

Last year I was preparing to take Dean to school in the morning. He was walking beside me, and I was carrying a bunch of things in my hands. I opened the car door for him to get in and then closed his door and proceeded to empty my hands and put things in the car on my side. As I turned to buckle him in his seat, I realized he was no longer there.

I leapt out of the car and yelled his name. Where could he be? Was he hiding and playing a game or was he in trouble? I kept screaming his name and ran all over the yard looking in his favorite hiding places.

After I frantically searched for him outside, I decided to go and check inside the house. There he was in his room laughing at me. I was so relieved that he was okay. That whole time I thought he was lost and now he was found!

In his book, “Making Room” Ed Robb says: “No one wants to be lost...and overcome with the despair of thinking, even for a moment that they might never get home again. But this is the story of every one of us. Since Adam and Eve left the garden of Eden, humankind has been wandering, spiritually lost, in the wilderness looking for a way back home.”¹

God sent Jesus Christ into the world on a rescue mission to seek out the lost and to bound up the brokenhearted so that all may come to know God. Robb encourages us with these words: In the season of Advent: “We who are lost have been found! We are profoundly loved, and our Savior has come to walk us back home.”²

On this fourth Sunday of Advent, we celebrate Christ our peace, the one who always makes room for us, and the one who leads us home.

As Christians our heavenly home is with God. I think this is why we love spending time in our sanctuaries. In these places we feel that we get a glimpse of the kingdom of God. We, like the psalmist in Psalm 84, believe: “For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.”

In the walls of our sanctuaries, we experience the “peace that passes all understanding.” It has been so hard for our Healthy Church Team to decide whether or not to have worship for this reason, because we know that being together and worshipping God brings us peace.

Jesus embodied a ministry of peace. He stilled the raging waters, he told his disciples not to use violence as a response, and he made room for the children to come to him.

He promised the disciples that the Holy Spirit would be coming and would bring them peace. Christ’s ministry of peace is much needed in our world today which feels full of chaos.

The Old Testament Scripture from 2nd Samuel shares with us God’s desire to remain among God’s people. When David offers to build God a temple God makes it clear that at no time did God request an immovable home. Here we are reminded that we serve a relational God who desires to dwell among us even beyond the walls of the church.

We see that Jesus continues this relational ministry in the gospels. In the Gospel of John, we see that John the Baptist is trying to explain who Jesus is to all who are listening. In his explanation he shares that he is not worthy of the one who is coming. In Matthew 3 we hear these same words from John, and hear the relational nature of God, that the one coming with baptize with fire and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11). God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit continue to work as a team to save us and bring us peace.

We are all in need of peace in our lives. Scripture tells us this peace comes from God and the fellowship of Christians. In Isaiah 9:6 the prophet Isaiah says: “For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

This “Prince of Peace” is born in the midst of chaos in a manger. He is visited by strangers and born away from the home of his parents. The start of Jesus’ life is anything but peaceful, but he spent his ministry bringing healing and peace to those who were searching for it.

I wonder how you may find yourself in need of peace today. Are you seeking a respite from worry, anxiety, stress, grief, or pain? Are you looking for reconciliation in a relationship or with God? Do you simply want to feel the nearness of God?

As we approach Christmas Eve this Thursday, we all desire to feel the presence of Christ among us. This is possible as we encounter Christ in the reading of Scripture, prayer, music, and as Ed Robb says, in the “divine spark” in one another.³

In his book “Making Room” Robb shares about how “people are not connecting these days like they used to.”⁴ He says that over the years, scientists have tracked “declining levels of participation in every area of civic life.”⁵

In other words, research is showing that we have forgotten the gift of community. Yet, Robb reminds us the Christmas story is “steeped in human interaction.”⁶ He says, “The Christmas story, and the life and ministry of Jesus, teaches us that following Christ is not intended to be a lone-ranger experience.”⁷ We see that the first thing Jesus did when he started his ministry was to invite the community to participate.

John the Baptist participated in this in-breaking of the kingdom of God. Jesus’ disciples participated in a community that ate together, walked together, and embodied their faith together.

We see it was this same community of disciples that was together when Jesus shared with them the secret of everlasting peace. In John 14 he said: “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. ²In my Father’s house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴And you know the way to the place where I am going.”

Jesus continues to make room for us each day through the promise of the resurrection. We know we can always find peace in life and in life beyond death through our faith in Jesus Christ.

The good news for our lives today is that Christ continues to offer us a home through His peace.

Today Christ continues to charge us to walk one another home as we share this peace with others. In his book, Robb shares a beautiful illustration of how we need one another as we journey together in discipleship. He recounted a trip to California with his wife to visit the Muir Woods National Monument and see the enormous redwood trees.

He remarked that some of the trees are more than three hundred feet above the ground. He learned from the park ranger that these “massive trees are sustained by a shallow root system” and that they “grow together in clusters, allowing the trees’ root system to intertwine, providing the support for one another...only together can they survive.”⁸

Together we are called to be Christ’s peacemakers in the world.

So how can you be a peacemaker as you grow in your discipleship with others?

- 1) Plan to be a peacemaker. Proverbs 12:20 tells us: “Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil, but those who plan peace have joy.” If we plan to offer peace it will come more easily to us.
- 2) Immerse yourself in the Word of God. You can do this through reading the Bible, reading a Christian book, or listening to a sermon.
- 3) To offer peace to strangers let someone in who is merging in traffic. Your action of letting them in may just strengthen their belief that there is hope for humanity.
- 4) To offer peace to your neighbors acknowledge their presence. Do not quickly run into your house pretending like they don’t exist. Jesus modeled this behavior for us when he greeted the disciples with peace.
- 5) So, what about the people we already have relationships with like our friends and family? To offer peace to our friends we can spend time with them. Nothing says I love you more to someone than giving them your undivided attention. The same goes for your family.

You can offer peace to your family by being interested about what is going on in their lives. When we know what is going on with our family, we can readily speak peace into their lives because we know what is going on. Finally, pray as a family whether it is every night at dinner, or at a family gathering, pray every time you are together so that it becomes a natural practice. Praying for those we love can bring them great peace.

It is hard to be a peacemaker in all these aspects of our lives, but it is well worth it. The more we offer people peace the more we can help further the kingdom of God. As we approach Christmas Eve this week may we continue to seek the peace of Christ. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

¹ Ed Robb. “Making Room.” Abingdon Press: Nashville, TN. 2020. P. 68 & 69.

² Ibid. P. 69.

³ Robb. P. 86.

⁴ Robb, P. 75.

⁵ Robb. P. 75.

⁶ Ibid. P. 76.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid. P. 79 & 80.