



The Federated Church of Hyannis

320 Main Street
Hyannis, MA 02601
508-775-0298

www.federatedchurch.org

Reverend Derek L. White, Pastor

Weekly Message from the Pastor and Sermon Notes for September 19, 2021.

Greetings and Peace be with you,

This week I am starting a new series called “The Happy Church”. This will be a mini-series for the next several weeks followed by a series on stewardship. As you may have noticed, the church is picking up momentum as we prepare for the fall and more activities in the life of the church. It has been so encouraging to see many people return to the church and to see new faces in the congregation. We also have many visitors stop and ask questions about the church. I believe we are moving in a positive direction. It seems fitting to talk about the church being a happy church.

A couple of upcoming things to be aware of. I am planning a Wednesday noontime Bible Study for October called “Reading the Bible Through Jewish Eyes”. This will be an in-person study, but the materials will also be online for the accessibility of those who prefer to participate remotely. Also, Oct. 3rd will be my installation service at the Federated Church. I am looking for it to be a celebration for the whole church and the ministry accomplished over the past year, and the ministry to be accomplished going forward.

Scripture: Romans 15:13 *“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”*

Sermon: “The Happy Church, Part 1”

The word “Evangelical” is a word that evokes many mixed feelings. Like all words there is an evolution in its meaning. At the turn of the 19th Century the word “Evangelical” was a popular religious movement in western culture as people began reading the Bible. Today it is common to expect that Christians would read their bibles. But before the Evangelical Movement started it was rather uncommon for Christians to read their bibles. The Evangelical Movement was a movement that emphasized the Bible as the written Word of God as the source by which Christians should live their lives. Today the word “Evangelical” is most often thought of as

being connected to politics and a political demographic in America. But if we look at the root of the word “Evangelical” from two thousand years ago we would see the root Greek word is “E-u-angelia”. Angleia means message or messenger and Eu means good. Together these two parts in Greek mean “the Good News”. What moved the Church forward two thousand years ago was this group of Christians who proclaimed the “Good News”. What awakened religious life in America in the early 1900s, the time of Rev. Dr. Sarah Dixon, was a movement to proclaim the “Good News” as part of the Evangelical Movement.

As a Pastor who is fascinated with Church history, I must confess that often Church history does not contain messages of “Good News”. As a matter of fact, most church records record inner fighting and disagreements in the Church. They are records of troubling news. Years ago, I had an awakening moment in which I asked the question, why if the Church is called to proclaim the “Good News” do we keep so many records of “Bad News”. It felt to me like Jesus gave the disciples the “Good News” and ever since we have had a tradition of keeping records of terrible things that have happened in the Church.

One amazing thing I have found about the Federated Church is that it has a history with records of wonderful and positive things, as well as records of very difficult things. There are records when this church has been a happy church, and there are records of when this church has been an unhappy church. In two weeks my Installation Service will take place here at the church on the one year anniversary of my arrival. I only get to be one of the many Pastors this church will have. And it is my hope that the records during my time here will be records that reflect a happy church.

In the passage this morning from Romans, Paul had written letters to many churches that were unhappy churches. Usually, his letters were written to give wisdom and advice to churches facing conflict. When Paul wrote these letters the Church did not have a Bible. It wasn't until about four hundred years later that the Church started using the Bible. It was another fifteen hundred years before people started reading the Bible. We can see from the passage in Romans that Paul desired for Christians to be filled with joy, to have peace, and to abound with hope.

Last week we had the choir sing for the first time in eighteen months. I have to say it felt good to have a choir back in worship. Every week I see visitors coming to the church and it feels good to see new people here. Every week I see momentum picking up here at the church and it feels good to see the ministry happening. We all went through a really hard time with COVID. As we move forward this year it is my prayer this year will be a season of joy and happiness as we come together as a happy church.