



25 Main Street, P.O. Box 61, Grand Bend, Ontario N0M 1T0 * (519) 238-2402
huronshoresunitedchurch@gmail.com * www.huronshoresunitedchurch.com

May 12, 2021

In Pursuit of Happiness and Joy

*"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds,
because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.
Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete,
not lacking anything" James 1: verses 2-4*

Who would have thought we would all still be dealing with the Covid 19 Pandemic? Along with all the other trials and tribulations of life we are all dealing with a worldwide public health emergency. Surely, we will not remember this period of time in history as a period of happiness, but can we still find meaning and joy amongst the feelings of confusion and fear about the future?

The Bible uses the words both happiness and joy. They are synonyms in the dictionary. Many authors, philosophers and historians have written about happiness and joy. Aristotle defined happiness as a life lived in accordance with virtue, and outlined a philosophy of becoming happy through acting virtuously. Some authors and historical experts believe that a shift happened from "being good" to "feeling good" ie: that being good has become somewhat overshadowed by feeling good

Happiness is an emotion we feel (usually temporary) because of our situation or circumstances like having perfect health, a big house, the perfect job, great vacations, fancy clothes, a shiny new car etc. These things may make us all have a feeling of happiness when things are going well, but perfect lives don't exist usually. What happens if you lose your job or lose a loved one? What happens if your own, a loved one's or a friend's health fails (physically or mentally)? We all have stressors and heartache to deal with. Can we still find purpose and perhaps joy in life?

Joy is a feeling of gladness not based on circumstance: it is longer lasting a time of looking inward, finding meaning and hope and looking for ways to help others: It is an ongoing process. True joy and peace comes from knowing God is with us and he gives us strength to carry on or to persevere.

I was touched when I read an article in the Ontario Nurses Association Magazine called "Frontlines". Doctors, nurses, respiratory therapists, cleaning staff and other front-line workers are working during very trying times especially the ones who are working in ICU's in the bigger centres. It discusses how these workers are coping with the stresses of looking after increased numbers of sick and sometimes dying patients who are unable to have family close by and with limited staff. They also fear bringing the virus home to possibly infect their loved ones. Do you know what is getting them through the pandemic? Three words were mentioned: Perseverance, Courage and Respect! They are all important but perseverance popped out at me as I was in process of writing this letter. I personally experienced an angst I have never felt before in my career at the beginning of the pandemic. It was my job, but there was a part of me that was scared to go into the room of a patient who had Covid 19. We always wore protection and we always went in to care for them and all the patients were always grateful and they were scared too! It was through prayer, the support of co-workers, family, friends and church services online, I received the strength I needed. It really did put it into

perspective for me. This must be what James meant when he asks us to consider this as a feeling of "joy". This was one of my trials that I have experienced in life.

I feel blessed to be a member of Huron Shores United Church! Our church is carrying on through the pandemic with zoom services, "Shorelines" newsletter, bible study, Affirming team meetings, Rights relations group, prayer shawls, meditation groups, phone tree calls and the list goes on. People are finding new ways of reaching out to people as we cannot physically be together right now. Our church is persevering!

There is no better day than this day to pray for God to uplift your spirit and give you strength for everything that comes your way!

Lois Gill

"Joy is the infallible sign of the presence of God"
Pierre de Chardin

*"Our relationship with God and each other strengthens us, and helps make the world a better place.
We welcome and include **everyone** into congregational life."*

