

Sunday, April 16, 2023 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church
Fullness of Joy
Bible Study
Psalm 16 and 1 Peter 1:3-9

Open with a word of prayer

Gathering Time (5-10 minutes). In pairs or groups of three, have participants share their responses to the question, “What brings you joy?”

Psalm 16. Context. This psalm is a confession of trust and confidence in God. The psalmist trusts in God so completely, it is impossible to imagine the future apart from life in God’s presence (‘you do not give me up to Sheol, or let your faithful one see the Pit’). Although this psalm is not an explicit statement of the idea of resurrection, the early Christians used it to interpret the meaning of Jesus’ resurrection. The psalmist here is King David, but as David was also seen as a prophet (even as Peter described him in Acts), his words were seen to be fulfilled in Jesus from early on in the Christian community. And when David speaks in this “prophetic” mode, his words are Jesus’ words, which is exactly how Peter understood them.

1 Peter 1:3-9. Context. The “first” letter of Peter was probably not written by the apostle, but rather by one of his followers in the next generation who was steeped in Peter’s teachings – perhaps Silvanus, mentioned in 5:12. He likely wrote from Rome, where Peter’s presence had had great influence. The letter is “first” only because it is the longer of the two letters written over Peter’s name. (In the Bible, letters were generally arranged primarily according to length, not chronology.) This week’s reading touches on the suffering that has come to these new Christians on account of their new way of life, and the joy that comes from trusting in the God who raised Jesus from the dead.

Read Psalm 16 and 1 Peter 1:3-9

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn’t make sense to you in the text?

Read Psalm 16 and 1 Peter 1:3-9 again -

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

Some reflection questions –

- What might it mean to be gifted with a “new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”? (1 Peter 1:3)

- How might receiving a “new birth” as a gift be countercultural in a society that emphasizes productivity?
- What might it look like to live confident in our “inheritance” (1 Peter 1:4-5)?
- Why do you think Peter notes that our faith is “more precious than gold”? (1 Peter 1:7)
- As a group, read aloud together Psalm 16:9-11. How do we experience God’s presence? How can we experience the joy from God as a response that can be disconnected from our present circumstances?

Closing Reflection Question

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

Prayer (10 minutes). Share prayer requests and respond appropriately.

Sending Forth (2 minutes). After all, have shared, end by praying the following or a similar prayer:

Merciful and Covenant-keeping God, we give you thanks for your faithfulness when we are faithless. Give us a fresh wind of the joy that comes from your salvation – an eternal, abundant life-giving relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. May your joy propel us to be your faithful witnesses this coming week. **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord’s Prayer....

Our Father who art in Heaven
hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power
and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.