



“Promises Unfold: Promises of Peace”

4th Sunday in Advent

December 20, 2020

WELCOME

Thank you for worshipping with us today!

If you have an email address and want to be on POP’s weekly announcement list, please let the church office know. You can find worship each week at <https://princeofpeace-er.org/podcasts/>. DVD’s of the previous Sunday’s worship are available by contacting the church office at 715-479-9263.

If you would like to support the mission of Prince of Peace so that we can continue worship, community outreach, and other ministries, you can give any amount by cash, check, online, through the Give+ app by Vanco, or by sending a text to 833-394-7887 (text your dollar amount and follow the prompts). Thank you for your generosity.

ORDER OF SERVICE *The assembly speaks the bold verses*

Preparing for Worship

As you enter this time of worship and sanctuary, you are invited to rest and prepare to receive.

Quiet your mind.

Trust in God. Trust Christ. Trust in the Spirit.

Find a comfortable position and place to just “be.”

Breathe in God's goodness...let go of your "to do" lists.
Breathe in God's grace...let go of anxiety and fear.
Breathe in God's abundant love...let go of self-doubt.
Be opened to abide in God's loving arms.

Music **"We Light a Candle" (vs. 4) – Richard Bruxvoort Colligan**

We light a candle for peace
And our world that's longing for peace
We light a candle for peace
And our world that's longing for peace Holy One,
Shine with the fire of our lives, oh
We lights a candle for peace
And our world that's longing for peace.

Advent Candle Lighting

I feel peace in beautiful moments:
In moments when we hold hands around the table for grace,
or when you see siblings laughing at shared memories;
In moments that we as a church share,
when we baptize babies, or hear the choir sing in harmony;
In moments when we hear God say again in scripture,
"One day every valley will be lifted up," and, "Darkness did not overcome the light."

In such a broken world, peace can feel abstract, impossible, and naive.
And yet, we come to this sanctuary week after week and say,
"The peace of Christ be with you,"
because we believe that God sounds, feels, and looks like peace.

So family of God, we light this candle—the candle of peace—as a reminder that when we draw near to God, we are drawing near to peace.

Light the first, second, third and fourth candles on your Advent wreath or any candle or flashlight you have at home.

Thanks be to God. **Amen.**

Music **"We Light a Candle" (vs. 4) – Richard Bruxvoort Colligan**

We light a candle for peace
And our world that's longing for peace
We light a candle for peace
And our world that's longing for peace Holy One,
Shine with the fire of our lives, oh
We lights a candle for peace
And our world that's longing for peace.

Advent Prayer

God of mystery and miracles,
Your Word brings light into the dark places of our lives;
Your presence gives us strength to endure
when we are pushed beyond our own strength.

You find us in our lostness and,
with love beyond our imagining,
you lead us home.

All this you offer in and through Jesus Christ.
Yet, we resist you.
We resist loosening our tight grip on our lives.
We hesitate to trust you
for you may lead us where we do not want to go.

You know the places in our hearts
and in our minds
where we are well-defended
against your intrusions.

In this season of longing,
grant us grace to bring all that we are to you, O Christ
— all the broken places
— all the lost wanderings
— all the weariness from trying to live lives that are pleasing to you.

Hold them all in the fullness of your love.
Then, be born in us,
that we may find our home,
our life,
our joy
in You, Lord of light and love. **Amen.**

Luke 1:26-45

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He 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. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The 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. ³⁶And 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. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God."

³⁸Then 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. ³⁹In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴²and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

Music *"My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness" - #251*

My soul proclaims your greatness, Lord;
I sing my Savior's praise!
You looked upon my lowliness,
and I am full of grace.
Now ev'ry land and ev'ry age
this blessing shall proclaim—
great wonders you have done for me,
and holy is your name.

To all who live in holy fear
your mercy ever flows.
With mighty arm you dash the proud,
their scheming hearts expose.
The ruthless you have cast aside,
the lowly throned instead;
the hungry filled with all good things,
the rich sent off unfed.

To Israel, your servant blest,
your help is ever sure;
the promise to our parents made
their children will secure.
Sing glory to the Holy One,
give honor to the Word,
and praise the Pow'r of the Most High,
one God, by all adored.

Sermon

Pastor Andrea Fluegel

Advent Poetry Prayers *Draw Near to One Another - adapted from poetry by Sarah Are*

When Adam saw Eve, the first thing he said was, "At Last." And when I fell in love, God became real faster than I could imagine. When my brother was born, I learned the size of my heart. And when my mom held my hand, I knew the love that willed that heart to start. And without them, how would I know love? Without others, how would I learn grace or music, confidence or trust? And without the sun, how could the earth grow life? And without you, how could I know God with green eyes, God with brown skin, God with wrinkles, God within.

So I have come to believe— we belong to one another. Families and friends, neighbors and strangers—we belong to one another. And I have come to see the space between you and me as nothing short of holy ground. So take off your shoes and draw near. Together is where God is found.

Music *“O Little Town of Bethlehem” - #279 (vs. 1-3)*

O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by;
yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary,
and, gathered all above
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the king,
and peace to all the earth!

How silently, how silently
the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming;
but, in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still
the dear Christ enters in.

Prayer Conversation

“God,” I whispered. “What if peace isn’t possible? Then what?” God was quiet for a minute. Then God wrapped me up in God’s arms and told me a story. God said, “In the beginning, I knit you together. I wove strands of peace into your heart so that you might know and grow love; and your heart was beautiful, wild, and free. That was a long time ago, but peace is part of who you are. It just gets stuck under fear, doubt, and hurt—like a bird with stones on its wings.” “I don’t understand,” I fussed. “If peace is part of who we are, then why are we humans so bad at it?” God held me a little tighter and said, “Little bird, remember how loved you are, and start small. Remove the stones of anger, hurt, and fear one at a time and peace will surely grow.” Then God lifted up my arms and set me out to fly, and I realized that, grounded in God’s love, I was beautiful and wild and free, and peace was a part of me. So I flew home, and stayed up all night writing love letters and tearing down walls so that the peace in me could fly to the peace in you. Let me know when you get it.

Music *"If in Your Heart"* – Ana Hernandez
**If in your heart you make a manger for his birth,
then God will once again become a child on earth.**

God of power and might, tear open the heavens and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

Father God, there is no miracle as grand as birth. As we prepare for the coming of your son, Jesus, create in us new life. Transform us so that we may reflect the light of your son, and become beacons of goodness, kindness, compassion, generosity, honesty, patience, and peace, for the sake of the one whose name brings deliverance and life to all the world, Jesus Christ, infant king.

**If in your heart you make a manger for his birth,
then God will once again become a child on earth.**

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world.

Gracious God, all generations call you blessed. In this holy season we pray for our neighbors of other denominations and faiths. Inspire the faith of their people. Cultivate understanding among us and strengthen us in love and service to our community.

Eternal God, you are faithful to the promises you made to our forebears. We give thanks for the ministry of Katharina von Bora Luther and other ancestors who organized, planned, dreamed, encouraged, and reached out as they served you. We give thanks for the bold leadership of female leaders in our own time. Inspire others with their steadfast witness.

**If in your heart you make a manger for his birth,
then God will once again become a child on earth.**

Turn us outwards from our own selfish desires and limited vision; bless our ministries and use us to proclaim your grace and love to everyone we meet.

Compassionate God, you fill the hungry with good things and send the rich away empty. Nourish those who lack access to adequate food and nutrition. Bless the work of advocates, community organizers, and food pantries. Encourage others to provide for their neighbors in need.

Tender God, you know sorrow and joy alike. We pray for those in our families, congregation and community who are not joyful in this holiday season. Comfort those who grieve, be a companion to all who are lonely, tend those who are sick or struggling with depression, and gather all people in your healing embrace.

We now name all the people, places and circumstances on our hearts and minds...

We give thanks for the lives and witness of those who died while waiting for justice, peace, or healing, those whose names we know and those whose names are known only to you. Sustain all who still yearn for the completion of your redeeming work.

Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

**If in your heart you make a manger for his birth,
then God will once again become a child on earth.**

Lord's Prayer

**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.**

Music "O Come All Ye Faithful" - Sam & Sara Hargreaves and brass by Dan Warwick.

O come, all ye faithful,
joyful and triumphant!
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
come and behold him,
born the king of angels:

Refrain

O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!

God of God -
Light of light
Lo, he abhors not the virgin's womb
Very God,
Begotten – not created. *Refrain*

Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God
in the highest: *Refrain*

We'll give him all the glory,
We'll give him all the glory,
We'll give him all the glory,
Christ the Lord!

For he alone is worthy,
For he alone is worthy,
For he alone is worthy,
Christ the Lord!

Blessing and Sending

God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,
God of the wilderness wanderings,
God of the prophets and messengers,
God of the exiled and weary,
God of grace and love,
Bless you now and forever.
+In the name of the Son, waiting to be born
To bring hope into the darkness,
Jesus Christ our Lord
through the gift of the Holy Spirit,
One God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Why are we waiting?

For the coming of Jesus.

How are we waiting?

With patience and hope.

Go in peace. Soon and very soon we are going to see the King.

Thanks be to God.

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Blessing and Sending, "In these or Similar Words: Crafting language for worship," Augsburg Fortress Press, 2015.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Blue Christmas Worship

The Blue Christmas Worship is now available on the church website or on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/We63Ydjfcnk>. Blue Christmas is a time of worship for people who may be struggling with grief, loneliness, and anxiety during the holiday season. Whether your partner has left you, you've lost your job, you're spending Christmas without a parent, sibling or child, struggling with mental illness or addictions, or some other stressful situation, or just struggling with life in 2020, you're welcome to attend the Blue Christmas worship. All are welcome and encouraged to attend. Please share and invite others.

Christmas Worship Experiences

Mark your calendars. There will be three different Christmas worship experiences for you to participate in this season. Prince of Peace will have an **outdoor Christmas Eve service with candlelight at 4:30 p.m.** on the front lawn of the church. Due to rising numbers of COVID-19, we will keep socially distant and masked. This will be a 30-minute worship experience. You are welcome to bring your own chair or participate in your car. In addition, there will be a **Northern Great Lakes Synod Christmas Worship Service** on the Synod YouTube channel. We will provide a link closer to Christmas. DVDs will be available. This worship service will also be broadcasted on Marquette Channel 6 television station. Prince of Peace has worked in conjunction with Channel 6 and the Synod office to produce this worship experience for the Upper Peninsula and Northern Wisconsin. The third option is an audio-only, **Christmas radio play**. You can listen to this radio play beginning December 18 by calling 1-978-599-7887. *Just stay on the line to listen to the content.*

Gathered and Sent Bible Discussion Available By Phone

The weekly Gathered and Sent Bible discussion recording (podcast) is now available by phone. Just call **978-599-7887** and stay on the line to listen to the recording that discusses the upcoming Sunday scripture reading. A new recording is posted every Monday. You can also use this phone number to listen to the Christmas Radio Play beginning December 18. Gathered and Sent podcasts can also be found on the church website, Spotify, Pandora, Alexa, Audible, iTunes, Apple Podcast, Google Podcasts, and more. Listen, invite, and participate in God's Word.

Staff Availability

Prince of Peace staff will have limited availability from December 21 - January 2 in order to prepare for Christmas Worship, end-of-the year, and to take some sabbath time to renew and refresh. Please email, Facebook message, text, or leave a voicemail and they will get back to you. If it is a pastoral care emergency, please **call** Pastor Andrea Fluegel on her cell phone at 715-891-5975.

Annual Reports Due

Ministry Team annual reports are due to the church office in email format, if possible, by December 31. Please send them to Kerry Walker, church office secretary, at pop@princeofpeace-er.org.

End-of-the-Year Gifts

If you would like to make a contribution to the ministry of Prince of Peace and would like it credited to your giving record for 2020, you **must mail (and postmark)** checks on or by **December 31, 2020** in order to claim a charitable contribution deduction for 2020. If you are mailing from the Eagle River Post Office and want it postmarked promptly, please **take it to the counter inside the Post Office** and ask for “local postmark.”

Love Lights

Prince of Peace has the Advent tradition of lighting a Love Lights Tree. The Love Lights Tree provides an opportunity for individuals to honor their loved ones by making a donation to the Prince of Peace Endowment Fund. Donors may sponsor an ornament on the Love Lights Tree as a memorial or tribute to an individual who has touched their life. Traditionally, the Love Light Tree has been placed in the sanctuary and lit at the end of worship during Advent. This year the ornaments will be hung in the windows of the Fellowship Hall and will be lit up at night. We encourage you to drop by to view the Love Light ornaments from the parking lot. You can donate to Love Lights by contacting the church office at 715-479-9263.

Volunteer for the Weekend Backpack Program

Please sign up to help with the Weekend Backpack Program. Volunteers are needed weekly to continue this ministry. Contact the church office or visit the website to sign up. We are feeding 133 children each week through this program plus are feeding an additional 100 children through in-school pantries!

Worship DVDs

DVD's of the previous Sunday's worship are now available at POP! They can be mailed or scheduled for pick up by contacting the church office via telephone (715-479-9263).

Return to Phase 1

The Prince of Peace Council has decided to return back to Phase 1 due to the rising number of positive COVID-19 cases and deaths in Vilas and Oneida Counties as well as the number of students being quarantined due to close contact with a positive case in the Northland Pines School District. This means that we are suspending the limited communion worship for the meantime and reducing the number of volunteers for the Backpack Program and for other essential functions of the church. The Church Council continues to reassess what is happening in our local community on a frequent basis. The Oneida and Vilas Health Departments are strongly encouraging people to limit contact with people outside their immediate household, wear face masks/coverings, wash hands, and keep at least 6 feet (or more) distance from others if you need to go outside of your household unit.

CURRENT PHASE: 1

- Fully digital worship and fellowship
- Critical staff and volunteers by invitation-only access to building
- All in-person activities suspended and moved to digital format where possible
- Visitors must wear a facemask and may not enter the building



MISSION STATEMENT

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church is a community who believes in God's love, knows Jesus as Savior, and is blessed by the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Thankful for these gifts, we gather to pray and praise, explore God's Word and its meaning for our lives, strengthen each other in our witness, and serve each other and our neighbors in the world.

VISION STATEMENT

Gathered by Grace ~ Sent to serve.
*Core Values: Spirituality, Community,
Grace, Helping Others, Creativity.*

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 5030 Highway 70 West, Eagle River, WI 54521
www.PrinceofPeace-ER.org