

Saint Mary's Newsletter: December

Vicar: David Smithson 021 985530 Fridays

07 8492761 Afterhours

Peoples Warden: Sally-Ann Riddell 07 8243850

Vicars Warden: John Heaton 07 8243996



SERVICES FOR DECEMBER



Sunday 5th:

10:00am Advent 2 Holy Communion.

Refreshments: Majella Heaton

Readings: Majella Heaton

Intercessions: Majella Heaton

Sunday 12th:

10am Advent 3 Holy Communion

Refreshments: Trish Smithson

Readings: Trish Smithson

Intercessions: Trish Smithson

Sunday 19th:

10am Advent 4 Holy Communion

Refreshments: Trish Smithson

Readings: Trish Smithson

Intercessions: Trish Smithson

Friday 24th:

11pm Midnight Mass

Dec 25th to Feb 6th:

NO SERVICES. Services resume Sun 13th
Feb 2022



For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:6



DEC 25th 2021 to FEBRUARY 6th 2022:

Please note that there will be no services on and between these dates. Services will resume Sun 13th Feb 2022.

Is there a difference between joy and happiness?

There is no explicit difference between happiness and joy. Both involve the emotions, both are pleasurable feelings, and both are mentioned in Scripture in passages that equate the two.

A dictionary definition of *happiness* is “a state of well-being; a pleasurable or satisfying experience.” A definition of the word *rejoice*, related to the word *joy*, is “to feel great delight; to be glad.” Depending on the translation, the Bible uses the words *happy* and *happiness* about 30 times, while *joy* and *rejoice* appear over 300 times.

Jeremiah 31:13 says, “I will turn their mourning into gladness; / I will give them comfort and joy instead of sorrow.” Here, in the parallelism of Hebrew poetry, the words *gladness* and *joy* are used synonymously. And Proverbs 23:25 says, “Let your father and your mother be glad, / And let her rejoice who gave birth to you.” Being glad is the same thing as rejoicing in this verse. Unless we are willing to say that gladness and happiness are completely different things, then we must say that joy and happiness are linked.

It is common today to hear believers speak of a difference between joy and happiness. The teaching usually makes the following points: 1) Happiness is a feeling, but joy is not. 2) Happiness is fleeting, but joy is everlasting. 3) Happiness depends on circumstances or other people, but joy is a gift from God. 4) Happiness is worldly, but joy is divine. But there is no such distinction made in Scripture, and forcing a distinction between two words that are so obviously close in meaning is unnecessary.

If a person is joyful, then he or she is happy. There’s no such thing as glum joy. We cannot drain joy of emotion and still call it “joy.” When God’s Spirit gives us joy, then we are happy people. Christians should be joyful; happiness should characterize our everyday lives.

James 1:2 says, “Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you encounter various trials.” Christians can be happy, even in the midst of difficulties, because we know “the testing of our faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing” (verses 3–4). As we persevere through trials, with God’s help, our faith strengthens and matures. By God’s grace we can be happy despite our circumstances.

Joy is often presented as “true” contentment based on faith. Happiness, in contrast, is often thought of as “false” or “superficial” emotion dependent on circumstances. But this is a false dichotomy. There is nothing in the Bible that suggests we divorce joy from happiness. The two are equal.

Of course, there are different types of joy and happiness. There is a joy that comes from the world, such as “the fleeting pleasures of sin” spoken of in Hebrews 11:25. There is a joy that is part of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). There is a temporary happiness and an eternal happiness, but we can call both “happiness.” We don’t need to split hairs between the meaning of *joy* and *happiness*. We just need to decide where our joy comes from. Are we happy in the Lord, or are we content with the happiness the world affords?

Solomon tried the world’s brand of happiness and found it to be lacking: “I said to myself, ‘Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.’ But that also proved to be meaningless. ‘Laughter,’ I said, ‘is madness. And what does pleasure accomplish?’” (Ecclesiastes 2:1–2). The joy of the world is hollow, but the joy of the Lord is rich and abundant. The world’s happiness will fade with time, but God’s people will be happy forever.

“Those the LORD has rescued will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away” (Isaiah 35:10).

A Prayer for this month:

Lord, in this holy season of prayer and song and laughter, we praise you for the great wonders you have sent us: for shining star and angel's song, for infants cry in lowly manger. We praise you for the Word made flesh in a little Child. We behold his glory, and are bathed in His radiance.



This Month in Christian History:

Dec 29th 1170: Thomas a Becket, archbishop of Canterbury from 1161, is murdered by four of King Henry II’s Norman knights. Once a close friend of Henry’s, as his archbishop, Becket had opposed the king over several critical tax and Church issues.



Parish Bank Account:

02 0410 0103053 00 Thanks for your weekly A/P contributions to keep our Parish running!