

## September 2021 - Rejoice always

Some weeks ago, Richard and I were returning home from a walk. It was raining hard. We had perhaps walked further than was sensible, and our dog, who is no longer young, was tired. I know that I was more focused on getting home than on enjoying the walk.

Then we came across a young boy, oblivious to his family's urging, squatting down in the middle of the path, totally absorbed in moving the stones and gravel so that the rain seeping down the path was channelled into a mini river burbling down the hillside. His pleasure in his achievement was infectious, and we stepped carefully around him and his handiwork, knowing that the next few boots to tramp up the hill would return the path to normal.

That young boy transformed the remainder of the walk for me. As I reflected on his simple enjoyment, and on his family's patience despite their obvious desire to go home, I found myself reflecting too on Paul's words to the early church in Thessalonica, 'Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in everything.' Witnessing that young boy's pleasure brought me pleasure, and I rejoiced at a child's ability to find play in almost every circumstance. He reminded me both of the importance of play for all of us whatever our age, and of the joy to be found in simply experiencing the world around us. For the rest of the walk, I returned to my normal state of enjoying rain simply as an experience rather than feeling it as uncomfortable or inconvenient. 'It's only water,' as my mother used to say!

I found myself drawn naturally into giving thanks for the countryside around me, for the incomparable smell of wet vegetation, for the different seasons, for the fact that my boots don't leak (after many months of boots that did!), for the joy of being able to relax in the company of those I love, for the people who visit our area, finding refreshment and renewal and supporting our local economy. The list goes on and on.

And so my prayer for myself and for us all this month, is that we will all be blessed with sights or sounds or experiences that enable us to rejoice and give thanks and, as we do so, to draw closer to God and to one another, and to all his creation.

Yours in Christ,  
Louise Petheram  
[rev.louise.p@gmail.com](mailto:rev.louise.p@gmail.com) 01433 621918

If you would like to sign up to receive the regular newsletters from churches and Christian groups across Hope Valley, please go to  
<https://mailchi.mp/f29b1286b3df/2t1gk3uwy2>  
or email me and I can sign you up.