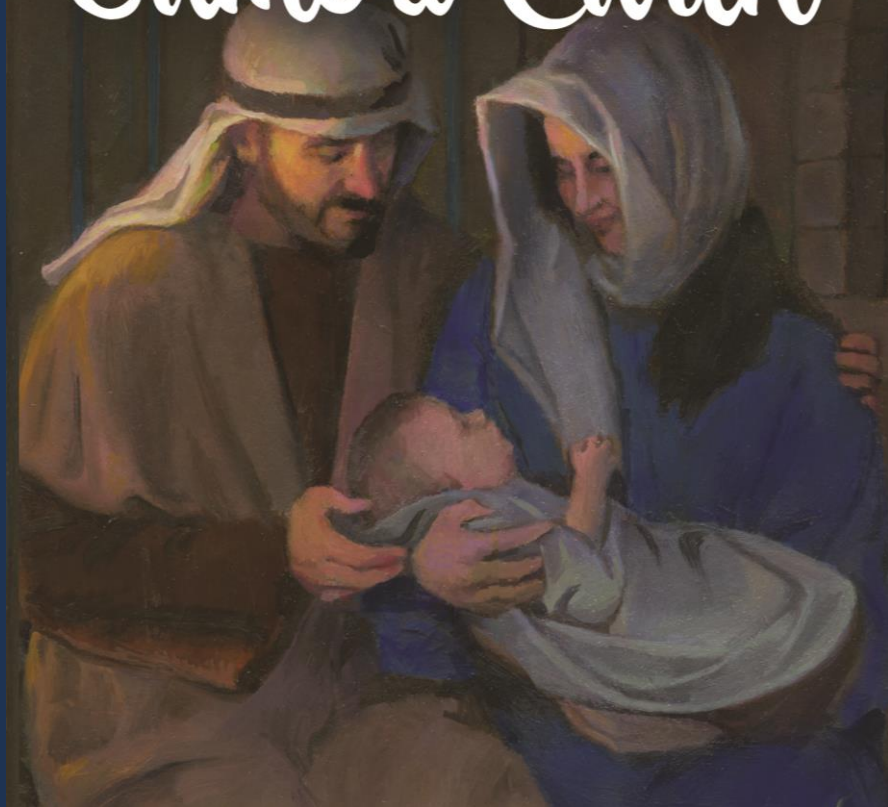


Peace Came to Earth



Advent 2 Midweek

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

Wednesday, Dec. 13, 2023

ADVENT MIDWEEK 2

✠ PREPARATION ✠

THEME: "PEACE TO ALL, NEAR AND FAR"

AS WE GATHER: As we pause to contemplate His Word during this second week of Advent, Jesus comes to us where we are and says, "My peace I give to you" (John 14:27). This peace does not come through our attempts to remove ourselves from reality or rearrange the broken pieces of our past. No, it is only by the grace of God that we now receive His peace, His forgiveness, and His restoration through faith in His promises. Gathering us from far and near, no matter who we are or where we have been, our Advent King gives us His peace by means of His death and resurrection. When we trust in Him, we will not simply feel better with a short-term stillness; we will stand fully forgiven by Jesus and at permanent peace with our God.

TITHES AND OFFERINGS

(Basket placed in the aisle)

(Our offerings are made as an act of worship, given in loving response to all that God has graciously given us, both materially and spiritually.)

PRELUDE

WELCOME

HYMN

Let There Be Peace On Earth

Let there be peace on earth, And let it begin with me;
Let there be peace on earth, The peace that was meant to be.
With God as our Father, Brothers all are we.
Let me walk with my brother In perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me, Let this be the moment now;
With ev'ry step I take, Let this be my solemn vow:
To take each moment, And live each moment
In peace eternally. Let there be peace on earth,
And let it begin with me.

INVOCATION

- P** In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

OPENING SENTENCES

- P** For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;
C **and the government shall be upon His shoulder,**

- P** and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor,
C **Mighty God,**

- P** Everlasting Father,
C **Prince of Peace.**

- P** The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
C Amen.

OPENING PRAYER

- P** Heavenly Father,
we seek peace, but it seems so far away. We often hope that we will find peace in distant places. But You bring us peace right where we are, speaking peace through the coming of Your Son. It doesn't matter where we have been or where we are now. We are called to be Your people, united and at peace through Your one Son. Give us that peace we seek here with You. We pray in Jesus' name.
C Amen.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

- P** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
C **But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**
- P** Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.
C **Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean.**

We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

P Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

SALUTATION

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us pray.

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come, that by the light of Your Holy Word, we may be drawn to Jesus and healed of our brokenness, rejoicing in Him who alone is our peace. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Prince of Peace, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

† THE WORD †

PSALM

Psalm 85:1–9

P LORD, You were favorable to Your land;

C You restored the fortunes of Jacob.

P You forgave the iniquity of Your people;

C You covered all their sin.

- P** You withdrew all Your wrath;
- C** **You turned from Your hot anger.**
- P** Restore us again, O God of our salvation,
- C** **and put away Your indignation toward us!**
- P** Will You be angry with us forever?
- C** **Will You prolong Your anger to all generations?**
- P** Will You not revive us again,
- C** **that Your people may rejoice in You?**
- P** Show us Your steadfast love, O LORD,
- C** **and grant us Your salvation.**
- P** Let me hear what God the LORD will speak,
- C** **for He will speak peace to His people, to His saints; but let them not turn back to folly.**
- P** Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him,
- C** **that glory may dwell in our land.**

EPISTLE

Ephesians 2:11–18 (ESV)

¹¹Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— ¹²remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For He Himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in His flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that He might create in Himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, ⁶and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. ¹⁷And He came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸For through Him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

- P** This is the Word of the Lord.
- C** **Thanks be to God.**

HOLY GOSPEL

John 14:25–31 (ESV)

²⁵ “These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. ²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. ²⁷ Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. ²⁸ You heard Me say to you, ‘I am going away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. ²⁹ And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe. ³⁰ I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on Me, ³¹ but I do as the Father has commanded Me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

HYMN

Lord, Open Now My Heart To Hear

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- 1 Lord, open now my heart to hear,
And through Your Word to me draw near;
Let me Your Word e'er pure retain;
Let me Your child and heir remain.
- 2 Your Word inspires my heart within;
Your Word grants healing from my sin;
Your Word has pow'r to guide and bless;
Your Word brings peace and happiness.
- 3 To God the Father, God the Son,
And God the Spirit, Three in One,
Shall glory, praise, and honor be
Now and throughout eternity.

MESSAGE

Ephesians 2:11–18

“PEACE TO ALL, NEAR AND FAR”

Pastor Jim Sprenkle

MAGNIFICAT

Luke 1:46–55

- P** Mary rejoiced that the Lord was coming to earth to reconcile us to the Father, bringing us peace through His blood. Let us now use her song of praise to rejoice in our Advent Savior.
- C** **My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior;**
- P** for He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden. For behold, from this day all generations will call me blessed.
- C** **For the Mighty One has done great things to me, and holy is His name; and His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation.**
- P** He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
- C** **He has cast down the mighty from their thrones and has exalted the lowly.**
- P** He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent empty away.
- C** **He has helped His servant Israel in remembrance of His mercy as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever.**
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

PRAYERS (following each petition)

- P** “Lord, in Your mercy,”
C “hear our prayer.”

THE LORD’S PRAYER (Mt 6:9ff; Lk 11:2ff)

- P** Lord, remember us in Your Kingdom and teach us to pray:
C **Our Father Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

BENEDICTION

- P** The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.
- C** Amen.

HYMN

Go, My Children, with My Blessing

- 1 Go, My children, with My blessing, Never alone.
Waking, sleeping, I am with you; You are My own.
In My love's baptismal river I have made you Mine forever.
Go, My children, with My blessing—You are My own.
- 2 Go, My children, sins forgiven, At peace and pure.
Here you learned how much I love you, What I can cure.
Here you heard My dear Son's story;
Here you touched Him, saw His glory.
Go, My children, sins forgiven, At peace and pure.
- 4 I the Lord will bless and keep you And give you peace;
I the Lord will smile upon you And give you peace:
I the Lord will be your Father,
Savior, Comforter, and Brother.
Go, My children; I will keep you And give you peace.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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