

he rescued us in and through his terrible death. Looking forward to the coming joy-without-end, Jesus said to his followers, as he says to you, if you are among them: **As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Now remain in my love....I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.** (John 15:9, 11)

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# Old Orchard Church

## Second Sunday of Advent

December 9, 2012—10:15 to 11:50 a.m.

### Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers

Words by Laurentius Laurenti (1700); tr. Sara B. Findlater (1854)

Tune: attr. J. Michael Haydn (1737-1806); arr. In B Jacob's National Psalmody (1819).  
Greenland

Rejoice, rejoice, believers, and let your lights appear!  
The evening is advancing, and darker night is near.  
The Bridegroom is arising, and soon he will draw nigh;  
Up, watch, in expectation! At midnight comes the cry.

The watchers on the mountain proclaim the Bridegroom near;  
Go forth as he approaches, with alleluias clear.  
The marriage feast is waiting; the gates wide open stand.  
Arise, O heirs of glory: The bridegroom is at hand!

Our hope and expectation, O Jesus, now appear!  
Arise, Thou Sun so longed for, above this darkened sphere!  
With hearts and hands uplifted, we plead, O Lord, to see  
The day of earth's redemption that sets your people free.

*Joy*  
☆

We celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly—and in a circle, at the end of worship. A word of direction is given, and with this everyone stands and moves to the walls. The cup is passed in two forms: in a chalice and then in small individual cups. You are free to choose.

And as this is the Supper of the Lord Christ, please listen to the instructions we give as to what qualifies a visitor to participate. **But whether you intend to take communion or not, please join us in the circle.**

**“Father...I am coming to you now,  
but I say these things while I am still  
in the world, so that those whom you  
gave me out of the world may have the  
full measure of my joy within them.**

—John 17:13

## Celebrating The Fruit of the Spirit in Messiah Jesus: The Promise of Joy

This little Babe so few days old  
is come to rifle Satan's fold;  
All hell doth at his presence quake,  
though he himself for cold do shake;  
For in this weak unarmèd wise  
the gates of hell he will surprise.

With tears he fights and wins the field,  
his naked breast stands for a shield;  
His battering shot are babish cries,  
his arrows looks of weeping eyes,  
His martial ensigns Cold and Need  
and feeble Flesh his warrior's steed.

His camp is pitchèd in a stall,  
his bulwark but a broken wall;  
The crib his trench, haystacks his stakes;  
of shepherds he his muster makes;  
And thus, as sure his foe to wound,  
the angels' trump alarum sound.

My soul, with Christ join thou in fight,  
stick to the tents that he hath pight.  
Within his crib is surest ward,  
this little Babe will be thy guard.  
If thou wilt foil thy foes with **joy**,  
then flit not from this heavenly Boy.

—Robert Southwell (1561-1595)



### Today's Scripture

Old Testament Lesson: Isaiah 62:1-5  
Advent Reading: Luke 1:39-45

### Advent Sermon Series

“The Spirit-Inspired Joy Messiah Gives ”  
Isaiah 61

Ron Lutjens, senior pastor, preaching

## Kill-Joys and the Joy of Christ

Joy is a divine virtue; and if experiencing love and love's gifts is the thing, chiefly, that brings joy, then we may presume that joy has existed in God from all eternity, since we know that the Father has loved the Son forever (John 17:23). Nothing can kill joy in God. But in a world subject to evil temptation (as Eden was) and riddled with sin (as all post-Eden life is) there are things that can kill our joy, or poison the soil it's trying to grow in. Three big joy-killers we encounter in living are *depression* (whether brought on by brain chemistry or difficult circumstances), *boredom* and *painful memories* we carry forward into today and tomorrow. Often one, two or even all three of these are kicking our joy while it's down, wounded and writhing.

Consider this reflection on the sin of *sloth*, one of the so-called, “seven deadly sins,” (by W.F. May in *A Catalogue of Sins*), and see if you can't identify in it, at least to some degree, your own temptation to boredom, to that deadness of soul that makes you numb to the en-joy-ment of God and his good gifts:

*According to the Fathers of the Church, sloth is not laziness so much as “acedia” — dejection or melancholy, the sorrow in the Divine Good. Such a man has his son, but his son bores him. He possesses his beloved, but he finds her incapable of stirring his interest. Apathy would be a better term to describe this profound dejection. The soul in this state is beyond mere sadness and melancholy. It has removed itself from the rise and fall of feeling; the very root of its feelings in desire is dead. To be human is to desire. The good man desires God and other things in God. The sinful man desires things in the place of God, but he is still recognizably human, inasmuch as he knows desire. The slothful man, however, is a dead man, an arid waste. His desire itself has dried up. Perhaps boredom is the best modern term to characterize this deadness of soul. In boredom before God it is man who has failed his object, not the reverse. Although the modern sophisticate feels no need to apologize for being bored—since he thinks his boredom is caused by the poverty of his object—the man of faith must confess his boredom as his sin because his attitude reflects the poverty of his own soul. To be unmoved and untouched in the presence of God exposes an interior inadequacy.*

Read Richard Winter's 2002 book, *Still Bored in a Culture of Entertainment*, if you want a good examination of how profoundly boredom plagues the modern secular world in the west. Even in these leisure-laden times of stunning accomplishments in so many directions, there is still an emptiness.

What is missing is the eternal joy that only God possesses, the joy that not only is so deep that it's root knows no tip, but also is so tough and fibrous that no present suffering or painful memory or brain malfunctioning or bouts with boredom can make it wither and die. If we are to find joy, we must go and get it from the Lord. But thanks be to God, he came into the world as one of us in order to give it. Christ possessed joy from eternity; but according to Hebrews 10:2 he also *won* joy, anticipating the delight that would be his after