*Art by Sue Carroll*

Sunday, May 20, 2026

# Culmore United Methodist Church

## Welcome and Good Morning!

# Welcome and Announcements

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# Happy Birthday!

Once again it's your birthday. Once again the time is here.
What a loving gift from Jesus, He has given you one more year.
Happy time is your birthday, happy time  this year.
What a loving gift from Jesus, He has given you one more year.
Oh happy birthday to you, oh happy birthday to you.
For you have Jesus Christ everyday of your life.
Oh happy birthday to you, oh happy birthday to you.
The Lord bless  and keep you.
Happy birthday to you. And to Jesus with you.
God bless you and keep you. Happy birthday to you.

**What do we gain…*in this life*…**

**from following God?**

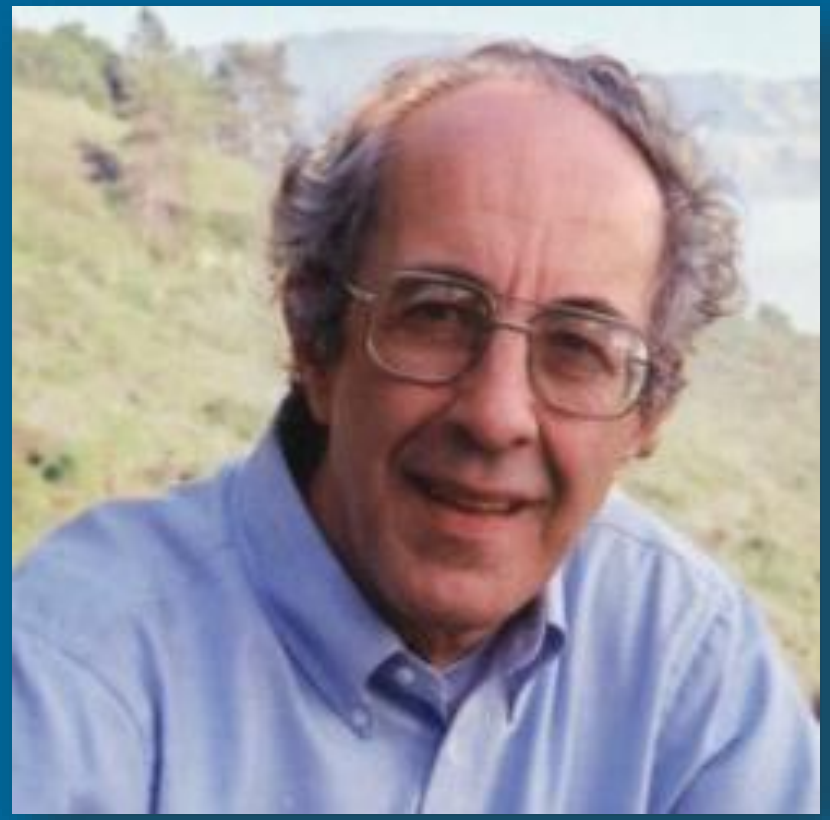
I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy

Down in my heart, down in my heart.

Down in my heart to stay.

The joy that compassion brings is one of the best-kept secrets of humanity. It is a secret known only to a very few people, a secret that has to be rediscovered over and over again.

*—Henri Nouwen*



# Opening Prayer

O Lord of true vision, let me see the blessings before me. Let me look beyond the worries of today and dance for joy that You are with me.

O Lord of my heart, let me live with love. May *loving kindness* be my watchword and rejoicing my constant refrain. May I then share this joy with all my brothers and sisters, just as You do with me.

O Lord of my soul, keep me focused on You and forever rejoicing.

***Amen.***

# Rejoicing Words from the Psalms

*Art by Sue Carroll*

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

*(Psalm 107:1)*

**Fill us in the morning with your love, so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.** *(Psalm 90: 14)*

Praise the Lord, o my soul, I will praise the Lord all my life.
*(Psalm 146:1)*

**Let all who take refuge in you be glad, let us ever sing for joy.**
*(Psalm 5:11)*

Let the light of your face shine upon us, O Lord.
(Psalm 4: 6)

**The LORD has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.**

*(Psalm 126:3)*

# Philippians 4:4-7

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation,

by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your

requests to God.

And the **peace of God**, which transcends all understanding,

will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Rejoice in the Lord always.

I will say it again: *Rejoice*!

Art by Sue Carroll

Fill us with your love, O Lord, and we will sing for joy.

Fill us with your love, O Lord, and we will sing for joy.

Teach us to number our days aright
that we may have wisdom of heart.

Fill us at daybreak with your kindness;
we will sing for joy all our days.
Make us as glad as of old we were sad,
in the years when we saw evil.

Let your work be seen by your servants
and your glory by their children.

May the gracious care
of the Lord our God be ours.
Prosper the work of our hands.

# Rejoice!

Art by Sue Carroll

Dear Rabbi,

I need your help.

I am deeply depressed.

I pray and find no comfort.

I perform the commands but feel nothing.

I find it hard to carry on." …

Dear Rabbi,

I need your help.

I am deeply depressed.

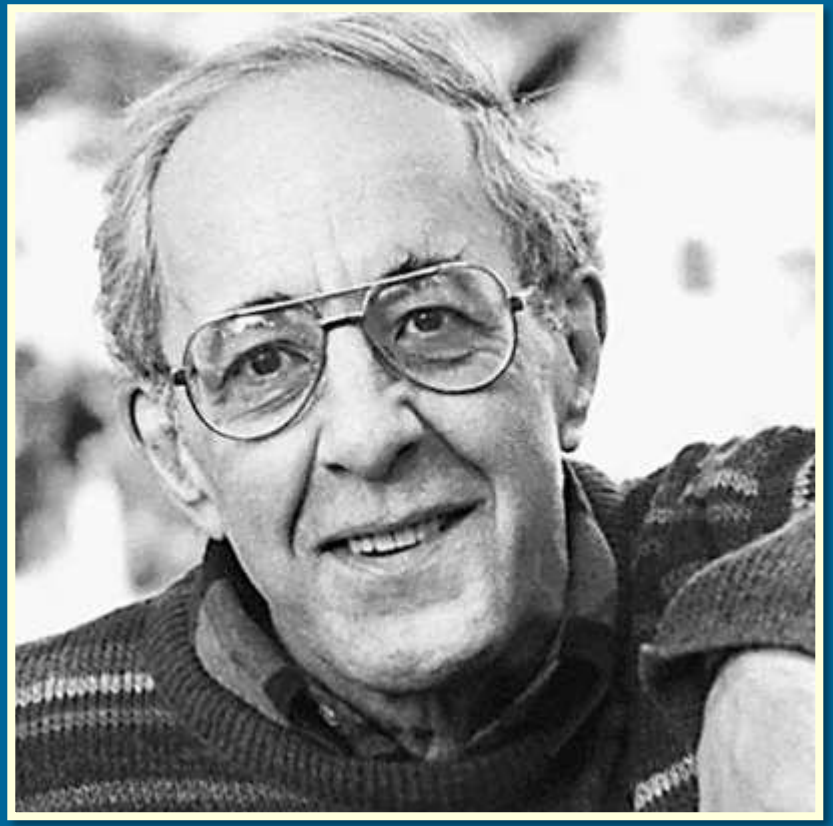
I pray and find no comfort.

I perform the commands but feel nothing.

I find it hard to carry on." …

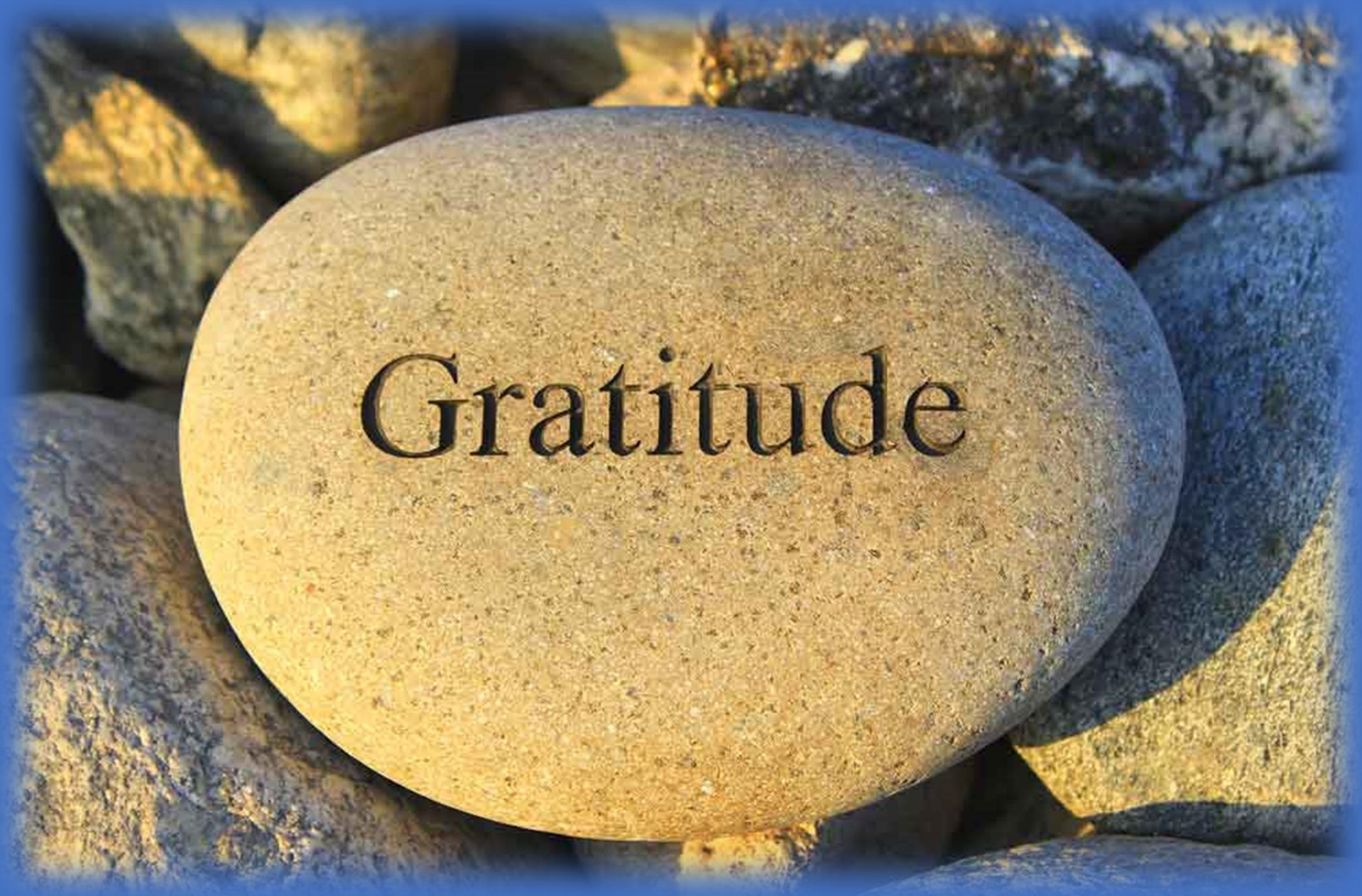
Joy does not simply happen to us.
We have to choose joy
and KEEP choosing it every day.

*—Henri Nouwen*



# AWE

- **Attention**: Give your full attention to things you appreciate, value or find amazing.
- **Wait**: Slow down, pause.
- **Exhale and Expand**: Amplify the sensations you are experiencing.


Gratitude

It tastes better when you share.

Rejoicing is an attitude we choose, whether we
are on top of the mountain or down in the valley.
We worship a God who calls us to rejoice.
Photo by James Gardner

# Jonathan Sacks (paraphrased)

Joy lives not in thoughts of tomorrow, but in the grateful acceptance and celebration of today.

We are here and we are alive….

And yes, we do not know what tomorrow may bring….

…and when we focus on the moment, allowing ourselves to sing and give thanks… when we do things ***just because*** and not for any other reward….when we let go of our separateness and embrace one another, then there is joy.

I turn to Him for strength whenever I begin a new stage of life's journey. I try to express my thanks to Him every time I feel I have done something He would have wanted me to do.

**I *WILL* rejoice.**

# Give Thanks— TFWS 2036

Give thanks with a grateful heart,

Give thanks to the Holy One

Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ, His Son.

And now let the weak say, "*I am strong*.“

Let the poor say, *I am rich”*

Because of what the Lord has done for us.

***Give thanks***

# Community Prayer

LORD Jesus, at Christmas, we delight to sing, "*Joy to the World, the LORD is come.*" But we need to remember that every day of our lives. There are so many "joy-stealers" in our world, our communities, and our lives that it might help to have that song with us on our recording devices at all times.

We most need to remember this when it is the hardest for us to believe, when we have been harmed in some way by those we care about, when we observe for ourselves how hard life is for so many people, or the many other incidents that make us feel brought down or discouraged.

Help us to remember the promise from the prophets in the Old Testament that we can always draw our strength from the joy You brought into the world when You were born, and into our lives when we accepted You into our hearts. **AMEN**

# Offering

We give thanks for this wonderful,
generous community of faith.

# Doxology - UM Hymnal 94

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God, all creatures here below

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Praise God the source of all our gifts!

Praise Jesus Christ whose power uplifts!

Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

# Benediction

*Photo by James Gardner*

# Reflection on Psalm 68:3

I think the word "righteous" has gotten a bad rap. It can be taken to mean someone who claims to know all the rules, the "right" way to do everything.  It can be conflated with "self-righteous" or used to describe someone who is smug and self-satisfied.

Instead, I believe, it means being "in the right relationship" with God and neighbor. And those who live in the covenant with God have every reason to be giddy with joy.  Let's dance!

--Sue Carroll

People who have known the joy of God point each other to flashes of light here and there, and remind each other that they reveal the hidden but real Presence of God.

They discover that there are people who heal each other's wounds, forgive each other's offenses, share their possessions, foster the spirit of community, celebrate the gifts they have received, and live in constant anticipation of the full manifestation of God's Glory.

# Psalm 30: 5

Weeping may stay for the night,

but rejoicing comes in the morning.