

## ***Calm and Bright - Let Us Sing - Isaiah 9:1-7***

Norwalk Christian Church, December 23, 2018, Calm and Bright Series, Advent 4, Year A

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You probably don't know his name, but I know you've heard his songs. He was the one who first asked us as children, "Can You Tell Me How to Get, How to Get to Sesame Street." He taught us, "It's Not Easy Being Green" and that "C is for Cookie". Joe Raposo was the official composer for Sesame Street.

He wrote his most famous composition in 1971, a song simply entitled "Sing". It began in the mouth of Muppets and traveled the world, thanks to the Carpenters who decided to sing, "Sing". They took it to a top-ten and Grammy Nomination. Since then, it's been recorded over 50 times and sung by such a diverse group as Lena Horne, Gloria Estefan, Garth Brooks, and even Ben Stiller and Conan O'Brien.

The song brings joy. The words are simple, but I challenge you to hear it sung without smiling, just a little:

*Sing, sing a song, Sing out loud, Sing out strong,  
Sing of good things not bad, Sing of happy not sad  
Sing, sing a song, Make it simple to last, Your whole life long  
Don't worry that it's not, Good enough for anyone Else to hear  
Just sing, sing a song.*

The song changed Joe Raposo's life, propelled him from Sesame Street to international fame. But in 1988, he just wanted to get away from it all. Joe was 51 and he was just diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. His diagnosis was terminal, and he didn't want to tell anyone.

So Joe left everyone he knew, flew across the world, and checked into a inn on an isolated Island off Scotland's coast, fleeing his life; pretending that he was not dying.

"[At the isolated inn]," Joe later told a friend, "There was nothing...to remind me of what's past or of any fears I might imagine." No one there knew of him. He could avoid his life. But one day, he was walking around, and stopped. He listened. In the distance, he heard the 80-year-old, Scottish innkeeper humming a tune..."Sing, Sing a song."<sup>1</sup>

Joe said, "I laughed." And in that moment his life came back to him. He could finally face the truth.

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The song he heard was his, but it was really only a variation of "that glorious song of old." Hope. Hope. Today, we sing of Hope. But I wonder if it's Hope that really does the singing. Hope is a song, a song that comes to us when we least expect it. When we are

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/silent-night-salzburg/index.html>







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