
The JCC Times

Issue 239

April 2010

A Newsletter of the Japanese Congregational Church

The Discipline of Joy

By Gregory Rawn

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. (Philippians 4:4)

When we think about the spiritual disciplines that we use to bring our minds and hearts back to the God who never leaves us, a discipline of joy usually does not make the list. In times past, many have thought that a life that pleases God consisted of being serious and focused, without time for laughter and frivolity. Even today, we can get so wrapped up in the worries in our lives (and our churches) that we forget the command of God, found all over Scripture: Rejoice!

It is critical to note here that the command to rejoice does not mean that sadness, mourning, and depression are against God's law in any way. "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven...a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance (Eccl. 3:1,4-5). Paul even tells us to "rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep" (Rom. 12:15). Sorrow over loss, suffering, and even over our sins is a natural and appropriate part of the life of faith.

However, joy is the natural response to God's awesome love for each of us. Joy is not just the same as happiness; it is deeper and more profound. Joy can lead us to laughter and dancing, but also to a sense of peace and comfort. Joy is the product of God's work in our lives and our awareness of that work. We cannot create our own joy, but we can focus our attention on God's goodness to us.

To practice the discipline of joy, we simply need to surround ourselves with reminders of the love of God. Listen to songs and hymns that tell of God's

wondrous work. Read about what God has done for you and his people throughout time. Spend time with others who are experiencing the joy of the Lord.

We are starting a double season of joy this month. First, in the church we are moving from the darkness and sorrow of Lent and Good Friday to the unspeakable joy of Easter. *Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!* The very same Jesus, who suffered a horrifying passion because of our sins, arises from the tomb victorious over sin, death, and the devil. And, through our baptism into his death, we also rise victorious and will someday arise to live with Jesus forever. Alleluia!

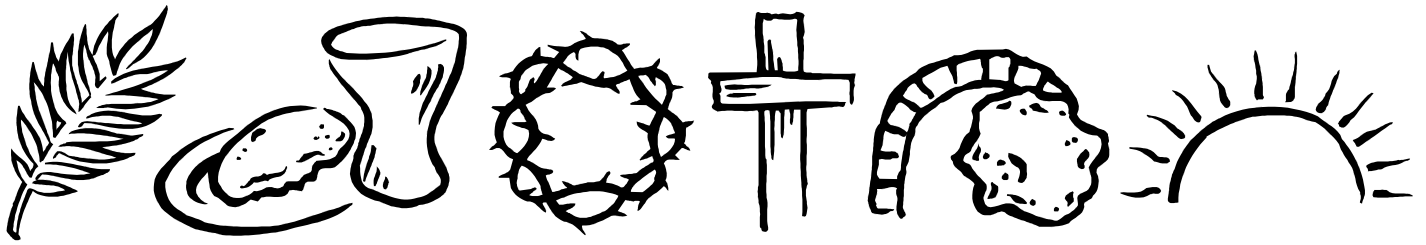
And, of course, the natural transition from the darkness of winter to the light, warmth, and growth of spring also brings joy to my heart. Cold, death, and darkness hold important places in the world God has created, both spiritual and natural, but the movement to warmth, life, and light can fill us to overflowing with joy.

As you rejoice this Easter season in the goodness of the Lord, allow yourself to overflow into worship and praise. King David, the man after God's own heart, danced with abandon before the Lord, rejoicing in his presence. Let us pray for God's help to do the same.

O give thanks to the Lord, call on his name, make known his deeds among the peoples. Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wonderful works. Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice. (Ps. 105:1-3)



DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS



Extra! Extra!

Calling all hands! Please join us on Saturday, April 3rd for our Spring Clean up. We'll need everyone's help for some yard work and general cleaning as we prepare the church for Easter Sunday. We'll start at 9:00 AM and hope to be done by Noon.



Our **Easter Week Events** continue with our **Good Friday Service** on Friday, April 2nd at 7:00 PM. This will be a short informal service to honor our Lord for what He did for us. Then plan to rejoice and celebrate His resurrection with us on **Easter Sunday**. We'll start with a **Breakfast** at 9:00 AM and then our **Congregation Picture** right after service. We conclude with a fun **Egg Hunt**, so be sure to bring your children!



Due to other commitments, the Sunday morning **Bible Study** will not meet again until Sunday, April 25th. Everyone is welcome to join as we continue our study of the Book of Acts.



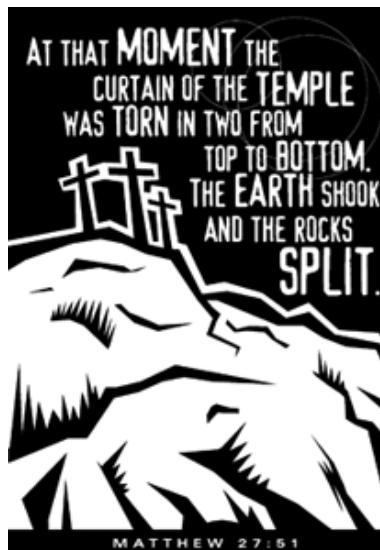
Let's keep the **prayer list** updated and active at all times. If you have a prayer request or an answer to prayer, please let Pastor Steve or Sue Hanson know. We want to pray for each other and also rejoice together as we celebrate God's answers to our prayers!



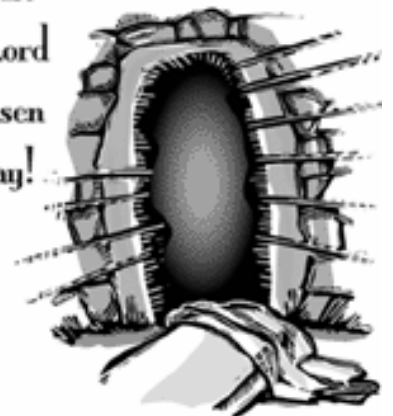
Several members have expressed an interest to support the **Haiti Relief efforts**. Please pray that we select the most effective way to assist those affected by this tragedy.



Operation Nightwatch appreciates the donations of cookies for their hungry homeless men and women. Thank you to the Tsai Family, Megan & Jillian Farren, along with Sharon's friend, Kim Ito, and Shirley Yabu for donating a variety of cookies, brownies and scones. Another great need at Operation Nightwatch is for disposable razors. If you'd like to donate any of these items, please give them to Sue Hanson who will arrange for delivery.



Christ
the Lord
Is Risen
Today!



JCC Calendar of Events

April 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>May Newsletter deadline will be <u>Sunday, April 25th!</u> Please email submissions to the editor at Gregory.Rawn@gmail.com.</p> <p>Nichigo Bento Fellowship will not be meeting this month.</p>				1	2 Good Friday <u>7:00 PM</u> Good Friday Worship Service	3 <u>9:00 AM</u> Spring Cleanup at JCC
4 Easter <u>9:00 AM</u> Easter Choir Practice Easter Breakfast <u>10:00 AM</u> (Communion) Worship & Sunday School <u>11:30 AM</u> Easter Egg Hunt & Congregation Picture	5 <u>7:30 PM</u> Homeless Feeding/ Lord's Table	6	7 <u>12:15-1 PM</u> Prayer at the Cross	8	9	10
11 <u>10:00 AM</u> Worship & Sunday School <u>11:30 AM</u> Fellowship Time Tutoring Sessions	12	13	14 <u>12:15-1 PM</u> Prayer at the Cross	15 Happy Birthday! Nanoha Oi	16	17 <u>11:00 AM</u> Women's Bible Study ❖ Men's Fellowship
18 <u>9:00 AM</u> Board Meeting <u>10:00 AM</u> Worship & Sunday School <u>11:30 AM</u> Fellowship Time Tutoring Sessions	19 Happy Birthday! Betty Luttio	20	21 <u>12:15-1 PM</u> Prayer at the Cross	22	23	24
25 <u>9:00 AM</u> Bible Study <u>10:00 AM</u> Worship & Sunday School <u>11:30 AM</u> Fellowship Time Tutoring Sessions	26	27	28 <u>12:15-1 PM</u> Prayer at the Cross Happy Birthday! Bisim Lee	29	30	

Japanese Congregational Church

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Seattle, WA 98144

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



Mailing Address
Street Number and Name
City, State, 98165-4321



The Strife is O'er, the Battle Done

The strife is o'er, the battle done;
The victory of life is won;
The song of triumph has begun: Alleluia!

The powers of death have done their worst;
But Christ their legions hath dispersed;
Let shouts of holy joy outburst: Alleluia!

The three sad days are quickly sped;
He rises glorious from the dead;
All glory to our risen Head! Alleluia!

He closed the yawning gates of hell;
The bars from heaven's high portals fell;
Let hymns of praise His triumphs tell! Alleluia!

Lord, by the stripes which wounded Thee,
From death's dread sting Thy servants free,
That we may live, and sing to Thee: Alleluia!

Hymn text by unknown author, trans. by Francis Pott, 1861

