

Home Service for October 11, 2026

Welcome and Announcements

Rejoice in the Lord always. Rejoice in the Lord. Rejoice.

You may also find listening to some of your favorite hymns helpful in worship.

Call to Worship:

Rejoice in God always! Rejoice in God's steadfast love. Rejoice in Christ's enduring grace. Rejoice in God's saving Word. Rejoice in the Spirit's gentle guidance. Rejoice in God's healing presence. Again, I say, rejoice!

Opening Prayer:

Holy God, we come into your house with praise on our lips and songs of joy in our hearts. We come to stand firm in our conviction: that good is stronger than evil, that love is stronger than hate, that truth will ultimately win the day. We come to be grounded in Christ. Amen.

Prayer of Confession:

Holy Presence, following you is seldom easy. When worry and doubt cloud our vision bless us with your peace. When work and social obligations rob our strength, grant us rest. We yearn to focus our hearts and minds on things that are excellent, admirable, and worthy of praise. Shine the light of your love in our lives, that we may bring your light to the world. Amen.

Words of Assurance:

*The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,
is ours through Christ Jesus. In Christ, we rest secure.*

Read Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23

Praise the Lord.^[a]

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his love endures forever.

² Who can proclaim the mighty acts of the Lord
or fully declare his praise?

³ Blessed are those who act justly,
who always do what is right.

⁴ Remember me, Lord, when you show favor to your people,
 come to my aid when you save them,
⁵ that I may enjoy the prosperity of your chosen ones,
 that I may share in the joy of your nation
 and join your inheritance in giving praise.
⁶ We have sinned, even as our ancestors did;
 we have done wrong and acted wickedly.
¹⁹ At Horeb they made a calf
 and worshiped an idol cast from metal.
²⁰ They exchanged their glorious God
 for an image of a bull, which eats grass.
²¹ They forgot the God who saved them,
 who had done great things in Egypt,
²² miracles in the land of Ham
 and awesome deeds by the Red Sea.
²³ So he said he would destroy them—
 had not Moses, his chosen one,
stood in the breach before him
 to keep his wrath from destroying them.

Prayers of the People:

Our hearts are filled, O Lord, with your joy and peace. You have placed your imprint on us and challenged us to be your people in thought, word and deed. In gratitude we come to you this day, bringing shouts of joy as well as cries of sorrow. We are concerned about so many of our friends, our brothers and sisters in Christ, who are afflicted with illness of many kinds, who mourn, who feel lost and alone and wonder where you are. We have raised their names before you in prayer that your healing love may be poured on them. Lord, we know that you hear and respond to our prayers for these dear ones. Likewise, gracious God, we shout with joy at the many blessings that have been poured into our lives and into the lives of our family and friends. Our hearts rejoice at the delight they feel. Help us to understand that these blessings are your wondrous gifts of joy for each one of us. We have lifted the names and situations which reveal to us your loving presence with us. We thank you for all these blessings. Help us to bring words of healing and hope to all we meet, for it is in Jesus' name that we pray. AMEN.

Lord's Prayer

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. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever and ever. AMEN

Read the Old Testament Lesson: Exodus 32:1-14

When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, “Come, make us gods^[a] who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don’t know what has happened to him.”

² Aaron answered them, “Take off the gold earrings that your wives, your sons and your daughters are wearing, and bring them to me.” ³ So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron. ⁴ He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. Then they said, “These are your gods,^[b] Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.”

⁵ When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of the calf and announced, “Tomorrow there will be a festival to the Lord.” ⁶ So the next day the people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented fellowship offerings. Afterward they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.

⁷ Then the Lord said to Moses, “Go down, because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt. ⁸ They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf. They have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and have said, ‘These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.’

⁹ “I have seen these people,” the Lord said to Moses, “and they are a stiff-necked people. ¹⁰ Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation.”

¹¹ But Moses sought the favor of the Lord his God. “Lord,” he said, “why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand? ¹² Why should the Egyptians say, ‘It was with evil intent that he brought them out, to kill them in the mountains and to wipe them off the face of the earth’? Turn from your fierce anger; relent and do not bring disaster on your people. ¹³ Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel, to whom you swore by your own self: ‘I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and I will give your descendants all this land I promised them, and it will

be their inheritance forever.”¹⁴ Then the Lord relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened.

Read the Epistle Lesson: Philippians 4:1-9

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!

² I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord.

³ Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹ Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Read the Gospel Lesson: Matthew 22:1-14

Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: ² “The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. ³ He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.

⁴ “Then he sent some more servants and said, ‘Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.’

⁵ “But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business.

⁶ The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. ⁷ The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

⁸ “Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. ⁹ So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.’ ¹⁰ So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.

¹¹ “But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. ¹² He asked, ‘How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?’ The man was speechless.

¹³ “Then the king told the attendants, ‘Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

¹⁴ “For many are invited, but few are chosen.”

Message

Rejoicing in your circumstances can be a difficult thing, and it can even feel that it is impossible sometimes, but Paul teaches us in this lesson about rejoicing in the Lord. Paul writes, “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice!” It is easy to say that when times are good. It is another thing to say it when times are rough. As we hear this verse today, oh we are so tempted to say, “Well, Paul, that is easy for you say! You aren’t in my situation! How can I rejoice?”

Is it really easy for Paul to say, “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!” Let us take an honest look at Paul’s own life as he was writing this verse and letter to the Philippians. As he penned this, he was sitting in a dank, dark prison cell. I think we can agree that things were not going so great. He was dealing with the stresses and struggles of prison, on top of dealing with the pressures and worries of watching over the various churches, like the ones in Corinth, Thessalonica, or Ephesus. This does not include the problems that he is dealing with in Philippi. For in chapter three, he expressed worry over false teaching in their midst. Today we heard that, he was dealing with a feud between Euodia and Syntyche. On top of it all, he was working in a context and place that was totally hostile toward Christianity. The point being: Paul was not writing when everything is all good. He was not writing after he has had a mountain top experience, but rather when his life was full of challenges. However, despite the hardships, he said, “Rejoice in the Lord always!”

Paul’s call to joy was helpful and brings up two important questions for us Christians: Where do we ultimately find our joy and what affects it? We can find joy in our hobbies, like reading or gardening. We can have joy in following our favorite sports teams like the Twins or Vikings although I know some follow the Packers. We might find that special joy in a person, whether it be a spouse, child, grandchild, friend, or relative. It is in things and people like these that we go to in trouble, and to find our ultimate fulfillment in life. Honestly speaking, it seems that we do not have as much joy in our Lord like we seem to expect to find in other places, like special people in our lives, in things and activities even including sport teams. And if that is not enough, our lives also teach us about the real nature of

joy, and what truly affects. For life has shown us that our happiness can depend on our circumstances in life. We experience joy when some great things happen to us, but our joy disappears when tragedy enters in. Our joy can be reactionary and dependent on things outside of our control. Our joy can be sensual, being dependent upon things that are experienced, like winning the football game. It can also be dependent on us, and how we take situations and events. And as we have experienced, joy most times is not lasting.

Our reactions are quite normal and relatable though. It is not always easy to have joy when our bank account is lower than what it should be and we have some expensive and unexpected bills coming our way. It is not easy to have joy when we may feel distant from our Lord in our faith life, or distant from others. It is a challenge to have it when nothing seems to be going right, and when you have those moments when all you want to do is to go home and crawl into bed. Sometimes to rejoice always is easier said than done. Maybe as we read this lesson we wanted to say to Paul: It may be easy for you, Paul, but it is not easy for me.

But Paul says it is easy for us with a God like ours. Paul says rejoice in the Lord, always. Did you catch that little preposition? It is key to this sermon, and to Paul's point. He says, "Rejoice **in** the Lord." Our Lord is the One where we can find our joy in, and can always have joy in. We can have joy in the One Who has died for us and forgiven us despite us putting other things and people before Him. We can have joy in the One Who loves us, cares for us, guides us, and provides for us, even when we don't deserve it! We can have joy in the One Who watches over us and is with us, both in the good times and in the bad. We can have joy in what our Savior gives us through our baptism and His Supper: new life, salvation, mercy, and grace. Because of these things, we can always rejoice in our Lord, and have a true and lasting joy in Him, even when things are not going well. Our joy can be in the Lord, and we truly can rejoice in Him whatever the circumstance might be. This joy in Christ is a true joy, and is not one based on our circumstances, things we can control, or what we may experience. It is based on our faithful Lord and His promises. That is why Paul repeats himself. He says, "again I will say, Rejoice!" We can always have joy in the Lord because of His grace and goodness to us. He gives us joy and is our everlasting joy. In Christ, we always have something to rejoice about: Him!

As a result of this joy and faith in our Lord and His gifts, we see our life changes. Paul says, "Let your reasonableness be known to everyone". Paul says that when our joy is in Christ, we can show our reasonableness. The Greek word for reasonableness means more than just that. It also means "moderation, forbearance, gentleness, patience, selflessness, and mildness." Since our joy is in the Lord, we

can show all these qualities in the face of financial difficulties, random problems, and ailments because our joy is not rooted in the things of this world, but in God Himself. These things flow from the joy of our faith.

We can also have joy because “The Lord is at hand.” He is near to help us, to give us patience, wisdom, strength, and grace. Since our God is close at hand, we do not have to be anxious about anything, “but in prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.” We can bring our requests, both big and small, to Him, since He is our Father through faith in Jesus. We do not have to be anxious because we can leave all matters to God’s fatherly direction and care. Thanksgiving can be in our prayers and lives because with Jesus, we are never without specific reasons for being able to give thanks.

In verse seven, Paul provides one of my favorite blessings when he wrote: “And may the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” This peace of God is a condition brought about between God and His people as a consequence of salvation. There is no dividing wall between us and Him. We are made right with Him and are no longer at odds with Him. This is a very special peace. What the human mind, reason, and understanding cannot do, the peace of God does with ease. His peace keeps the heart in check, it watches our minds, it guards against human affections and sinful thoughts. What a peace it truly is!

So, “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice!” While it can be a difficult thing to hear, we can always rejoice in a God who is as awesome as ours. AMEN.

Benediction:

Beloved, as you go from this place, may the peace of God that surpasses all understanding surround you, centering your minds on whatever is true, honorable, just, pure, pleasing, commendable, excellent, and worthy of praise and empowering you to press on toward the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus. Amen.