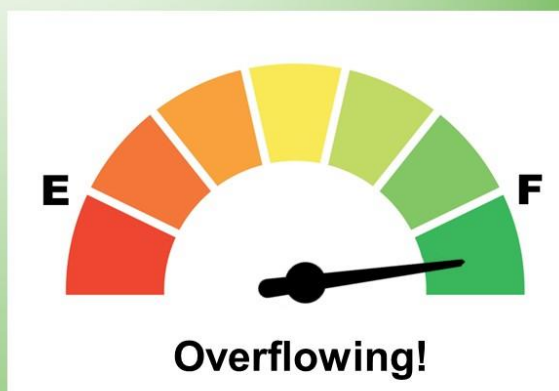


Serving More Joyfully

How much **JOY** is in your tank?



“The joy of the Lord is your strength.” Nehemiah 8:10

When we're on a road trip, we keep an eye on the gas gauge. What if you checked the level of joy in your tank today? Would you be full and overflowing? Or running on empty?

Increasing the joy in our tank helps us move from serving that is haphazard, intermittent or stagnant and move to serving that is intentional, **joyful**, impactful and faith-full.

Of course our joy goes up when we're praised at work, or when that big home repair is finally done, or when we do something we enjoy. But when we serve, there's plenty to push joy aside: difficult people, mind-numbing routine, demands of the job; a hectic schedule; lack of sleep. And being told to 'put on a happy face' or 'think positive' isn't helpful and it doesn't work.

We know what happiness looks like. But we've also seen or experienced something deeper than happiness. We see it when the parent feels awe and pleasure, alongside the exhaustion, as their infant feeds at 3am; when sight of a flowering tree takes your breath away during the boring commute; when we see someone showing unexpected peace and groundedness in the midst of tragedy. This is joy, a positive reality at our core that we can cling to even as anxiety, fear and pain intrude.

Such unshakeable joy must come from an unshakeable source. God offers this joy. And it's not doled out as a reward for our hard work. Entirely free, it's a gift Jesus earned for us by His brutal death and joyful resurrection. Drudgery, exhaustion, pain are all limited to our human lifespan. God's gift is eternal joy without end.

How do we tap more into that joy on a daily basis, especially when tasks are hard? Some suggestions:

- Look at the many times the Bible talks about joy. ([Listed in “A Life of Joy” here.](#)) Write down a favorite and post it where you'll see it.
- Using our natural gifts and abilities usually brings more joy. We can't work in those areas all the time, but perhaps we can lean more in that direction. See [“Serving More Intentionally.”](#)
- Rest. God judged a day of rest important enough to include it in the Ten Commandments.
- Do a gut check on your motivation. Are you working too hard in order to please others? To make a name for yourself?
- Be the joy. Make others smile; bring a small gift, wear a silly hat, tell a knock-knock joke. When you increase someone else's joy, you increase your own.
- Take a moment right now to praise God. Repeat daily. Each time you think of a reason to praise Him, you're thinking of a reason to be joyful.
- Pay attention to your attitude. As a caregiver, I realized how a negative attitude made the challenge greater.
- Reach out for help when you need it. One way God helps us is through the resources around us.
- Don't fake joy. That adds to the burden.

What one step is God calling you to take today to add a little more joy to your tank?

Let's Talk: What gives you joy?

When it comes to serving, what would you like your leaders at St. Peter to know about what you love (or don't love!) to do? What abilities do you most love using? [Tell us using this form.](#)

Also in this “Let's Talk” series:

[Week 1: We're on the Move!](#)

[Week 2: Serving an Audience of One everywhere we live, work and play](#)

[Week 3: Serving More Intentionally](#)

Week 5, May 25 and 26: Serving More Impactfully

Week 6, June 8 and 9: Serving More Faith-Fully

Week 7, June 22 and 23: Serving Together