

# MUSINGS FROM THE MANSE

The Second  Lockdown Edition – no.5 – December 13<sup>th</sup>. 2020



**ADVENT 3** The theme is Joy.

Christmas decorations adorned the Manse this week. Jill does a wonderful job putting up the inside decorations and dressing the tree and I put up the outside lights. Not so many this year as I can't reach up to fix them! The tree decorations hold many memories. Some were made by the children and every year they are brought out they get a little bit more battle scarred, an ear, a leg or arm may drop off (the decorations not the children). Some remind us of the where we brought them, places visited on our tours. The angel on the top of the tree must have put on weight, like many of us during lockdown, as it is bending the top branch.

We have a tradition where Jill ventures up into the loft to retrieve the stored wonders. Apart from fending off all the spiders and disgruntled mice there was another threat this year. After recently having some plumbing work done in the loft it was noticed that there is a junction box with lots of bare wires attached. These exposed wires were just where the metal loft ladder sits. A shocking situation. I still sent Jill up to find the decorations though. Not sure if aluminium conducts electricity .... Now I remember it does, oops!

★ Ollie the dog has now put up his stocking! ★

## JOY

Christian joy is a wonderful feeling deep within us produced by the Holy Spirit, as He causes us to see the magnificence of Christ in the word and in the world. The first thing is to realize that joy is a gift from God. The root word for *joy* in the Greek is *chara*, which is closely related with the Greek *charis* for "grace." Joy is both a gift of God as well as a response to the gifts of God. Joy comes when we are aware of God's grace and know His love.

Rick Warren adds his own definition: "Joy is the settled assurance that God is in control of all the details of my life, the quiet confidence that ultimately everything is going to be alright, and the determined choice to praise God in every situation." I think these ideas move us closer to the



true definition. Joy is a feeling, yes, but it's also an inner confidence leading to a kind of empowerment. It is also the future expectation that everything is going to be okay as we draw life and strength from the Lord —no matter our circumstances. Indeed, it is why Jesus could go to the cross "*for the joy that was set before him.*" (Hebrews 12:2) It is that close relationship we are permitted to have with our lord and saviour that is amazing. We with all our faults and failings are invited to commune with our creator.

*John 15<sup>5</sup> 'I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.*

True JOY is produced by the Holy Spirit, which is clear because neither you or I can make these things happen. They are called the fruit of the Spirit. "The fruit of *the Spirit* is love, **joy**, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, [and] self-control" Galatians 5:22-23. Therefore, the joy within us is the work of the Holy Spirit and it overflows towards God in praise and as a blessing towards those around us.

Philippians 4:4

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again:  
rejoice!

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## Puzzle Corner

Last week's puzzle. how many words can you make out of the word **CHRISTMAS**. The number is quite surprising. If you got 100 not bad, 200 very good, 300 fantastic. The official scrabble dictionary list of acceptable words is **301!** Yes, three hundred and one.

This week a Covid related question ...

"A scientist puts a virus culture in a petri dish at exactly 12 noon. Every minute the culture divides into two and doubles in size. At exactly 1 PM the petri dish is full. At what time was the dish half full?"

**Andrew and Jill**