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When you begin a trip, I imagine you make certain preparations before you leave. Pack a suitcase full of clothes, put gas in the car, make reservations at a hotel, and plan your route. Years ago I would call AAA for a TripTik, which was a set of paper instructions that would lay out the best route for the trip. Now I ask Google maps to create a route, and I follow it using GPS on my phone.

Family trips take planning, and so do our journeys in the church. Nine months ago we began a journey together, and it also required a lot of preparation. Not only did the search committee try to discern what direction to head, but all of you helped in that process.

When you invited me here to join in your adventure of ministry, we began in September a new approach to the scriptures used in worship. The Narrative Lectionary has provided us a map through the Bible. We began with a creation story, Joseph, Moses, David, and Jonah and several other prophets. In December we traveled through Advent

with stories of Jesus' birth, and then we explored his ministry with his disciples. During Lent we heard Jesus' parables, celebrated Easter, and then we traveled with Paul through his letters to churches. Last Sunday's Pentecost celebration ended this year's trip, and now we begin several shorter excursions this summer before starting all over again in the fall.

This Sunday we begin a five-week journey through the Psalms, following the ups and downs of the writers' emotions. About a dozen of us have been wandering through the Psalms on Tuesday mornings during Bible study, and we invite you into our journey with the Psalms over the next five Sundays.

This week our Psalm invites us to begin with a lot of noise, not something one usually wants on a trip in a small car. You've probably heard noisy travelers in the back seat: I'm tired; (*what have you heard?*) I'm bored; I'm hungry; how much longer? Psalm 100 has a different kind of noise: a joyful

noise—not just by human voices, but by the entire earth.

The Hebrew word רוּעַ (roo-AH) is most often translated as “shout,” but it can also mean “noise” or “sound the alarm” or “cry out” or “give a blast of a horn.” In other words, make a lot of noise, and in this case, a joyful sound.

Psalm 100 invites us to worship with gladness, to come into God’s presence with singing and thanksgiving. The psalm celebrates God’s goodness, God’s love that lasts forever, for God made us, and we belong to God.

Psalm 100 is a psalm of thanks, celebrating what God has done, acknowledging the many blessings in our lives. The psalmist is so grateful that he even invites all of creation to make some joyful noise.

Sometimes, I know, we may not always recognize what we have; we may forget to give thanks for the things already surrounding us, as in a Peanuts cartoon when Lucy complains,

“My life is a drag. I’m completely fed up. I’ve never felt so low in my life.”

Linus, her little brother, tries to comfort her, “Lucy, when you’re in a mood like this, you should try to think of things you have to be thankful for. In other words, count your blessings.”

Lucy replies, “Ha! *That’s* a good one! I could count my blessings on one finger! I’ve never had anything and I never will have anything. I don’t get half the breaks that other people do. Nothing ever goes right for me! And you talk about counting blessings! You talk about being thankful! What do I have to be thankful for?”

Linus suggests, “Well, for one thing, you have a little brother who loves you.”

Lucy runs over and gives Linus a big hug, to which he replies, “Every now and then, I say the right thing.”¹

If you were to make a joyful noise about what God has done for you, about the blessings in your

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life, I wonder what it would sound like. Let's try it. Think for a moment of something for which to give thanks. When I count to 3, make a joyful noise and shout out why you're thankful. Ready? 1...2...3.

What a joyful noise of thanksgiving!

There's much in the world that could inspire joyful noise, and several centuries before Jesus was born a scholar and a historian each made a list of the Seven Wonders of the World, including the great pyramids and the coliseum in Rome. Throughout history various people have revised the list to reflect their perceptions of the 7 Wonders. In the Middle Ages the list contained the Leaning Tower of Pisa and Stonehenge.

Joy Garrison Wasson, an English teacher who taught in Muncie for over thirty years, often told a story about:

a group of geography students who had studied the Seven Wonders of the World. At the end of that section, the teacher asked the children to list what they considered to be the

Seven Wonders of the World today. Though there was some disagreement, the following got the most votes:

1. Egypt's Great Pyramids
2. Taj Mahal
3. Grand Canyon
4. Panama Canal
5. Empire State Building
6. St. Peter's Basilica
7. China's Great Wall

While gathering the votes, the teacher noted that one student had not finished her paper yet. So she asked the girl if she was having trouble with her list. The girl replied, "Yes, a little. I couldn't quite make up my mind because there were so many."

The teacher said, "Well, tell us what you have, and maybe we can help." The girl hesitated, then read, "I think the 'Seven Wonders of the World' are:

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1. To See
2. To Hear
3. To Touch and feel
4. To Taste
5. To Smell
6. To Laugh
7. To Love.”²

There are wonders all around us, things for which to give thanks. In our families. In our schools. In our careers. And in this church. When I look around, I see at least seven wonders in this place for which to give thanks:

1. This beautiful sanctuary where we gather to give thanks to God.
2. Our congregation’s commitment to reaching out into the community through our monthly Saturday morning breakfast and annual Thanksgiving dinner where we not only feed

neighborhood and homeless families, but where we also engage in conversation.

3. Our wonderful music and leaders: David and the choir, Vicky and the organ.
4. Leaders who guide our journey: elders, deacons, team and council members, and Sunday school teachers.
5. Study groups who continue to learn: Bible study, book study, and Sunday school.
6. The many volunteers who keep this place going: from scrap metal collection to rummage sales to cooking to mowing to making repairs.
7. Each one of you who gathers here for worship and engages in your ministry of kindness throughout the week.

I think all those things are worth giving thanks and making some joyful noise. So let’s make a joyful noise again and say *thanks* to God. Ready?
1...2...3....Thanks!

¹ Robert Short, *The Gospel According to Peanuts*, 1964, 23.

² <https://philipchircop.wordpress.com/tag/teacher/>