

Series: Advent 2025

**The Peace of the Presence**

Luke 1:26-33, Ephesians 2:14

Sermon by Lead Pastor Paul Joslin

Waterstone Community Church, Littleton, Colorado

Sunday morning, December 7, 2025

As we enter into the story of Advent together, we reflect on God's peace through His presence and favor. The Holy Spirit empowers ordinary people to accomplish the extraordinary, through trust and surrender to His plans. We light a candle today as an act of remembrance that God brings peace through his consistent presence. A reading from Luke 1, verses 26 through 33: "In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, 'Greetings, you who are highly favored. The Lord is with you.' Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be, but the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary. You have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of his father David, and He will reign over Jacob's descendants forever. His kingdom will never end,'" the word of the Lord.

Paul: Let me pray for us. Heavenly Father, God, as we come before you today, Lord, many of us resonate with the video that Paulie and his dad Paul shared, this kind of anxiety, this lack of peace that we can feel during the holidays, and yet, Father, it is not a mistake that during Advent the church has focused on this word, "peace," and that when everything feels like chaos in the world, the church is continuously calling us back to a space where we can experience your peace, and so Father, wherever we are coming from today, whatever anxiety or fears or worries that we might be carrying into this room, I pray now that the power of your Holy Spirit would just rest on this place, that you would speak to us through your word and that we could experience something different this year, that there would be a tangible manifestation of your peace in our lives, and it is in Christ's name that we pray, amen.

As the video shared, family is not always peaceful, especially during the holidays, and I do not know if any of you have had that experience that Paul Senior talked about, where he said, "Sometimes you just want the dinner to be a little bit shorter." Like you just try to figure out, can you stack them in a certain way, so you have an activity you have to go to after dinner, so you're like, "Oh, sorry, we only have an hour and a half today, and then we are going to have to leave a little early," and you just like try to find a way to get through it. Family can feel a little chaotic, and some of you, you are already beginning to feel that tension in your shoulders, because you know you're going to go to the family dinner, and when you get there, your uncle is going to say something about his political views that exist somewhere between a Facebook meme and like a podcast that no one should listen to, and you are like, "I just do not, I do not want to hear it. That is not what I am here for." Or you have got that friend, and your family that is going to show up to Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner, and they're going to tell you about a business opportunity they have. They are getting into essential oils, and for \$15,000, you could join their business initiative, and you are thinking in your mind, "Fifteen thousand dollars, I don't know, I am not sure. Pretty confident

I could probably just buy a new family with \$15,000. Like, that sounds more appealing.” It is those spaces where you are interacting with family, and the politics come up and the theology about the end times, and you are just like, “I am stuck in this conversation. Can I just go figure out if there is something for me to do in the kitchen, so I do not have to have this conversation?”

It is not just the family. It is also that the season itself just does not really work. I mean, it is the moment when it is the last day before school is out, and you realize you forgot to get the gift for your kid’s teacher, and so you run to Target at 10:30 at night, you are hoping they are still open and you can find something, and then you are rushing around. It is all of the people who are feeling like, oh, they have got this business meeting, and we have got this end of the year party, we have got this school thing going on, and it just feels like the calendar is somehow packed full with things, and you are just rushing from thing to thing to thing, feeling so spread thin.

Then it is the day itself, and we are given this vision of Christmas that it is like hot cocoa and warm twinkling lights, and the family is sitting around the piano singing Christmas hymns, and then the day actually comes, and the kids wake up at 4:15 a.m. like caffeinated raccoons, and they are just like going crazy, like biting packages and opening presents, and you are sitting there thinking like, “I just do not have the energy for it this morning.” Then it is the rushing around to get to the family dinner, where you know you are going to have to talk to the person that we already mentioned, but suddenly a fight breaks out, because none of the kids are getting ready fast enough, and you are just feeling anxious about the dinner, but you are taking it out on them, because they are not putting their shoes on when they are trying to get out the door, or they are fighting about wearing a coat. Does anybody have those moments? It just feels like there is no peace, and it just feels like it is consistently this space where you are longing for peace.

You want to experience peace, and even the moments when you think it will be peaceful, like my grandma, she used to make cinnamon rolls for Christmas morning, and it was just beautiful. I looked forward to it every year, but there were some years when she would burn them accidentally because she was doing a thousand other things, and then there was the moment when she would just yell at everyone, like, “You are still going to be happy because it is Christmas, and it doesn’t matter that they’re burnt,” and you have those moments, and it doesn’t feel like it is actually restful. It feels forced, and I think the only people who actually feel peace around the holidays are just the people who finish their Christmas shopping in October. Is anybody like that? You finish your, just so you know, the rest of us do not like you, okay? We do not. We are like, we’re mad that you have it figured out in a way that we do not, because we want that kind of peace, and we can’t find it anywhere, and so it is no mistake that Advent focuses on this word, “peace,” during the holidays, because everything about the holidays and family and everything that we look forward to seems to be the antithesis of feeling peace in our lives, and yet it is central to this season.

The church has always focused on this idea that Advent is about peace, and so we have to ask the question today, “What is peace?” Because I think many of us think of peace in a certain way, and we feel like it is not working for us, and so what we are going to do is we are going to submit this word to scripture today, and as we look at scripture, scripture does what it always does, which is it takes something we think we understand, and it disrupts it for us. It gently prods and says, “I am not sure that word means what you think it means.” A few of you got that reference. Actually, I think one person got that reference. We will just keep going then.

I think in our world, peace always means the absence of something. In our culture, for many of us, peace is the absence of conflict. It means no arguments, no tension, no one raising their voice at the holiday table, or peace maybe means the absence of anxiety when your mind finally stops spinning, and your chest loosens up for just a moment, and you feel like everything is okay. In our world, cultural peace usually equals the absence of trouble. Cultural peace means it relies on things that we do not want in our lives just going away. It means things going the way that we want them to go, but that means that this kind of peace is very, very fragile, because how often in your life do things go the way that you want them to go, and so it means that anything could take away your peace at any moment.

It is that comment from your roommate that suddenly you just did not understand, and so it disrupts your peace. It is the bill that comes into your inbox that you were not quite expecting during the holidays, and you think, “Oh my goodness, how are we going to come up with that money?” It is the look from your spouse when you’re doing Christmas shopping that you are not quite sure how to interpret, and suddenly your mind starts spinning like, “Did I do something wrong? Did I say something wrong? Is she upset about something?” Just me? Okay, cool. It is all of those moments, right? It is the moment when it is like ten o’clock at night, and you get the e-mail in your inbox where your boss says, “Hey, we need to talk tomorrow,” and no other subject, no other context around that. Just we need to talk, and you do not know if he wants to talk about the Broncos or like you are being let go, and suddenly you are just filled with this anxiety. It does not take much for our peace to be disrupted.

I want you to think about this idea. I want you to think about the last time you went on vacation, and my guess is, as you were getting ready for vacation, you were thinking something along the lines of like, life just feels crazy, feels a little chaotic. If we could just get away for a little bit, we could have some what? Peace and quiet, and then what happens? You get the getaway in the mountains, or you book the beach resort, or you find some sort of trip where you take the kids to Disney, and you think, if we can just get away from it all, get away from the stress, the chaos, we will experience a little bit of peace and quiet, and then what happens? You are driving up to the mountains, and your car breaks down, and suddenly this week that was supposed to be just magical time of you skiing with your family and spending time with them, your car is not working, and you have to fix that. Or you are trying to fly to the beach destination, and your kid gets lost in the airport, and suddenly you are stressed about missing the flight, and everything is chaos. Or you get there, and paradise is rainy, or there is no snow up in Vail, and it is all of these things that you think will give you peace, and what you realize is even escaping the day-to-day chaos does not actually give you peace, that your lack of peace follows you wherever you go, because the way we define peace, it is perfection. It is experiencing all of the circumstances in our life the way we want them to go, and if that does not happen, then we lose our sense of peace, but Biblically peace is very, very different.

The Bible defines peace in a very different way. The Hebrew word for peace is one you are probably familiar with. It is “shalom.” The Greek word is “irina,” and they mean essentially the same thing. What they do not mean is quiet or calm or nothing stressful. What shalom means is wholeness. It means completion. It means harmony and flourishing. It is when all of the pieces in life fit together the way God designed them to, not because there’s no strife or conflict or aggression or any of those kinds of things, but because you are living in relationship with God.

The interesting thing about the Biblical definition of peace is that shalom is not the absence of conflict. It is God's presence in your life, and here is what is crazy about Biblical peace. It is you can have shalom, you can have this idea of peace in the midst of conflict. The Bible talks about experiencing peace when the world feels like it is falling apart. You can have shalom while you are grieving the loss of a loved one. You can have shalom when the world feels like it is out of control, because shalom is not based on your circumstances. It is based on God's presence, and so Biblical peace, it has a definition that looks a little more like this. If our cultural peace is the absence of trouble, Biblical peace, Advent peace, is restfulness that comes from being made whole, not from avoiding hard things. It is experiencing life with God, the presence of God in our lives, despite whatever chaos might be happening in the world.

When I think of this idea, I think of the road trips my family used to take often around the holidays. We lived in Texas, and we would travel to Iowa or Missouri to see my grandparents, and early on, it was just my brother and I. We were about two years apart, and there was a bigger gap between us and the others, so we would always drive in our Oldsmobile. Does anybody remember an Oldsmobile? It looked like a shoebox on wheels. It was just a big box, four corners and everything, and in the back of this Oldsmobile, there was just a long bench, and my brother and I would sit on that bench, and there was always one of two kinds of atmospheres, I'll call it, in the back of that car. One was just total all-out war, where my brother, usually my brother, would cross the boundary between my side of the bench and his side of the bench, and it did not matter if it was an elbow. It did not matter if it was a shoelace. It did not matter what it was. That was a breach of the Geneva Convention, and all-out total war was justified. Anything short of pitching him out of the car while we're driving down the highway was allowed, and it was chaos, it was loud, it was noisy, it was punching, it was scratching, it was throwing things, and then it usually, peace would have to come back by my dad, usually yelling to the back, like, "I'm going to pull this thing over, no Christmas presents this year," and then you just get quiet, and you are like, "All right, we won't do that." So that was one option for peace.

The other was we would be like best friends, but do you remember those caffeinated raccoons I was talking about earlier? It was like that, where in the backseat of the car, we were just like giddy and joyful and best friends, and we were making a ton of noise, and we were like laughing and playing together, and that also would sometimes produce the same reaction in my dad, of like, "I'm going to turn this thing around if you do not just calm down," and so it is just chaos, and here is the thing, is now we figured out how to mitigate a lot of that, right? Because we realized, do not give kids benches. Give them their own bucket seat, and then just put a screen right in front of their face. There is no more fighting about whose iPad is whose. Just put the TV right in the car, right there for them, and give them separate TVs so they can watch what they want or play what they want. Give them noise-canceling headphones, so that way nobody else has to hear what the other person is doing, because if your TV screen was a little too loud for my thing that I was doing, and suddenly there is a fight, but we just give them noise-canceling headphones, and they can't even hear what is going on. We have figured all this out.

Here's the thing, though. That is not actually peace. That is distraction. It is not actually intentional peace. It is just creating this manufactured environment where we have gotten rid of all the noise, but it is not actually peace, and I think so many times in life, in our effort to try to find peace, what we do is essentially what we have done on road trips, is we just try to numb ourselves. We just try to check out. We

binge watch the TV show. We lose ourselves in a book or an addiction. We just try to find peace. We just try to silence the chaos of our lives by just numbing out and forgetting about the world around us, and if I can just forget about everything going on out there long enough, then maybe I will experience a little bit of peace in my life, but that is not actually peace. That is just removing the circumstances, because as soon as the iPad dies, or the noise-canceling headphones do not work, or somebody has to go to the bathroom, suddenly the peace is disrupted again in the car.

What we figured out in my family now is it is not that I need to yell from the backseat, “I’m going to turn this thing around,” if Camden and Landon are not listening. What we figured out is if we want actual peace to reign in the road trip, and we do long road trips, like 14 or 15-hour road trips to Texas with a two-year-old and a six-year-old, not fun, but how we have found to have peace is actually through my wife’s presence, because what she does is she climbs into the back seat of the truck, and she sits in between the tension, and her presence, she has this magical ability, this presence to just sit and be with the kids, and suddenly all the fighting turns into games or to stories or to doing things together. That is actually a picture of Biblical peace, because Biblical peace is not the removal of the tension. It is not changing the circumstances. It is God stepping into the circumstances with us. It is God getting into the back seat of your car when everything feels like it is exploding and blowing up and going chaotic and saying, “I am with you.” Biblical peace is relational.

I think in our culture we think of peace as circumstantial, but God defines peace as relational. Culture tries to find peace through escape, but God gives us peace through His presence, and if we understand that, then we are ready for the story of Mary, because I think at first glance that we often hear the story of Mary, a young woman, truthfully a teenage girl who God comes to and says, “You are going to have a baby,” and we think of all of the chaos of the time. You think of the census that you hear Linus talk about, or you think of all of the different political tumult that was going on. You think of all of the different ways that her world was crazy, but actually, if you look at the story, especially in Luke, when the angel comes to Mary, it is not painting a picture of chaos or a lack of peace. I want you to listen to the state of her life and what is going on in her life.

Luke chapter 1, verse 26: “In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent an angel Gabriel to Nazareth,” a nowhere town in Galilee, “to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph.” Mary is actually on the precipice of a beautiful life, a husband who wants to marry her and who will take care of her. She is about to step into this traditional space where she was going to have a predictable, honorable life, a life of peace, of raising children, of having a husband who has a job, of having an honorable character and stepping into all of the expected rhythms of marriage and home and family. That is her life. That is what she is looking forward to, and then everything is turned upside down by God. God disrupts her peace, so “She was pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David.” So, he was also an honorable man, and her name, the virgin’s name, was Mary, “and the angel went to her and said, ‘Greetings you who are highly favored. The Lord is with you.’” That sounds like an amazing greeting. The Lord has seen you, his favor is upon you, and the Lord is with you, but notice Mary’s response. “Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.”

Now why would that be Mary’s response to, “you are highly favored by God, and God is with you”? Why would Mary’s response to that be to feel greatly troubled at his words and wonder what kind

of greeting they mean? Because what we see in scripture is that Mary was a student of scripture. So next week, when we look at the Magnificat, you can see that she is someone who has understood the message of scripture, and she understands as a student of scripture that usually when an angel shows up in your life, it is not to just say like, "Hey, everything is going great. You just need to keep going the way you are going." Usually, the angel shows up in your life and says, "God has seen you. You are doing the right thing, and now He is placing a call on your life to do something that is going to cost you everything," and so that is probably where her fear comes from in this moment. She knows that whatever the angel is about to say, it is going to stretch her, reshape her, lead her into unknown places. She is not afraid because she sees an angel. She is afraid because she understands. She has an awareness that God might be asking her to do something that she never imagined she was supposed to do.

I think this is something that we miss in the Bible and something that we rarely talk about. It is that most of us, I think we miss peace in our life because we think of it as circumstantial, and we think of peace as like if things could just go the way that I want, and so what do we do to make that happen? Rightfully, we pray. We say, "God, would you just show up in my life, and would you fix this thing? Would you make the path straight? Would you resolve all of the tension I am feeling about this relationship or this career or whatever it might be? God, can you just come in and fix it?" and God does do that, but far more often, what we see in scripture is that when we pray for God to fix our circumstances, He shakes them up. So, I would actually argue from the next chapter over that we see Mary has been praying for God to show up and change the political climate of Israel and Judea. She has been hoping and praying for the Messiah. She understands that when the Messiah comes, all things will be set right, and that is what she is praying for and hoping for. She never imagined that God would come to her, and it would be through her womb that God would start that journey. What we often pray for, what we often ask for, is for God to just show up and fix the things in our life, and more often than not, what God does is He disrupts our life, and it feels less peaceful in the traditional sense, but He promises to be with us. He promises that He will be with us. What we often pray for is asking God to fix the problem or to remove the stress or silence the fear, but the peace of God does not come from God changing our circumstances. The peace of God comes from Him stepping into and entering into our circumstances, and that is what He says to Mary, "I will be with you." He is offering his presence.

I was thinking about this, and Camden, I got permission from her to share this with her, and actually we have started this thing in my family. When I use my family for an illustration, I give them five dollars just to keep getting their permission, so she is really excited right now, because she is going to get five dollars from the story, so here is the thing. Camden, she will have nightmares, like any kid will have nightmares, and she is in the room next door to us, so there is just a really short hallway. The doors are basically right next to each other. We have a monitor so we can hear if she or Landon is having trouble, and here is the thing. If Camden has a nightmare, and we just shout from the other room, "It is okay. Nightmares are not real," that does not solve anything. If from the other room, I just speak into the monitor, it is just like some booming voice in her room of like, "Monsters are not real. You are okay." That does not actually solve anything, right? What often happens when Camden has a nightmare is she comes down the hall, she crawls into bed with us, and she just says, "Hey, mommy, daddy, I had a bad dream. Can I stay in here for a little bit?" because what she needs is not changing her circumstances. She doesn't need the dream to

have not happened. She just needs to be near to us. She just needs our presence. She just needs us to pat her on the back and say, “It is okay, I am here, and then after a little bit of like snuggling on her bed, she is fine, and I can take her back into her room. That is the picture of Advent, that in all of the chaos and all of the tumult, in the nightmare of life, God offers his presence to us, and to Mary in this moment, who is about to have her entire world flipped upside down, He is not entering and calming her circumstances or simplifying her future. He is drastically complicating it, and He offers his presence, “I will be with you.”

That is who God is. He is not a God who stands in the distance and offers inspiration or advice or who just simply shouts, “It is going to be okay.” He is a God who steps into our life, and the promise of Advent is that He says, “I will be with you, and I will be with you always.” It never promises an easier path. It simply promises that God will be near to us. I think some of us are desperate for peace, but we are looking for it in the wrong place. We are waiting for God to rearrange everything around us and for our families, our finances, our emotions, and our schedules to be fixed, and then we will feel settled. Then we’ll feel like everything is okay. Then we will feel peace, but what Advent tells us is that peace does not begin when everything changes, but it begins when God comes close. Mary does not receive peace because her life becomes easier. She receives peace because God comes near, and the same is true for you and me.

It is fascinating, you see Mary’s response to this, so God says that He is with her, and she is greatly troubled about the message, and she is wondering what the angel is going to say, and this is what the angel said to her: “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.” He reiterates that again. “You have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call Him Jesus,” which means “the Lord saves.” Right away, Gabriel names what we most deeply long for, rescue, healing, deliverance, and then he says, “He will be great, and He will be called the son of the Most High.” This child that will be carried in her womb is the son of the most high God, the one who has ultimate authority, unmatched power, and unshakable goodness. He is coming to reign. This child that she will carry is the one that satisfies every longing that we have ever had, and then the angel says, “The Lord will give him the throne of his father, David, and his kingdom will reign forever.” He is saying that in this person, Jesus, in this baby, there is a kingdom coming, a king who is coming, the true king, who will set everything right. In a world that longs for justice but experiences injustice, He will come and bring justice. In a world that feels unstable and fragile, He will bring peace and joy and goodness. He is a king who keeps his promises, and his goodness is not temporary. It will last forever, and what Gabriel is saying is that the peace you are longing for is not found in different circumstances. It is found in a person, and that person is Jesus.

Then Mary asks a really fair question, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” Totally fair question. The math is not working. I am a virgin, and you just told me I am going to have a baby. You have got to give me more than that. That does not make sense, “and then the angel answered her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you, so the Holy One to be born will be called the Son of God, and even Elizabeth, your relative, is going to have a child in her old age, and she who is unable to conceive is in her sixth month, for no word from God will ever fail.’”

Now, I want you to take a moment to just sit in, and we have heard this story before, but marriage reality and how it is changing. She is engaged to be married, and now she is going to have a baby out of wedlock, a big no-no in those days. All of the stability, the peace, the life that she had been looking for, just got infinitely harder. Her circumstances have changed drastically. The Lord is asking her to do

something that is incredibly difficult. Her life is about to be turned upside down. She has no idea how her fiancé is going to respond to this. She has no idea how the town that she lives in will respond to this. It would be every opportunity for her to feel a lack of peace in this moment, and you notice what she says: “I am the Lord’s servant. May your word to me be fulfilled,” and then the angel left her.” “May your word be fulfilled in me.” I think sometimes, in spite of our circumstances, this is the response that God is asking for from us. This is the response that He wants us to pray, not fix my life, not change everything, but are you a willing servant to carry the gifts and the burdens that you are going to experience in your life, and can you hold on to peace in the midst of them? Because peace is not found in your circumstances. It is found in a person. It is found in the presence of God.

So, I want us to finish where we began today. Many of us walked in carrying the very December kind of tension, the crowded schedules, the relational strain, the pressure to make everything feel magical, and we are carrying that quiet ache that wonders why peace seems to elude us, and the peace that culture is trying to offer us is almost always circumstantial. It is this escape. It is the quiet room. It is the perfectly behaved family. It is the night where nothing goes wrong, and those moments are beautiful when they happen, but they are not peace, and they do not last, because they can be taken away with a single interruption or an unexpected comment, a bill, a phone call, or the child waking up at 4:15 in the morning, ready to open up the presents. We see the peace of God is a kingdom reality. An Advent peace is inviting us to recognize that peace is not the absence of tension, but the presence of Jesus Christ in our lives. Jesus is called the Prince of Peace not because He removes all conflict from the world, but because He reigns over the world. His kingdom is not grounded in forcing everything to go right or making sure everything feels constantly stable. His peace is grounded in his authority, his nearness, his unending reign, the kingdom that will never end, and that peace is strong enough for the worst day of your life, when everything feels like it is coming undone, because it was strong enough for Mary’s hardest day of her life.

So, as we wrap up and conclude today, in a moment we are going to go into a time of communion, but what often happens in communion is we invite people into a space to respond, to receive from the Holy Spirit, and we say something along the lines of, “As you are ready, you may go up and receive the elements,” and without fail, almost every single one of us stands up immediately, and we go to take the elements, and that is not wrong. This is not like some sort of referendum on how we do church, but we miss an opportunity sometimes, and what I want to give us today is, as the band leads this first song, is I actually want no one to stand. I want you to just take a moment to receive. I want you to pray. I want you to invite the Spirit into your chaos, into your lack of peace, and I just want you to say a simple prayer, “Jesus, I want your peace,” and then as you pray that prayer, just simply listen, and if you feel distracted, I am going to ask you to just say that prayer again. If you feel like your mind starts racing about all the things you have to do, then just come back to center and say that prayer again. Allow the words of this song to wash over you. It does not have to be forced. It does not have to be dramatic. What I am asking you to do is to invite the quiet power of the Holy Spirit to dwell with his people, because that is where we experience peace. So, I am going to pray for us, and then the band is going to play this song, and I am going to encourage you to just stay and have a moment, one moment of peace in the midst of this season, so will you pray with me?

Heavenly Father, we come before you, and Lord, we recognize that there are many who are feeling the lack of peace today in their lives. Some of us are carrying anxiety that just sits so heavily upon our chest and our shoulders. Some of us are coming into the room today just exhausted from trying to hold all of it together. Some of us are here today, and we have storms and battles that we are facing that it seems like nobody else sees and that nobody else knows about. God, whatever the circumstances, for every heart in this room and those who have joined us online, I pray now for a tangible manifestation of your peace. I pray that we would recognize that peace as a person is Jesus, and Jesus is here in the room with us now. Lord, may we just experience your presence in this moment, in whatever way that we need. It is in Christ's name that we pray, amen.

As we come to the Lord's table now, we remember that the peace that we long for, the peace with God, and the peace within ourselves, and the peace within a broken world, is accomplished through the sacrifice of Jesus, and He Himself is our peace. So, if you are a follower of Jesus, we invite you now to receive communion. You will find the elements at different stations around the room, and if you need gluten free, they will be in the center back of the room. The words of institution: "On the night before his death, Jesus took bread, and He broke it, saying, 'This is my body given for you,' and then He took the cup, and He said, 'This is the blood poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Take this in remembrance of me.'" When you are ready, please come forward to take the bread and to receive the cup, receiving his presence and his peace.

If you are in need of someone to pray with you about needing peace in your life, I am just going to let you know there will be elders and Stephen ministers down front to pray with you today before you go, and they would be happy to do so. I am going to say a benediction over us, but before I do that, I just want to remind you that next week, we had the adult choir today. Next week on Sunday we have the kids' choir, so excited for that. We were talking about joy. It is going to be a beautiful celebration next Sunday. I did tell both of the choirs that they were in a competition with each other, so come and judge who you think is better. Just kidding. Do not do that. Just enjoy the worship, but it is going to be a beautiful day, so I would invite you to come back. If you feel comfortable, please extend your hands to receive this morning's benediction, blessing.

Heavenly Father, we are told in Ephesians 2:14 that Jesus Christ Himself is our peace. Lord, I pray that for every person in this room, for every person joining online, that this week we would know that peace is not based on what is going on in our lives, but based on the person of Jesus Christ, and may He reign in our lives, so we can experience his peace this week. It is in the name of Jesus that we pray this, amen. You may go in peace.

35:52 minutes

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Edited by Tom Kenaston

Message #903