

While in Their Joy: Dancing Sure

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Preacher: Pastor Cathy Hall Stengel

[0 : 00] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[2 : 3 0] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[5 : 30] Thank you.

This is the Easter season, a season of new life and a breath of the Spirit. As we enter into this time of worship together, may we open our hearts to the renewal of our minds and our spirits.

May we dare to let go and dance with our hearts and our hearts to the earth, may we dare to let go and dance with renewed vigor as we allow resurrection hope to fill our bodies and our souls.

This Sunday acknowledges that we are not sure.

[illegible]

[10:42] Amen. Please be seated. As we imagine what sharing the peace of Christ might look like, I invite you to look to your neighbors and wave to them.

Say, peace be with you. Peace be with you. Just, you know, if I make you sit in your seats, then you don't run around and hug everybody and do all that kind of stuff.

So we're just going to do a little bit of that for right now. You know, this is the time that we talk about the offering, the friendship card. And I think sometimes it's good to talk a little bit about why do we give.

Some people give out of obligation. Some people give because they know that it's biblical and it's the right thing to do. But there's not a lot of feeling in that.

And the sense that we, as we grow in faith and hopefully develop relationship with God and a church family, it comes from gratitude.

[12 : 00] And, you know, some of the graces that people have been taught to say at the dinner table, you know, for life and health and daily food, we give thee thanks, O Lord. Think about that.

Life, health, and food. This has been a year where if you have those things, then you are so blessed.

I have been so blessed. Prayers have been answered. On Easter, I talked about how we don't always know when prayers are going to be answered. And then when they are answered, my daughter I shared last night has wanted to be a mother her entire life.

Whether she found a husband or not, she was going to find a way to get a baby. And she shared with us a week ago Friday that she's pregnant. And so we just give thanks.

And that's part of there are other things in life that are not good. And we're not thankful for. But in the things that make us grateful. In the places where we feel and sense the presence of God caring for us.

[13 : 10] May we give thanks with our hands, our feet, our hearts, our minds, and our prayers. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[16 : 41] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Gracious and eternal God, you have shown us in so many ways how your love is real in our lives. Please accept this gift back to you as it goes as a way to show that our love is real for you as well.

You have shown us that a gift without the heart of the giver is bare. Please receive it with the love that accompanies it. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, we pray.

Amen. Let's take our seats, ready ourselves for prayer today. Morning, church. It's always a joy to be connected with you whether you are physically here in person or worshipping with us online.

We come to our conversation with God today and we are mindful of a couple of things. We want to share that the flowers in front of the altar today have been given by Joanne Pizzino in memory of her husband, Vincent, who passed away on the 14th.

[17 : 49] So we want to be mindful of that and keep that family covered as they deal with their grief. We also want to be mindful of Mary Ellen, who is recovering from some surgery. And we know that there are several other concerns out here in our church family.

Make sure they are close to your heart as we go to God today. And also we will be mindful that even in the midst of all our struggles, there are so many reasons for which we must give thanks.

So now let's adopt that attitude of prayer as we go before God together. Let's pray. Let's pray. Loving and eternal father, we thank you for the gift that is this morning.

For the gift it is that we can be together, that we can be gathered before your throne and we can offer our hearts to you. As we come this morning, we are mindful of the resurrection.

Let us never lose the joy we feel at knowing that our Lord and Savior has conquered sin and death for us. Move in us, Lord.

[18 : 54] Move in us and move us by the spirit of that joy. Let it keep us moving in the world, sharing your good news and doing the things that you call us to do.

Gracious and loving God, we are also so awestruck by the ways in which you pour out grace upon grace on our lives.

That in all the ways in which we need you, in all the ways in which you know that we need your touch, you continue to be there for us.

Lord, we come today grateful for the ways in which you have shown us that blessing and we come on behalf of those we know who need blessing in other ways.

Blessing of healing for those who are struggling with their bodies. Those who need to know that sense of wholeness and renewal.

[19 : 51] Those who are struggling to feel renewed in this way. For those who are providing care and need to have their strength refreshed.

To need to pour out compassion. Lord God, give them what they need from that deep and eternal well that can only be you. That they might indeed offer that which those who are struggling need.

Lord God, for those who are continuing to work to help our world overcome so many ways in which we have fallen short.

Ways in which brother oppresses brother. Those who are under threat of violence. Those who are under deep threat of need. Let your people speak truth that comes from knowing who you are and what you have commanded us to be and do in this world.

Lord God, wherever we encounter need, let us be ready. Ready to serve, ready to help, ready to work as you continue to call us to.

[21 : 01] Yes, Lord, we come today joyful. Joyful because our Savior has modeled all of these things. Compassion and care. Striving for real work and justice.

And always ready to help those who are in need around him. And Lord, we know this because he has done it for us. All the ways in which he has blessed our lives.

And as we come today, move in us and move us. That we may be the body of Christ in this world. Who needs it so desperately.

For it is in his name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. ■ Hello, I hope you're all staying safe.

Today's scripture is from Luke and 1 John. While they were still talking to about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, Peace be with you.

[22 : 40] They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, Why are you troubled? And why do doubts rise in your minds?

Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself. Touch me and see. A ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.

When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet, and while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, Do you have anything here to eat?

They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence. He said to them, This is what I told you while I was still with you.

Everything must be fulfilled what is written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms. Then he opened their minds so they could understand the scriptures. He told them, This is what is written.

[23 : 48] The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

You are the witness of these things. See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God. And that is what we are.

The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known.

But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves just as he is pure.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. be to God. Thank you. When you are not yet to be, thank you.

[25 : 07] Poohamishima What you just saw was the Glasgow team in what's called the Jerusalem challenge.

And if you're not familiar with that, it went wild. It was a South African artist. He said, as he describes it, he got a beat.

And then he gave the beat some music. And then he gave the beat some words. And he wanted it to be a spiritual song. And you probably would guess that Jerusalem is Jerusalem.

The song translated, Jerusalem is my home. Jerusalem, go with me, protect me, walk with me. Jerusalem is my home.

And it was written during COVID because there was just so much fear and alarm. And so when you watch these, if you looked up on YouTube, Jerusalem a challenge, you'll see that there are doctors and nurses and police officers.

[27 : 00] And they're all doing a challenge to do this dance. And that's where it comes from. And the artist, most importantly, wanted it to be a spiritual message.

So let me ask you a question. You might wonder, well, hey, Pastor Kathy or Kathy, are you showing us all these dance videos so you don't have to talk today?

You should be so lucky. How many dancers do we have here? How many people are good? And how many people like it enough they don't care whether they're good?

It doesn't matter which category you go into. If you give me polka or waltz or some kind of slow music with my husband, I'm right there.

Put me in a line dance and I'll always be in the back. But do you know what happens when you line dance? What does the back become? The front. Holy guacamole, I'm out.

[28 : 06] And if it's sort of what appears to me to be random fast dancing, I'd rather watch. It's just that these bones and ligaments are maybe tied just a little tight for some of that kind of music.

Not because I don't like it, but because my body doesn't know what to do. So the question, why do we dance? Anybody have a one-word answer?

Why do we dance? What's that? Fun? Joy? Celebrate. Most of our dancing is wedding receptions.

When my husband and I were young and we had kids at home, it was the best free date we could go on. It was to go to a wedding reception and eat and drink and be merry and dance.

Free date. So, sometimes we are the toe-tapping, you know, we're the people in the car driving down the road and we're going like this because there's a song on the radio or on our playlist that we really like.

[29 : 14] Or maybe it's a great hymn and we're singing and maybe it's generally not classical or instrumental unless it's something we know.

But you see people going down the road all the time and sometimes it's going down the road so loud that your car is vibrating. And that makes me laugh as long as I don't have to be next to it for too long.

But music has a way of getting into us. Getting into our bodies and our spirits.

Faith music forever. Why did we struggle for so long? Because we couldn't sing because that's a part of who we are. Church equals music.

And the word of God has been preached through music forever and ever. Dancing not so much. In the early Methodist church, not the United Methodist Church, in the early Methodist church, yeah, that wasn't allowed.

[30 : 23] Anybody ever seen the movie Footloose? That was kind of what it was like in the old Methodist church. And that's why my grandmother said, I'm out of here.

No dancing, no wearing jewelry, no card playing, none of that. I'm just going to go play down the street. Some of the things that I want to talk about merged in with our scripture this morning is why don't we dance?

Why don't, what are the reasons that sometimes we don't dance? My spiritual director, I was telling her once years ago that I was feeling good and that I was kind of dancing in my kitchen because nobody was looking.

But then there are times when I'm not. And she would be the kind of person that would say, well, what happened to that? What happened to that dancing in the kitchen? Why?

Sometimes it's because of weight. Not this kind of weight. No. The weight of the world we hold upon us.

[31 : 31] Gloomy personalities, pessimism, people who are negative, people who are more concerned about other people's shortcomings than they are their own growth and connection with God.

This may also describe people who are resigned. Oh, well, what can you do? What can you do? Now, there are a lot of things we can't do much about.

But there are a lot of things we can do something about. Scripture says, see what love the Holy One has given you that we should be called children of God.

See what love the children of God. Seems to me that should lighten anybody's heart and put a little step in their dance.

Some people have been missing the jitterbug. Any jitterbuggers here? Are you allowed to say that, jitterbugger? I know jitterbug is the dance, but it's fun to watch.

[32 : 40] And Pastor Sherry can show us at some point what a jitterbug looks like. Does it require a husband? No? No? No? No? No? No? No? No? No? No?

No? No? No? No? No? No? Most women golfers PenO shoulders? No? However, are you esos. nightmare that, every dog will get a house? You know, everybody misses what us used to be. Everybody misses when we didn't have to wear masks all the time and when we could get together with a whole bunch of people, swim in the pool soon, travel together, eat together, be in the car together, and nobody will say anything to us.

My niece, who's probably on the extreme end of being introverted, she's a librarian perfect job for somebody who's that introverted and even she misses people being in the library as long as they're minding their own business and reading and doing all that stuff she misses them and she wishes she could take her cat to work so she wouldn't be so all by herself so if we put on repeat we can't do anything nothing is fun anymore what's the use that lend itself to your toes tapping your head bobbing Jesus says in this scripture peace be with you peace be with you sometimes if we're comfortable with the fact that we are loved no matter what top to bottom broken or whole walking dancing or nothing we don't have such trouble dancing expressing joy the past in many people's lives can be a real dance stopper and I think pretty much everybody has something in their past a loss and experience that they carry with them that weighs them down at times not all the time but sometimes in this past year has given people a lot of stuff to carry around and it can happen that we might get to a day like this and we might not even notice that the Sun is shining that things are growing by the inches out there life is happening it may not look the same but life is happening and so yes we carry the past with us some things we will not forget the loss of people we love the loss of dreams the loss of jobs things like that we do feel that loss and that weight but if we are stuck in the past then it would be like me walking down the aisle like this and that is something you don't want to see down these steps because I'll fall but if we can figure out and we think about how we can't go backwards we can't take back any words we can't take back actions we can't go back and do it differently and so we read in Scripture repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations to all nations if it's all nations then it's you this is why Jesus came Jesus came and died and was resurrected so that we might know the forgiveness of sins that we might know new life in fact God would be looking at what you're pointing at back there and going I don't see it what are you talking about because for God it's gone it's already gone forgotten because it's forgiven sometimes the weight that we carry is the present things that are going on right now sometimes as I say to people who might be watching online there are people who cannot receive the vaccine and so they still must stay apart from places where they might get sick and catch this virus there are people who stay home because they're afraid and that's the way this current life is there are people who are addicted to the news anybody here addicted to the news now
I

don't mean like a dick but you don't have to go to a 12-step program but I saw somebody's hand go up a little bit my grandparents would have it on in the family room on ABC and the dining room or the living room on NBC and down the hall where there was nobody they'd have it on PBS it was like it was like you could lose your mind going to their house but it had to be on all the time I'm grateful that they did not come to live in this era because if they did we think about the stress level that people live under when they watch the news now I'm not advocating for not watching it we need to be responsible citizens of this land that God has given us but when we bury ourselves in it it's too heavy it's too too stressful and so we think about how do we get out of that how do we get out of that well some of it is challenging ourselves to be mindful of Easter to be mindful of some of the negativity that the disciples brought to Jesus when they he was standing right in front of them and they didn't believe it was him they thought it was a ghost that's why he said give me a piece of fish because he knew that if they saw him eat something like physically eat something that he would be real these are the people that we thought my goodness they would know and believe so we can give ourselves a little bit of grace but let's not live there let's not set up our permanent address as weighted down sad angry distracted stressed we're gonna visit those places because we're human but if now I say if because I think we live life right now we have this moment right now this moment right here right now whether it's in your homes or right here in the church this is all we're guaranteed right now and so if right now we listen to the message of the scriptures that tell us we are resurrected in Christ we will meet our loved ones in heaven we are forgiven and more than that we are beloved children of God you know I was thinking about well what if we all changed our names and instead of signing Kathy L Stengel I said I'm not going to be a sign ■■■■■■ Kathy L Stengel child of God I shouldn't sign my checks that way probably shouldn't sign my checks that way although the people who count the money would still take it right Mary yeah

Jesus came to give it all he gave his life his father made it his will that is also given that his son should give up his role most the most is again the piel of odonti life. But that is not the end of the story. The end of the story is resurrection and life, not death.

[40 : 41] Why is that dance worthy? Because I think it is. Well, how about because I say so? Well, it doesn't get me very far. But peace, past is past. God meant what he said. Part of the scripture this morning is this is the fulfillment of God's prophetic words, that this would happen.

So God kept his promise. God kept his promise. A lot of people don't, but God kept his promise. He meant what he said, and he said what he meant. Repentance and forgiveness of sins so long in the past. See what love the Holy One has given us that we should be called the children of God.

That is our new name. Not the kind of parent that we wouldn't want to have. The kind of parent we would have. Who would love us no matter the weight we carry, no matter the past, the present, the future, no matter. And not love us like, oh, isn't that sweet? No. It's the love that says, I know you from the top of your head to the bottom of your feet. I know that sometimes you get anxious, or sometimes you worry, or sometimes you wonder about the future, about now. Sometimes you doubt. Sometimes you get mad and you say, well, God, forget it. Just done. God knows that. And never, never, ever once does it stop God from calling us his children and loving us. And God does not want us, don't want to treat us like a toddler. Not that kind of children. Not bossing us and trying to be mindful that we don't touch things we're not supposed to touch. I had a weekend of that last week, and my goodness, my son and his wife, they got a lot going on over there. He's learned, don't touch the heat vent, his mother says, because sometimes it's hot. He's 10 months old. And he goes like this. God knows that we're like that.

We're like that. Don't do that. Oh, well, just this once. This is such good news, my friends. And it is far more dance worthy than the things that weigh us down. So it doesn't matter if you're a dancer. Doesn't matter if you tap your toes or go back and forth like this, do a good gospel song.

I always wondered why we didn't do that. Why don't white people do that? You know, gospel songs, rocking back and forth, and my pastoral care professor in college says, because we're too uptight.

[43 : 45] We're strong too tight. Another story. The reality is God says, be free. Be free.

Be forgiven and forgive. Say you're sorry and forgive. Love all, no matter what. Let God sort it out.

Be present to one another in need, in pain, in joy, in celebration. This is the dancing way that God wants us to live. And I pray that it will be so. And that you turn the music up loud. Turn the music up loud. Roll down your window. Let other people see how happy you are.

And say, my pastor told me to do this. It's not my fault. Okay, people. Enjoy. Amen.

Amen. We are Easter people, which means that we know that God loves us and has given himself for us, knows everything about us, and receives us still.

[45 : 17] And so we come to the table with open hearts. Will you open yourselves to the grace of Jesus Christ that is always and already available here at this table?

And if so, say, open us to your grace, Lord. Open us to your grace, Lord. Will you open yourselves once again to the call of Jesus Christ?

If so, say, open us to your call, Lord. Open us to your call, Lord. Will you open yourselves to the possibility of transformation through Jesus Christ?

If so, say, transform us, O Lord. Transform us, O Lord. As we prepare to attend the heavenly feast, we especially pray for those who have no earthly tables or no place at a table and so little daily bread.

We confess this day that we have been slow to join the dance that brings life to all, brings love to all, brings sustenance to all.

[46 : 26] In silence now, let us lift up our prayers of confession. Amen.

Hear the good news. God has loved you from the very beginning. The invitation of Christ is never ending because resurrection can happen at any moment.

The Holy Spirit is transforming you even now. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

Glory to God. Amen. The risen Lord be with you. And with all of you. So lift up our hearts and voices. Lift up our hearts and voices.

Let us give great thanks to the Lord our God. We lift up our hearts and voices. Holy living one, you transformed a whole lot of nothing into this amazing creation.

[47 : 38] You breathed the life all around and called it good. You invited us to the wonder of it all. And when we could not face you, you turned us around.

You keep bringing us around and around, time and again, offering the chance to join the freedom dance. And so we join with the glorious chorus of saints, past and present, singing a never-ending hymn of praise.

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. Indeed, you are holy. And blessed is your son, anointed one, liberator, dance partner, sibling, friend.

Jesus sat at tables with those who had no place. And offered fulfilling food for bodies and souls. And on the night when he would give all love for us, he sat at the table with extended family.

[48 : 53] Just as he hosts this table here and now with this extended family. He offered the usual prayers of thanks to you, God, over the bread and over the cup.

And then he distributed the gathering with uncustomary words. He said, take and eat. This is my body given for you.

Whenever you gather around the table, remember me. And then take the cup. Drink from it. Each and every one of you.

It is the sign of a new covenant. The darkness has given way to light. The resurrection dance goes on. This love is poured out for all people.

Whenever you gather around the table, remember me. And so, my friends, we remember. And we believe. Christ has died.

[49 : 52] Christ is risen. Christ will come again. Pour out your spirit on us now. And pour out your transforming presence. On the gifts of this body.

And the gifts of this bread and fruit of the vine. May they be for us your life and your love. Uniting us as one body. Christ's body.

For the sake of the world. And now let us join together in praying the prayer that Jesus taught us. Saying, 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. And lead us not into temptation. But deliver us from evil.

[50 : 48] For thine is the kingdom. And the power. And the glory. Forever and ever. Amen. This table extends beyond this physical space.

And into the space of the spirit that unites us. May this meal ready us to love. Trust. Hope. And dance. To the beat of God's heart.

I invite everyone now to take your elements. This is the body of our Lord.

Given for you. Take and eat. And this is the blood of our Lord.

Shed for you. Take and drink. And now as holy children of God.

[51 : 56] Let us rejoice together in the gift that God has given. He's called us to sing and dance and rejoice in who he is.

What he's done for us. We were meant to thrive. So I invite you all to stand if you're able. Everybody able to sway.

Everybody able to jump. Everybody able to move. You ready? We're going to do this. We're going to do this thing. Nobody's watching you. Everybody's okay. So we're just praising God.

All right. We're there. We're going to do this thing.

Here is this worn weary land Where many a dream has died Like a tree planted by the water We never will run dry To the living water flowing through.

[53 : 28] God, we thirst for more of you. Fill our hearts and flood our souls in one desire. I still know you and we can know we lift your name on high.

Tonight, like the sun may come, the sun and high. We know we were made for so much more than many lives.

Time for us to more than just survive. We were made to thrive. Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, into the Word for digging deep into our Father's heart.

Oh, oh, oh, into the Word we're reaching out to show them who you are. Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, go, oh, oh, oh, God, we thirst for more of you Fill our hearts and put our souls in one desire Just to know you and to make you know you lift your name on high Shine like the sun, make darkness done and died We know we were made for so much more than ordinary life It's time for us to more than just survive We were made to try Joy unspeakable, faith unsinkable, love unstoppable

Anything is possible Joy unspeakable, faith unsinkable Love unstoppable Anything is possible Joy unspeakable Faith unsinkable Love unstoppable Anything is possible Joy unspeakable Faith unsinkable Love unstoppable Anything is possible Just to know you And to make you know We lift your name on high Shine like the sun Make darkness running high We know we will make For so much more Than ordinary lives It's time for us to Hold and not survive

[56 : 47] We will make this ride Come on, you can swear Come on, let's give a joy in your heart God is born We will make this ride Faith is joy in this house, amen?

I'm singing in the rain You're singing in the rain What a glorious feeling I'm happy again I'm laughing at clouds So dark up above The sun's in my heart And I'm ready for love Let the stormy clouds chase Everyone from the place Come on with the rain I have a smile on my face I'll walk down the lane With a happy refrain Just singing Singing in the rain Into everybody's life

Rain will fall Into all of our lives Disappointments will happen But with the love of God Made known in Jesus Christ And shared through the Holy Spirit May we sing in the rain Because God is good all the time Amen All the time God is good Singing in the rain God is good Amen Love happy Hope to■■■ 4 Batman

I'vené I've journalist I've improved He's ■ I've returned Peace Esp linger Free Shnamed Your Last Vous D Sorry Amen.