**Springfield Presbyterian Church**

**May 1st, 2022**

**The God of Giggles**

**Second Sunday After Easter**

**Holy Humor Sunday**

1. **What today means**

Today we gather for Holy Humor Sunday, as you can probably

tell with our …interesting selection of hymns and focus on joy. A few disclaimers – I picked out the hymns, so if Linda gives me the knowing what-were-you-thinking-eyes – well, I deserve it.

The most important disclaimer is that we aren’t gathering this morning to laugh at God, but to recognize that God is not only with us in our sorrow and mourning but is with us in our joy and celebration. We serve and love a God who embodies and holds all of our human emotions and today we turn from the serious and stoic, to the laughter that God has for us.

G.K. Chesterton, best known for his writing, Father Brown, which later became a BBC series, said this about faith, “It is a test of a good religion whether you can joke about it.” I have to agree, because I don’t think I could stand up here every Sunday and preach solely about a one-sided God – I believe in a multi-faceted God, a God who laughs and cries and mourns and dances and sings with me, even if I am out of tune and off-beat. The same man also said, “Christianity has died many times and risen again, for it has a God that knows the way out of a grave.” So let’s recall that resurrection joy once again this morning.

We are also allowed to laugh, we are encouraged to in fact. I know we live in a complex world, one where war and strife are very real and there is hurt and pain and mourning. Sometimes I feel guilty for laughing, when we live in such a world, but then I remember what we do every Sunday – we come together to share our joys and concerns. When we share our joys, we do not diminish our concerns. We can help a world in pain and still take in the joy that God calls us to.

1. Disclaimers Over

So, now let’s get to the funny stuff. First, let’s dig it a little on

these Scriptures before us this morning briefly. When we look at our text from Genesis, I love this to-and-fro between Sarah and God. Sarah finds out that she’s about to be a mother and she laughs, oh, she hollers, she thinks – this is impossible, this is crazy, ah, a good hearty joke. And God peeks in and says, ‘Uh, are you laughing?’ And Sarah rebuts, ‘No, no, of course I wasn’t laughing. No.’ and I can imagine this slim smile across the mouth of God saying, ‘Oh, yes, yes you did.’

Sarah laughed. Sarah, who would be mother to many generations, laughed, because this was crazy. She forgot that God is the God of the impossible, and with absolute joy, God gives her this gift with love and laughter. What an incredible delight.

And then you have our passage from the Psalms this morning which is a song of David, and through this translation we hear that we are to give the gift of laughter. Laughter is surely a gift, isn’t it? I think we forget what a gift it is and how it can change your day in just a moment from a grumpy day to a day of joy. Laughter requires us to be in relationship, we are called to make one another laugh, and to give thanks to God for this gift.

1. The Joyful Newsletter

This Sunday is a joyful tradition that has been going on for a

while in the church, probably longer than many would imagine. I would point you to the Joyful Noiseletter, which you can find on google, and they’ve been publishing funny holy humor stories for 37 years. This day has a fun history where people hold picnics, play practical jokes on one another, and there’s even been word of a pie in a pastor’s face…but unless it’s a variation of a smith island pie cake, I would ask that you restrain yourself.

Even before this newsletter though, the church would engage in something called ‘Bright Sunday’ which ultimately celebrates the joy of resurrection and does not confine those alleluias to one Sunday morning.

The laughter that we have today has plenty of good and holy history. Maybe if the world knew about this Sunday, we’d see an influx of folks, wanting to share in the laughter – what if part of the great reformation of the church is one that lightens up and welcomes in radically, in joy and giggles. A man named Brother Zorba summed it up well, “A church should be an oasis of joy and hope in a desert of depression and fear.”

1. Okay

Okay, enough, enough – I promised funny, or deadpan groaning,

and here’s a few wholesome jokes for you to enjoy:

There were three boys and there were all bragging about their fathers. The first boasted that his dad owned a farm. The second said his dad owned a factory, and the third boy, a pastor’s son, replied, “That’s nothin’. My dad owns hell.”

“No way,” another boy scoffed. “How can a man own hell?”

“Sure he can,” the preacher’s son said. “My mom told my grandma that the elders of our church gave it to him last night,”

Now, now, now, I will say – this has not happened with our elders, but you do hear stories.

Another one, from a Presbyterian minister. He carefully prepared his sermons, word-for-word, and placed them in a loose-leaf binder, which he took with him to the pulpit Sunday mornings. One Saturday night, his son, just for fun, removed a sheet from the scripted sermon.

As the preacher read his sermon the next morning – ‘and Adam said to Eve’ – he turned the page and discovered it was missing. Perplexed, he looked at the congregation and exclaimed, “There must be a leaf missing here.”

Yes, that was bad, very bad.

A few one-liners

What kind of car would Jesus drive? A Christler.

**What did Jonah’s**[**family**](https://parade.com/1045384/marynliles/family-quotes/)**say when he told them about what happened before reaching Nineveh?** “Hmm, sounds fishy.”

3. **Why couldn’t the Israelites initially enter the Promised Land?** It wasn’t the Pinky Promised Land.

I leave you with this, spoken by a Rev. Milazzo, “The phrase that is guaranteed to wake up an audience is, ‘And in conclusion.” So indeed, in conclusion, may you know, feel, and embrace the laughter, the giggles, the joy, and all the good that God holds for you and for our life together. Amen.