

Here is the Song
Philippians 4:4-7
Rev. Curtis Bablitz
December 15, 2024

I think most people have a favourite Christmas Carol – or maybe a few favourites. For the record, mine is Hark! The Herald Angels Sing, and I learned at the concert last week that Jannie's is Silent Night. And if you were listening carefully during the cantata today, maybe you heard part of one of your favourite carols – there were a few notes of songs like Still Still Still, Angels we have Heard on high, Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming, Good King Wenceslas, and a whole lot more, all blended together to make something entirely new. Even though we've been singing this cantata together since September, every time we practiced I would still catch new little musical phrases and moments that I wasn't expecting, little surprises I hadn't noticed before. Each song in the cantata is made up of all these different carols and hymns, working together to create something beautiful that is bigger than any one song within.

And I think the church is supposed to be like that. We are meant to be a medley of different people from different places, all blended together to create something beautiful, something bigger and better than we could ever create on our own. Each of us bring our gifts, our passions, a few notes from the music of our lives, and then God takes those notes and uses them to write something extraordinary, all these melodies harmonizing into a united whole that still preserves the uniqueness of each individual song. And building a church like that isn't always easy. Even for the church in Philippi – a church that had shown so much love and support for the apostle Paul that almost his entire letter is filled with nothing but praise for their dedication and faithfulness – even for the church in Philippi, there were challenges. Just before our reading today, Paul pleads with two of the members of the church who just cannot get along, and urges them to be of the same mind in the Lord. That doesn't mean they need to agree on everything, that they need to be identical in everything they think and say and do – but Paul wants the music from these two faithful disciples to be in harmony with each other and with God. And the way for that to happen

is for them to Rejoice. Paul tells them to Rejoice always – even when it's difficult, when they disagree, when they don't like each other, even then, always Rejoice, always sing and celebrate what God has done for them. When they rejoice in the Lord, then God will bring their different voices together and make something new, something beautiful – a song of praise and celebration filled with joy, filled with the peace of God which transcends our hearts and minds and brings God's people together.

That's what the church is meant to be – a place of joy, a place where all God's people can gather in all our differences, in all our diversity, and bring the songs of joy we sing together so Jesus Christ can blend those voices and songs together to make us one. Today and everyday, we are meant to rejoice in the Lord, rejoice in the one who came to us at Christmas to unite us to God and to unite us with all God's people. Today, may our song be a song of Joy. In the name of Jesus Christ – Amen.