



The Secret to Joy

By Pastor Sam McKeen

Have you noticed that there seems to be a general lack of joy in our world today? While it is observable throughout the year, it becomes even more apparent during the holiday season. Maybe having joy is a personal struggle for you, or perhaps you have noticed the absence of joy in the lives of those close to you. The indications are sometimes subtle; superficial smiles, guarded detachment, and isolating from others. It is not just you. Numerous scientific studies have shown that Americans are experiencing less joy than ever before. Unsurprisingly, many of these studies have made a connection between the decline in joy with the ongoing mental health crisis.

Christmas and the holidays in general can exacerbate this downward spiral. Knowing that this is a time of year when one ought to be joyful shines a glaring spotlight on whatever loneliness, loss, and pain that may present. No wonder many dread this time of year.

How is it possible to have joy regardless of the circumstances you are facing? Let me tell you the secret. The secret to having joy is thankfulness. What?! That seems too simple. It is simple, but it is not easy. Why? Because we automatically fixate on the bad things that we experience. We have wired our minds to focus on the negative instead of the positive. Imagine what would happen if you reversed it. What if when you reflected on your day your attention focused on the good things that happened and to the blessings in your life?

Having an attitude of gratitude will result in a mindset shift; the fruit of which will be greater joy in your life. Get started today. Sit down and make a list of one hundred things that you are thankful for. It is harder than you think! Not because of the lack of things to be thankful for, but because sadly it is unnatural for us to think this way. Work at it even if it takes you a few days. Having a list to reference and add to will help you change your mindset. Also, please know that if you are struggling with your mental health, there is help. Please call or text 1-833-710-6477 (NAMI NH) today.

Christmas time really should be a time for joy. After all, joy is a key part of the Christmas story. The angel announced the birth of Jesus Christ to the shepherds by saying, "I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people." Why was the birth of Jesus Christ something that should cause great joy for all people? It is because of who He was and what He would do. We will be celebrating His birth and sharing more about why His birth brings joy on Saturday, December 24th at 6 pm at Center Barnstead Christian Church. I would love for you to join us as we celebrate the joy of Christmas.



All the Lonely People

by Kristina Schram

As a teen I used to play the Beatles song, Eleanor Rigby, over and over because the lyrics really resonated with me: "All the lonely people, where do they all come from? All the lonely people, where do they all belong?" It was like John, Paul, Ringo, and George were speaking directly to me, the girl who didn't fit in. I was painfully shy and felt like everyone else seemed to know how to navigate life - and with panache! - whereas I was both lost and panacheless. But this song intimated that maybe there were others out there like me. That I wasn't alone in feeling lost, lonely, and panacheless.

Now, there's a difference between being lonely and being alone. Wanting to be by yourself is healthy, as long as you're okay with it. In fact, as a mom, I would, and still do, beg for some alone time. Being lonely, on the other hand, can be soul crushing. Sadly, it's not an uncommon state in today's world. Nearly every single human has experienced loneliness in some form or another. Most of us are social creatures, looking for acceptance, even just an acknowledgement of our existence would be nice. But when we don't get either, we suffer from the 'nobody likes me, everybody hates me, let's go all eat worms' syndrome. And let me tell you, worms are yucky.

The holidays can be a stressful time (an understatement, if I've ever heard one), but to be on your own at these times can be especially tough. Any time an entire society heavily encourages us to gather as a group, the person who's alone is made even more aware of their singledom. TV shows, commercials, and social media can make you feel even lonelier, like you're the only person in the world who doesn't have a life, or someone to share it with. It's like you're the main character in a Hallmark movie, who doesn't get the heartwarming ending.

Connecting with others can be a challenging, even painful, task, and most of us would rather feel lonely than risk being burned. But when I headed off to college, I decided that if I didn't want to end up as the proverbial crazy cat lady who gets eaten by her cats when she dies, I'd have to risk getting burned. So I forced myself to talk to people even knowing I was going to miff it more times than not (and also, that people can be jerks), and that this miffing/peopling was going to feel bad at times. To this day I still miff it (and people can still be jerks), and it still feels bad, but I've learned I can survive the burn (mostly, anyway). While it took a lot of practice, improving my social skills was worth the pain and effort. Plus, I don't have to eat worms anymore.

Having a place where you can work on your social skills is essential. Here at the library we do our best to offer a welcoming space that offers a variety of activities designed to bring people together. We host a number of group activities (e.g., art night, movie night, book club, tea parties) for a range of ages, that help make getting to know others a little easier. Plus, we have couches for reading, tables for doing homework or journaling, and toys for children to play with. Even just being around others can be medicinal, not to mention educational - the art of conversation can be learned from listening to others do it. So feel free to stop by. As we all know, small steps can lead to big changes. Plus, I'm pretty sure practicing social skills is a wee bit more palatable than eating worms.

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SCAN ME

December Events at Oscar Foss Memorial Library

We are having a book sale! It runs from December 1st to December 3rd during normal library hours, and will take place in the library's Meeting Room. Come load up on books, pay what you can, and help out the library (proceeds support library programming and development). It's a win-win! Also, the library will be accepting book donations for the sale until 11/30.

Miss Jerissa's Storytime at the Library happens every Wednesday at 10:30. Stories are read, crafts are made, and fun is had! On Wednesday, December 21st, we are having a special story time with Santa! Kids can bring in wrapped new or gently used books to exchange.

Are you looking to talk about books with like-minded bibliophiles? Or for an excuse to get out of the house? If your answer is a resounding yes, then come join the OFML book club, Mead and Read, at Over the Moon Farmstead in Pittsfield! We meet the first Wednesday of the month at 6:00 pm, and this month's meeting is December 7th. We'll be reading *The Scent Keeper* by Erica Bauermeister. Our two big rules for M&R: You can just sit and listen if you want, and you need only come when you can.

On Friday, December 9th, from 4:00 - 6:00, OFML is holding a Silent Library Challenge! Can you hold it together while enduring challenges geared towards getting you to make noise? The name of the game is silent library and - in order to win - you must endure "interesting" challenges without making a sound! Get a team together and come down to the library. This is a tween/teen event, but younger patrons can come, as well.



Also on Friday, December 9th, at 6:00, we are showing *The Grinch* (2018 animated version and rated PG) for our Family Movie Night. We promise we won't be a grinch with the snacks!

On Saturday, December 10th, from 10:00 - 2:00, Oscar Foss Memorial Library and Barnstead Parks and Recreation would like to recognize the people who make our town great...our volunteers! We will be hosting a brunch at the Barnstead Town Hall, presenting awards to volunteers that are nominated by community members, awarding the Gordon Preston Award, and wrapping up with a presentation of "Wit and Wisdom: The Forgotten Literary Life of New England Villages" with Jo Radner at 12:00 pm. So all you awesome volunteers...please join us as we express our gratitude for all you do!

Our monthly Homeschool Event will be happening on Tuesday, December 13th, from 12:30 - 2:00. In this month's workshop, we will make fun treats while we learn about chocolate. Sounds delicious! Pre-registration is required.

Tween (ages 10-13) DnD is being held on Thursday, December 15th, from 4:00 - 6:00. Prepare to fully enter the world of DnD in session 1 of our Dungeon Crawl Campaign! Remember to bring your character sheets and dice. If you haven't already emailed (cassi.leigh08@gmail.com) your backstory please do ASAP so it can be included in the storyline! Light refreshments will be provided.

OFML Kids Club this month is happening on Friday, December 16th, from 3:30 - 5:30. Kids can hang out, make crafts, and talk about their favorite books. Ages 6-10.

Teen (ages 14-18) DnD is on Friday, December 16th, from 4:00 - 6:00. Prepare to fully enter the world of DnD in session 1 of our Dungeon Crawl Campaign! Remember to bring your character sheets and dice. If you haven't already emailed (cassi.leigh08@gmail.com) your backstory please do ASAP so it can be included in the storyline! Light refreshments will be provided.

DIY Jewelry Making: Thursday, December 22nd, from 6:00 - 8:00. We will be using makerspace kits to create last-minute gifts of ornaments, earrings, or keychains. You can then wrap them before leaving. All for free! For ages 16+ and pre-registration is required.

Due to the holiday this month, we will not be hosting the Writers Forum. We will start up again in January. Please note: OFML will be closed 12/23 and 12/24 and 12/30 and 12/31. For events that require registrations, please contact us at 269-3900 or ofmlstaff@gmail.com to reserve your spot!

There's always something happening at the library!

Barnstead Parks and Recreation News

November's 30 Days of Thanks

While it is always important to be thankful and let others know they are appreciated, November is known by many as an especially fitting time to bring this gratitude to light. Parks and Rec shared 30 Days of Thanks on our Facebook page throughout the month of November, giving daily recognition and thanks to different people, businesses, and organizations that have engaged in our community and have helped us have a successful year. The amount of support we received is astounding and it's wonderful that people want to help provide fun things for everyone in our community. If you didn't follow our posts throughout November, go to our FB page @barnsteadparks and look through all the posts made over the last month and see just how amazing and lucky our community is. We are truly grateful for everyone who helps, no matter how big or small.

If you have always wanted to help but haven't found the perfect time to take the first step, reach out to us and we will see what's a good fit for you. Every little bit helps and while it really doesn't take a lot of time, we frequently hear that the payback of knowing you contributed to others is priceless.

Upcoming Events:

Day of Gratitude – December 10, 2022 (Partnering with Oscar Foss Memorial Library) 10am – 2pm at Barnstead Town Hall

Movie followed by a bonfire – December 17, 2022 (Partnering with Oscar Foss Memorial Library) Additional details forthcoming

Color Me Zen (an adult coloring event) – Details forthcoming. Coloring improves mindfulness and is known to reduce stress and anxiety. Plus, it's a great opportunity to come together and socialize.

Commission Member Openings:

The commission is seeking positive and energetic volunteers to join our team. Contact us at barnsteadparks@gmail.com to express an interest or request additional information.

What's Happening with the Park & Playscape?

Barnstead Parks & Recreation has had considerable communication with the town about plans for a Park and Playscape to be located behind the Ice Rink and the Library.

The large federal Land and Water Conservation Grant awarded for the project requires the Town to maintain the Park & Playscape in usable condition for 25 years.

With the current design, a portion of the maintenance will need to be done by paid professionals and much of the maintenance could be handled by volunteers. The Select Board has expressed a concern that volunteers come and go and there is not a guarantee there will be enough of them to handle the maintenance work over the 25-year span and instead, the maintenance cost would fall upon the taxpayers.

For this reason, they have hesitated to approve the use of the \$75,000 federal grant. As an alternative, they have expressed being open to the development of a smaller park without the federal grant.

Barnstead Parks and Recreation has devoted a significant amount of hours to planning the park and is currently considering the following options for moving forward, including but not limited to:

- Design modifications that will reduce maintenance costs;
- Establishing and funding a playscape maintenance fund;
- Inviting the NH State Parks office that administers the grant to clarify for the Select Board the extent of their grant maintenance expectations;
- Developing a detailed maintenance plan that will accurately reflect the maintenance needs of the next 25 years;
- Continued dialogue with the Select Board about what a park built without the federal grant would look like; and
- Collecting signatures for a petition warrant article allowing citizens and taxpayers to decide the risks v. benefits at Town Meeting 2023.

The Parks & Rec Commission encourages everyone to join the dialogue. Send your thoughts via FB messenger, call us at 802-332-3799, email us at barnsteadparks@gmail.com, or come to our next Commission meeting on Thursday, December 15th, at 6:30 PM at the Oscar Foss Memorial Library.

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Community Events for December

Barnstead Historical Society is back with their Annual Holiday Sale!

Saturday, December 3, 2022, from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM at the Barnstead Town Hall

Shop our local crafters for that last minute gift for someone special or for yourself. We will have Tiede Farms Smokehouse serving breakfast sandwiches & other edibles, Made with Love Custom Quilts, and many other talented locals. The Historical Society will be sponsoring raffles including a Christmas Tree, Maple Syrup, Gift certificates to local businesses, and other local items. We will also be offering our books for sale. Stop in for a cup of coffee and to browse and visit. We look forward to seeing you.

Don't forget to join the Oscar Foss Memorial Library and Barnstead Parks and Recreation for our Day of Gratitude, a brunch to honor our community volunteers! The event will be held at the Barnstead Town Hall on 12/10 from 10AM to 2PM. It will start with a brunch, awards will be presented, and at 12PM Jo Radner will present a NH Humanities event, "Wit and Wisdom: The Forgotten Literary Life of New England Villages" This event is free and open to the public, so come spend a Saturday morning with us showing your appreciation for our community volunteers!

AA is still meeting on Tuesdays from 6pm - 7pm at the Center Barnstead Christian Church.

The American Legion Post #42 and the American Legion Auxiliary meet at the Earl B. Clark Legion Hall on the 1st Tuesday of the month at 6:30pm.

Cub Scout Pack 43 (Boys & Girls ages 5-10) meets on Tuesdays at BES from 6pm - 7pm.

Scouts BSA Troop 43 (Boys ages 11-17) meets on Wednesdays at the Earl B. Clark Legion Hall from 6:15pm - 7:15pm.

Scouts BSA Troop 53 (Girls ages 11-17) meets Mondays at T.L. Storer from 6pm - 7:15pm.

Girl Scout Troop 10340 (Girls grades K-8th) meets on Fridays at the Barnstead Town Hall from 4pm - 5:30pm.

HOLIDAY COOKIE RECIPE: PEANUT BUTTER BLOSSOMS

Ingredients

Nonstick cooking spray
 2 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
 1 1/4 teaspoons baking soda
 1/2 teaspoon fine salt
 1 cup smooth peanut butter (not natural)
 12 tablespoons (1 1/2 sticks) unsalted butter, at room temperature
 1/4 cup vegetable shortening
 1 3/4 cups packed light brown sugar
 2 large eggs
 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
 2 cups peanut butter chips
 Your favorite jelly thinned with a splash of liqueur (optional)
 48 to 60 chocolate kiss candies

Instructions

1. Adjust the oven racks to the upper and lower thirds and preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Coat 2 baking sheets with cooking spray
2. Combine the flour, baking soda and salt in a medium bowl. Set aside.
3. Beat the peanut butter, butter and shortening in a large bowl with an electric mixer on medium high until smooth, about 1 minute. Add the brown sugar and continue to beat until light and fluffy, about 4 minutes. Add the eggs and vanilla and continue to beat until incorporated. Add the flour mixture in two batches and beat on medium until incorporated. Fold in the peanut butter chips.
4. Scoop out level tablespoons of dough, roll into balls and space about 2 inches apart on the prepared baking sheets. (You will need to bake the cookies in batches; allow the baking sheets to cool in between batches.)
5. Bake until the bottoms and edges of the cookies are golden brown but the middles are still soft, about 10 minutes. (The cookies will bake a bit after they come out of the oven). Indent the warm cookies with the rounded bottom of a teaspoon. If using jelly, fill each indent with some jelly. Top each with a chocolate kiss candy.
6. Allow the cookies to cool on the baking sheet for a few minutes and then transfer to a rack to cool completely.



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