

**Hope Presbyterian Church
Sermon-Based Bible Study**

December 7, 2025

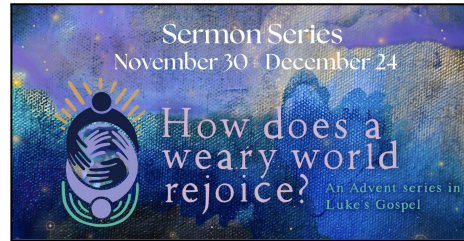
"Find Joy in Connection"

#2 in the series

How Does a Weary World Rejoice?

Scripture Text (NLT)

Luke 1:24-45, John 15:9-11



1. Consider these insights from Pamela King, Ph.D., psychology scholar and researcher, on how humans experience joy: "I hypothesize that the more one is able to live a strength-based life, reciprocate relationships with others, and live with moral coherency, the more joy one will experience in life. This suggests that joy is not just an individual pursuit, but one that deeply involves our connections with others...When the domains of the self, others, and values overlap, that is perhaps when we experience the most joy."
 - How do you respond to Dr. King's theory "that joy is not just an individual pursuit," that it is fundamentally relational?
2. **Read Luke 1:24-25.**

Upon learning that she is expecting a child, Elizabeth goes into seclusion for a period of time.

 - Why might women in ancient times have chosen a period of seclusion while awaiting the birth of their child?
 - What does Elizabeth's response to the news that she will bear a child indicate about her personality and her experience of being childless for so long?
3. **Read Luke 1:39-40.**

After Gabriel appears to Mary and announces that she will bear a child, she embarks on her own period of seclusion to visit her cousin Elizabeth.

 - How might spending time with Elizabeth have been helpful to Mary?
 - When have you sought out a friend or family member to share a joy or a major life change? What happened?
4. **Read Luke 1:41-45.**

Elizabeth expressed great excitement upon Mary's arrival and "was filled with the Holy Spirit" as her child "leaped within her."

 - What do you imagine these two women learned from each other during their visit?
 - What do we learn about their similarities and differences through their decision to share their joy?
5. **Read John 15:9-11.**
 - How do these verses help us understand how to find joy in connection with Jesus? With others?
 - In what ways does our community at Hope encourage joy through connections with each other?
6. How can we pray for you?