

Acts 10:44-48

Psalm 98

1 John 5:1-6

John 15:9-17

Sermon May 5th, 2024

Joyous Love Springs Forth from Hospitality

In our reading from the book of Acts, Peter, with a delegation of Christians, is visiting a Gentile home. The family is very hospitable to Peter and his friends while they are guests in their home. Listening to what Peter has to say. Showing interest and respect towards Peter's belief in Jesus. And Peter has been hospitable to them by eating of the food they have offered him despite his belief that he shouldn't eat from a Gentile table.

As the story continues, Peter, as well as, the other delegates are shocked and amazed at what they see next. The Holy Spirit is poured out on the Gentile family. In celebration of this joyous event, Peter states that they be baptized.

In this beautiful story of hospitality, we see that Christ's joyous love springs forth from this hospitality shown by Peter, the Christian delegation, and the Gentile family.

In our gospel, we see that when we live out what Jesus commands, we abide in Jesus' love, and Jesus' love abides in us. Or in other words, when we live out the hospitality Jesus commands, Christ's joyous love springs forth from this hospitality.

For years we have hosted a community clothing giveaway at All Saints. Including yesterday. In the early years, we hosted this event on our own. In the last few years, we have welcomed other faith communities to join us in this ministry. Those of us who have participated in the clothing giveaway have many stories we can share where we see people experience Christ's joyous love from the hospitality that we live out in this ministry. People who tell us how thankful they are for being able to find some clothes to wear this spring and summer. People from different faith communities expressing how grateful they are for being able to meet people from other faith communities in this work.

Christ's joyous love springs forth from hospitality.

In the past, we have shared in some gatherings with one of the Muslim communities in Calgary. We welcomed them into our church. They welcomed us with their delicious food and with their sharing of their Iftar celebration. We welcomed them into our sanctuary to do their evening prayers. They welcomed us by being so friendly and loving as we shared our beliefs and values. Many of us who took part in these events felt Christ's joyous love from the hospitality both our communities lived out.

Christ's Joyous love springs forth from hospitality.

Reflecting on your own experiences outside of this setting, do you have a story where you experienced hospitality from someone, or where you showed hospitality to someone? Did you feel Christ's joyous love from this experience?

I'm sure we all have stories we can share with one another where we bore witness to Christ's joyous love springing forth from hospitality.

Whether it was how welcome you felt in a home of a friend or how a stranger came to your aid when they noticed you were struggling with something. Whether it was feeling supported by someone or a group of people when many people in your community were judging you. Or walking with someone who suffers from injustice. Whether it is being asked to join the neighbourhood street hockey game or talking with someone who really tries hard to listen and understand you.

Christ's joyous love springs forth from hospitality.

As followers of Jesus, we experience this joyous love through the hospitality Jesus shows us as Jesus welcomes us into God's kingdom come. As Jesus welcomes us as we are with all our bumps and bruises. As Jesus shows us the amazing grace that is God's ultimate gift of hospitality to us. Inspiring us to gather for worship. Inspiring us to give thanks and praise for this amazing gift. Inspiring us to be hospitable to others.

Christ's joyous love springs forth from hospitality.

Let us pray, gracious God, thank you for the gift of hospitality. Thank you for the opportunities to gather with our Muslim neighbours. Thank you for the opportunities to work together with our interfaith and ecumenical partners to live out your hospitality in our community. Welcoming those who need clothing. Thank you for all the hospitable experiences we have had with friends, strangers, wherever we are. Thank you for your amazing grace that inspires us and empowers us to live out this hospitality. **Amen.**

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