

04 December 2022 – Communion / Advent 2 (Peace)¹

Welcome / Announcements / Land Acknowledgement

We recognize that the land where we gather for worship belongs to God, as does all of creation. We also know that this is the unceded territory of the Lkwungen and WSÁNEĆ people. As we pray, reflect, and celebrate in this place, we do so as guests lamenting the injustice in our history. We ask that the God of love and justice lead us along the path of reconciliation, bringing accountability and healing. May we be inspired to forge new relationships of respect and solidarity.

Celebrations / Joys & Concerns *God's blessing on you. God's blessing on you.
God's blessing, dear friends. God's blessing on you.*

PWS&D Message ***A Refugee Mother's Struggles in Pakistan***

Jehan and her children fled their home in Afghanistan after the Taliban took over in 2021. "For many days, we were surviving on the streets of Islamabad. A kind man took us in," she explains. Now, they share a house in Pakistan with eight other refugee families.

Jehan found out that she was expecting her sixth child just before her husband died in crossfire between two rival groups in Afghanistan. While she gave birth to a healthy baby girl, the family had left all of their belongings behind when they fled Afghanistan and she had nothing for the newborn. Jehan was also unable to afford food to meet the family's needs.

Earlier this year, Jehan and her family were selected to receive cash assistance from a PWS&D project supporting Afghan refugees in Pakistan. With this aid, she was able to buy food and other life-giving essentials for herself and her kids.

Thank you for faithfully responding to Christ's call to care for families who have fled danger. Through PWS&D, we can provide vulnerable families with essential life-saving items.

Gabriel's Secret Mission #2: Heaven, 9 months before the birth of Christ

➤ *Hope is a star (verse 2)*

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Call to Worship / Advent Candles

(Light the candle of Hope)

When God asks us to do big and small things,

God is with us.

When we are worried and have trouble waiting,

God is with us.

God's love reminds us to not be afraid.

God brings us peace

(Light the candle of Peace)

Gathering Prayer

God of Peace, help us as we listen to the story of Mary. Remind us that you are always with us and that we don't need to be afraid. Help us to live in peace with everyone. Amen

Meet Mary

Mary was a young woman who lived in the village of Nazareth in Galilee. She was a descendent of both King David and Jacob's son Judah. She was also Elizabeth's cousin (Zechariah's wife). She was humble, faithful and chosen by God to be the mother of Jesus. Even though she was from the line of David, she did not live in a palace or have a high position in life. She was engaged to a man named Joseph, who was a carpenter, and they lived in a rural village. When Mary is visited by an angel, she initially shows fear. (Who wouldn't be scared if an angel suddenly appeared in their living room?!) But Mary shows courage in following God's will for her life.

➤ *To a maid whose name was Mary*

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Prayer for Understanding

God of peace and possibility, we turn to your Word to hear your will and wisdom for our times. Open our hearts and minds by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit so that we might hear what you are saying to the church through Christ, our Prince of Peace. Amen

Scripture: **Luke 1: 26-38** [NT 56]

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has

also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

➤ *My soul gives glory to my God*

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Questions / Reflection

I plan to focus on one of these questions and offer a brief message. There may not be time for conversation during worship this week but I hope the questions are helpful for your own time of meditation or to chat about during our gathering after worship..

1. Have you ever been really afraid about something happening in the future?
What helped you feel safe, secure or at peace?
2. I wonder why God decided to come to Earth as a baby.
I wonder why God chose Mary to be Jesus' mother.
3. When have you been asked to do something important?
What was that experience like?
4. How has God helped you feel peace in challenging times?

➤ *O day of peace that dimly shines*

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Offering and Prayer *Praise God from whom all blessings flow* 306

This Sunday we celebrate the Advent of Peace, born for us in Jesus Christ. Think of your gifts as seeds of that peace which we can plant in the world God loves for Christ's sake.

God, our Peace and our Promise, receive our gifts as seeds of gratitude for your gift to us in Christ Jesus. Bless these seeds with growth so that peace will take root in people who face conflict and danger, and places seeking to establish peace in the face of violence. Be their peace and their promise, through Christ our Lord. Amen

The Apostles' Creed

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I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he

ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

Invitation to the Lord's Table

The celebration of communion is always a festival of friends – where we gather around the table with all our hopes and dreams, longing for a glimpse of the holy. It is here where bread is broken, and the cup is shared that we can be most truly ourselves – seeing ourselves and others as children of the living God.

Here, that which is earthly becomes divine and that which is human becomes more than has ever been dreamed.

Come to the table – you are all welcome. Christ invites us to gather here.

Sharing the Peace of Christ

The peace of Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

Please move around the sanctuary sharing the peace of Christ with one another.

➤ *Put peace into each other's hands*

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† Celebrating Together with Thanksgiving

God be with you.

And also, with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to God.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is good to give God thanks and praise.

Gracious and loving God, we praise and thank you, for you are the creator of all goodness and the source of abundance...

In the beginning, your Spirit danced on the waters and brought us life. In your generosity, you created a garden of delights and nourishment – you called us to live with respect in creation and to care for one another.

You brought your people out of slavery into a land of milk and honey – flowing with streams of living water and planted with groves of olive trees.

When we turned away from you – living in greed and violence – you sent us prophets to call us back and remind us to live for a day when no one would be hungry, and we would live together in justice and peace.

And so, with every generation before us, with all who will come after us, we lift our voices in joyful praise...

O holy, holy, holy God, O God of time and space. All earth and sea and sky above bear witness to your grace. Hosanna in the highest heav'n, creation sings your praise. And blessed is the one who comes and bears your name always!

Generous God, we give you thanks for Jesus, who came to live with us... We remember how he called disciples to follow and become fishers of all people. He told stories and taught us to pray. We thank you that Jesus loved eating and drinking around tables where strangers became friends and where outcasts were included.

Jesus was crucified, died, and was buried, but you raised him from the dead – and like his disciples we meet him again in the breaking of bread as we gather around this table.

We remember and give thanks, O God, that as Jesus sat at the table with friends – sharing the fruit of the vine and the harvest of the fields – he took bread, blessed it, broke it and shared it, saying: *"Take – eat – this is my body which is for you. Do this to remember me."*

When supper was over, he took a cup of wine and raised it, saying: *"This is God's new covenant, made possible because of my death. Drink this all of you, to remember me."*

As we gather in the promise of Christ, we proclaim the mystery of faith...

***Sing Christ has died, and Christ is risen, Christ will come again!
Sing Christ has died, and Christ is risen, Christ will come again!***

Pour out your grace upon us, O God, and upon the simple gifts of this meal. Send your Spirit on us and on what we do here as we gather at the Lord's Table to eat and drink of the living Word. May we be one in Christ and one with your vision of peace and plenty. **In Christ,**

with Christ, through Christ – by the power of the Holy Spirit – all glory is yours, now and forever and so we sing...

Amen, amen, O Holy One! Hosanna and amen!

Amen, amen, O Holy One! Hosanna and amen!

Sharing Bread and Cup

The one who was with God in the beginning, is with us in this bread.

The one of whom the prophets spoke now speaks to us in this cup.

In these gifts God comes to us so that we may come to God.

The bread of life – the cup of grace – we remember and share with thanksgiving.

Please come forward to receive Holy Communion – everyone is welcome at this table.

If you are unable to come to the front, please signal an elder who will come and serve you.

We use gluten-free bread. Both juice and wine are available.

Closing Prayer

God of Peace, you remind us to be unafraid. You sent Jesus to be our Prince of Peace and our King. He showed us that your ways are peace and love. Fill us with your peace.

Holy One, your world waits: in the longing of the persecuted for justice – in the longing of the poor for prosperity – in the longing of the privileged for riches other than wealth – in the longing of each heart for a better life and in the expectant song of the church. Come – liberator and guide – Come, O come, Emmanuel – we pray as Jesus taught...

➤ ***Our Father in heaven*** (*The Lord's Prayer – no repeats*) **469**

Blessing

Deep peace of the running wave to you – Deep peace of the flowing air to you
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you – Deep peace of the shining stars to you,
Deep peace of the Son of Peace to you, forever. Amen

➤ ***Emmanuel soon will appear***

¹Service idea from Journey to Christmas Advent Devotional (PCC) and Conversations with Gabriella by Patricia Souder (skitguys.com)