



**Northern Illinois District**  
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

## ***Some Thoughts on Being Joyful***

The discussion in my office was intense. Voices raised and feelings hurt. It was pastoral care in the midst of a marriage crisis.

*“This is a joyless marriage,”* one said. Things got very quiet. The other said, *“This is a loveless marriage!”*

These have been a difficult couple of years for several reasons for our workers, congregations, lay-leaders, and schools. Challenges ahead for sure. **Have we become a joyless church?** Where is joy to be found and given in our midst? Is joy not important?

Well, it must be kind of important! Our Lord Jesus has said, *“These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that **your joy may be full**”* (John 15:11). The next verses connect His sacrificial love with our love.

I am intrigued by this passage from the Lutheran Confessions speaking of saving faith: *“... people are righteous by faith, by which they believe that God is reconciled, and he adds that this same faith makes alive, because it produces peace, joy, and eternal life in the heart.”* (Apology of the Augsburg Confession)

We live in serious times. We deal with serious matters. We face Satan and an increasingly antagonistic culture and country. We repent of our own sin, both selfishness and self-righteousness.

Yet, with King David and the Church through the ages, we sing, *“Restore to us the joy of our salvation.”* That is both a prayer and confession of faith. The Lord is the giver of Salvation and that is a gift. The future of the Church and Gospel proclamation is under the direction and protection of the Lord of the church. He is in charge!



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Some thoughts on being joyful:

Listen closely and often to the Word of God read, taught, and proclaimed.

Rejoice in the gifts given in Christ for the Church and the world.

Celebrate and give thanks more often in your life and congregation.

Take your fear, anger, and self-serving opinions to Christ in exchange for true love and true joy.

Trust God as you listen and encourage others.

Keep the main thing the main thing - Jesus, His Work and Word.

Laugh and have some fun. (That works in the Church, too.)

*“God loves a cheerful giver”* (I Corinthians 9:7).

Exchange me for us and us for them.

Sing together.

The world is desperate for joy so the harvest is ripe for us. Truth and joy come together because both are gifts! *“The Lord has done great things for us; we are glad”* (Psalm 126:3). **Thanks for your prayers and financial support of our common work!**

Rev. Dr. Allan R. Buss

**President**

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