

Dear Fellow Members,

With the 50th anniversary of Earth Day coming up next Wednesday I, at first, felt called to write today's message about caring for creation, but I soon realized that message would just have to wait until next Saturday.

Why, because after receiving two of this week's messages I laughed out loud, and I hope you did, too! The writers said that because of these trying times they hoped their messages would put a smile on our faces, and so that is my purpose today, as well! Thank you, Joanne, Larry and Bert, for your inspiration.

Larry and Joanne's wishes for good health, hope and peace included a link to a wonderfully funny YouTube video online for the fun tune written in 1979 by American folk singer/songwriter Bill Staines called "All God's Critters Got A Place in the Choir". Perhaps you've heard it over the years, but like a lot of those fun songs, we don't play or sing them often enough! I remember many of them from my childhood days in elementary school music classes, in Sunday school & youth group activities, and at church camp & Boy Scout camp especially in the dining halls and around the campfires, and I'll bet you remember many of those songs too!

Bert introduced his message this week by saying he has something different for us, a story that I'll call "A Friday Evening Adventure in the Local Seafood House Drive-In Pick-Up Line". Who doesn't love a good story and I hope you found it as hilarious as I did and because of Bert's story telling/writing ability I feel like I already know Joe and especially Bonnie! I'm sure I could pick Bonnie out in a crowd and it would bring a smile to my face again, how about you?

I really appreciated the humor in both of those messages, I don't have a story today, but I do have a song that I hope will bring a smile to your face and a trip down memory lane as you think back to some of those fun songs from your childhood.

Many came to mind, such as "Father Abraham", "Three Jolly Fisherman", "Found A Peanut" and "If You're Happy And You Know It", but "Oh, You Can't Get To Heaven" was and still is one of my very favorites because it includes the invitation for instant creativity and fun as the participating singers continue the song indefinitely as more verses are thought of after the first five verses. One website online lists 28 verses!

As with each of the hymns in my previous messages I was curious to know the history of this song. The preface of a songbook published in 1986 by Pam Beall and Susan Nipp entitled "Wee Sing Silly Songs" was as close as I could get, it reads in part, "What a wonderful feeling...being silly. Children can have the sensation with the wink of an eye: adults may need some coaxing to melt away the façade of 'maturity'. But it's there, inside all of us. And when we let it out, the experience is JOYOUS (my caps)..... We have had great fun compiling these songs. There are folk songs from early America, nonsense songs from the camp bus, preposterous songs from our forefathers and others from who knows where. But they are all a

part of our American heritage, a history full of adventure, strength, sorrow, growth and laughter to all children and adults as well, release that spirit of silliness and enjoy”.

So, just for the fun of it today, sing it, play it, or look up and play a video online, and perhaps you’ll want to do the same with some others that you remember.

“Oh You Can’t Get To Heaven” as it appears in “Wee Sing Silly Songs” pages 48-49

“(Leader) Oh, you can’t get to heaven (group echo) Oh, you can’t get to heaven

“ On roller skates

“ On roller skates

“ ‘Cause you’d roll right by

“ ‘Cause you’d roll right by

“ Those pearly gates

“ Those pearly gates

(Everyone on the chorus): Oh, you can’t get to heaven on roller skates ‘cause you’d roll right by those pearly gates, I ain’t gonna grieve my Lord no more. I ain’t gonna grieve my Lord no more. I ain’t gonna grieve my Lord no more. I ain’t gonna grieve my Lord no more.

2. Oh you can’t get to heaven (echo) In a rocking chair (echo) ‘Cause a rocking chair (echo) Won’t get you there (echo)--- Chorus

3. Oh you can’t get to heaven (echo) In a limousine (echo) ‘Cause the Lord don’t sell (echo) No gasoline (echo)---Chorus

4. Oh you can’t get to heaven (echo) In a motor car (echo) ‘Cause a motor car (echo) Won’t go that far (echo)---Chorus

5. If you get there (echo) Before I do (echo) Just dig a hole (echo) And pull me through (echo)- --Chorus

Continue making up own verses.”

I hope singing, playing or watching a song(s) or video(s) makes you JOYFUL today, and makes you think of, as it did me, Psalm 100, especially the beginning verses.

Psalm 100: Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the lands! Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing! Know that the Lord is God! It is he that made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture, Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him, bless his name¹ For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations. (RSV)

Have some fun today and every day and take good care!

Bob