

2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12b-19

6 Once again David assembled the select warriors of Israel, thirty thousand strong. ² David and all the troops who were with him set out for Baalah, which is Kiriath-jearim of Judah,^[a] to bring God's chest up from there—the chest that is called by the name^[b] of the LORD of heavenly forces, who sits enthroned on the winged creatures. ³ They loaded God's chest on a new cart and carried it from Abinadab's house, which was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, Abinadab's sons, were driving the new cart. ⁴^[c] Uzzah was beside God's chest while Ahio was walking in front of it. ⁵ Meanwhile, David and the entire house of Israel celebrated in the LORD's presence with all their strength, with songs,^[d] zithers, harps, tambourines, rattles, and cymbals.

^{12b} So David went and brought God's chest up from Obed-edom's house to David's City with celebration. ¹³ Whenever those bearing the chest advanced six steps, David sacrificed an ox and a fatling calf. ¹⁴ David, dressed in a linen priestly vest,^[i] danced with all his strength before the LORD. ¹⁵ This is how David and the entire house of Israel brought up the LORD's chest with shouts and trumpet blasts.

¹⁶ As the LORD's chest entered David's City, Saul's daughter Michal was watching from a window. She saw King David jumping and dancing before the LORD, and she lost all respect for him.^[ii]

¹⁷ The LORD's chest was brought in and put in its place inside the tent that David had pitched for it. Then David offered entirely burned offerings in the LORD's presence in addition to well-being sacrifices. ¹⁸ When David finished offering the entirely burned offerings and the well-being sacrifices, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of heavenly forces. ¹⁹ He distributed food among all the people of Israel—to the whole crowd, male and female—each receiving a loaf of bread, a date cake, and a raisin cake. Then all the people went back to their homes.

Join the Dance 2 Samuel 6:1-19

Have you ever sat back and just watched other people dance? You're back is up against the wall and everyone else is out on the dance floor moving and shaking and having a great time. Have you been the Wall Flower? Or are you one who as soon as the music starts playing you grab your partner, or not even wait for a partner and just dance?

Let's try this. Let's dance. Yes, let's dance right here in front of God and everyone, right here in worship. I'll teach you. This is an easy one we can do in the pews. Did you know I started an Appalachian Mountain Clogging Team at Western Carolina University while an undergraduate student? Yep, I did. I also taught dance at Murray State University before moving to Ohio.

Here we go. Stand up right there in your pew. If you can reach a hand beside you, take it. Here we go. Go to your right. And sing, "Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice." Go the other way and repeat the words, "Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice." Raise your arms. "Rejoice, rejoice." Lower your arms. "Again, I say rejoice." Raise them. "Rejoice, rejoice." And back down. Again, I say rejoice." There we go. That's it. We're dancing in church!

Now, how many of us were looking around thinking, "I wonder what so and so is thinking about me dancing?" Guilty any of you? David danced before the Lord- but Michal, his wife, was not happy.

What keeps us from dancing? See, I had it easy. In high school I was dancing three times every two weeks. Every Thursday with the International Youth Dancers but we also did exhibitions at fairs and basketball games, parades and festivals. 2

We even danced in prisons and juvenile detention centers. Then every other Friday night I danced just for fun with the community dance group.

It has served me well for one of the top requirements Ann Marie had for a husband was "he had to be able to dance." I think she fell in love with me as I taught her to jitterbug on a campus ministry retreat with our Presbyterian Campus Fellowship, "The Presbys". Maybe we ought to start dancing with BGSU students. Just a suggestion.

There are inhibitions to dancing: 1) We are afraid of what others might think; 2) We are afraid that we might get it wrong; 3) We might not be in control; 4) fear of rejection and as I get older I have found 5) I have a fear of breaking a hip. Those are just 5 that I came up with but you might have others like the Baptists don't dance because it might lead to other expressions of intimacy. But David danced with all his strength before the Lord.

David had much to celebrate! He was bringing the Ark of the Covenant home to Jerusalem! He did what King Saul could not do! That is great cause for celebration. What is an appropriate response to God's presence? How do we say thank you to God? That's what David was doing. Remember, "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I say rejoice." Do it with David, do it with dance. 3

There is such community built around dance. Go to a county music honky-tonk and get your groove on with Boot Scootin' Boogie and see the joy of everyone in step with each other. Go to a wedding when the DJ puts on the Cha Cha Slide and watch the fun. Go to a Jewish wedding and start the Hora. Watch our Native American neighbors celebrate the rain or a good harvest. Dance is a celebration of life!

David wants us to join in the dance. God has done marvelous things! Dance.

Here's a story for you: A Presbyterian preacher visited a young pregnant woman for he was starting new Presbyterian Church in the community. She wanted her to join. Having grown up Baptist, and Southern Baptist at that, the pregnant woman had a few questions about what Presbyterians believe. She said, "Well my husband smokes. I wish he didn't, but he does. Is he going to go to hell for that?"

The minister replied, "Presbyterians believe that is between you and God and it's nobody else's business. There are Presbyterians who smoke and those who don't." That was reassuring, but she still had questions. "Now I like to have a drink now and then and I don't think that's sinful either." The pastor said, "Some Presbyterians drink and some don't. Moderation is the key."

Finally, she said, "I really like to dance and don't see anything wrong with that either." "Ma'am," the minister said, "All Presbyterians dance!" She joined the Presbyterian Church the very next week. We dance because we are grateful!

But don't leave it at just dancing. Look at the last verse, after the celebration that God was in their midst, "David distributed food among all the people of Israel—to the whole crowd, male and female—each receiving a loaf of bread, a date cake, and a raisin cake. Then all the people went back to their homes." After the dance, he served them. He fed them. He met their physical needs. Wow, that just makes me want to dance.

Come join the dance. Rejoice in response to the gift of God's love and compassion. Come join the dance. Enjoy and celebrate God's gift of life! Come join the dance. Live joyful lives witnessing to God's claim on our lives and serve the needs of our neighbors. Come, join the dance.

Preached by Rev. David M. Montgomery
First Presbyterian Church, Bowling Green, OH
7th Sunday After Pentecost, Proper 10, Year B
July 11, 2021