



## Messy Christmas!

### Glad Generosity

December 2019

It seemed natural to choose to visit this town, Glad Generosity, at Messy Christmas. Our children's hearts understand about being glad more easily than us adults and generosity is more prevalent at this time of year. BUT of course it is more than that.... wander the streets of this town and really look through the windows at the way people live here. Christmas happiness and generosity, whilst wonderful is almost superficial and easily crushed.

Gladness or Joy (both words we don't use a lot really) and happiness are lovely feelings to have, but are very different. Gladness (joy) is more consistent, intentional and needs cultivating internally. Gladness is an outward expression of inward joy and leads to natural generosity. Gladness doesn't depend on circumstances around you because inside, your heart is at peace with the hope and joy which I believe my faith in God, and choosing to be a disciple or learner of Jesus brings me.

But it is a habit! A Holy one! It has to be worked at. I have to choose to be glad because I know that ultimately God, in some mysterious way, walks before, beside and behind me. I am learning to trust in God. I have been a learner since the age of 7 and during my 60 plus years have had some wonderful times, had good parents, lovely friends. But - I have had many losses and difficulties, and my lovely family now has some major struggles going on. I also battle with depression which is different from a lack of joy or gladness.

Sorry if this seems to be about ME.... but I know her well! I am intentional in choosing to be glad. The Kingdom of God, I believe is the best kingdom to be part of and is the hope of the world. So, when my life takes unexpected turns that threaten to disappoint, worry or overwhelm me, and sometimes they do, I still choose to be glad in the deep place inside myself. God is with me, in Jesus everything holds together and ultimately will be made new. When my husband left me, completely unexpectedly and brutally, I had a new mantra. "Life is s\*\*t so enjoy the good moments" and actually there is truth in that. There are good moments in every day, people who show kindness and love. My wonderful girls who are there to help and encourage and the funniness of my grandchildren and even your children. You, Messy Church and Messy Munchkins who are good to be part of and encourage me so much. And really, so many more people have it so much worse, and thinking about them can take my focus off me. Out of all this comes generosity - to my self - being kind to me and being kind and generous to those around. This all takes work because naturally we all are selfish and we try to preserve self and our lives. But it is a Holy Habit because of that....habits only become habits by repeatedly choosing to live a certain way. But at this time of year, when the lights of Christmas, and more importantly the Light of the Christ Child shine in the natural darkness, it is a good habit to cultivate to bring hope to a world that needs it when Christmas lights go off. *Liz*