformation of humanity and creation that enables all to sing together in present and eternal joy.” Fred Gaiser. ⁱⁱ

You see years had come and gone, people sitting around the campfire wondering where God was. Had God forgotten them? Would they ever be able to return to the place they used to call, “home.” The time had come! See them skipping? Dancing? Hugging? Running? There are times joy can’t wait.

It’s that deep spiritual kind of joy that Mary sings from. Standing in Elizabeth and Zachariah’s living room, Mary sings for all the ancestors: for Abraham and Isaac, and Jacob. For Sarah, Rebecca, Leah, and Rachel - for all of Israel, who thought God had forgotten God’s promise to be with them forever, to love them forever, to give them fresh and endless life.... Mary was so sure of it. She was singing about it ahead of time as if the promise had already come true.ⁱⁱⁱ

The key to the Isaiah text is God comes to save (transformation of humanity and creation). Mary is singing with a deep spiritual belief that God would show up to fulfill the promises, even though it hadn’t happened yet. She is singing - as if. Those are the two beliefs you and I need.

1. God will transform and save. The message of Advent.
2. Believe as if it’s already happened. Mary’s message to the world.

People of God, how do you and I live with that deep joy which only God brings? We learn to get above the muckedee muck of everyday life to live in God’s presence. It’s putting on faith lenses to see where God is already acting and believing As If God will do what God has promised. Remember we walk by faith not sight. We walk by faith, not sight and there in lies our joy!

Is it been a long time. centuries in fact. But suddenly, Elizabeth and Zachariah knew that Messiah was on the way. Mary and Joseph knew that Messiah was on the way. And they rejoiced with every fiber of their being even though they couldn’t see Him yet.

Corrie Ten Boom and her sister Betsie were prisoners in Ravensbruck, a Nazi prison. Discovering that fleas had infested their barracks, they rejoiced. For the guards stayed away from the fleas, giving them a space to pray together and read scripture.

A tiny Bible hidden away from the guards, was a source of comfort and hope as its message with shared with hundreds of women up and down the barracks.

There’s a time when Joy simply cannot wait. When the strength and the hope and the peace and the joy of God come to rest in our spirits. The more we are open to it, the more God’s spirit brings in to us.

If this is a foreign idea for us, put again on those faith lenses and see where God is already at work. You may not read about it in the newspaper. But it's the deaf and mute man who sings a hymn. It's the food pouring into the Food Bank. It's the new patients at the North Sunrise Clinic. Or the prosthetic mechanical hand, that gives the vet a chance to touch his beloved dog once more. God is writing Joy all over God's world, each and every day!

God is a coming back! Not only as we celebrate this Christmas, but God is coming back. Believe as if it already has happened, then we will be ready with joy in His arrival. Joy can't wait! Amen.

ⁱ <https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/third-sunday-of-advent/commentary-on-isaiah-351-10-3>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/third-sunday-of-advent/commentary-on-isaiah-351-10-2>

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid. Footnote 1.