

Sermon followed by Service

October 2, 2022

Romans 5:1-5

I'm confused. What is America's favorite holiday? It's coming soon. Christmas with angels singing and our favorite songs: "Silent Night, holy night, all is calm" or "Peace came to earth," or a tiny bit louder "Joy to the World!" After Christmas, what are our favorite holidays? The days we say: "Thank you; I love you." So what's up with this month? Instead of days of peace and thanks and love, it seems we have a month of trying to creep each other out with darkness and death. We pray for peace, we claim to love, and then work to set each other on edge.

It's not just with Halloween, is it? Throughout the year, we pray for peace for our families, and then we do things and say things we know will ruin their peace. We pray for peace for ourselves, and then what? We do things and say things we know will ruin our peace. When it comes to peace, or lack of peace, we can be our own worst enemies.

So what's the answer? I have voices inside my head that tell me: "If life were easier, you wouldn't be so stressed; if you could sit back on your deck and enjoy your backyard paradise, ahhh, that would be peace." Or "If people would just do what you say, then you wouldn't have to work so hard; if people would just do what you say, then, ahhh, that would be peace." Or "If you just had a bit more money in the bank, then you wouldn't have to worry; if you just had more money, you could go out more, vacation more, relax more; if you just had more money, then, ahhh, that would be peace." In other words, "If I just had a bit more paradise, more power, more plenty, then I'd have peace." Ever fall into that trap?

Think about it. How did paradise, power, and plenty work out for Adam and Eve? They lived in the perfect paradise, the Garden of Eden, with nothing to worry about. They were in charge, empowered by God, with all the power of God to back them up. They had plenty, all they would need, all they could want. They had paradise, power, and plenty - everything they needed for peace, everything we might think we need for peace.

But what? We can be our own worst enemies. For Adam and Eve, their paradise, power, and plenty in the Garden wasn't good enough for them. The paradise, power, and plenty of God wasn't good enough for them. They thought they could do better without God. And when they went off without God, what happened to the peace they had? Their plenty wasn't enough and they had to cover themselves up. Their power wasn't enough and they had to hide from God. Their paradise was no longer a paradise. Where before Adam and Eve and God lived in perfect peace, now Adam and Eve were hiding from God, with Adam blaming Eve and God, and Eve blaming a snake. It takes something more than paradise, power, and plenty to have peace, doesn't it?

What does it take? Well, what was it that led to Adam and Eve's loss of peace, their guilty fear, their conflict with each other? It wasn't eating a piece of fruit. No, it was thinking they would be better off thinking their way than God's way, doing their thing than God's thing. So what, do you think, is the way back to peace? Some would say: "Think God's way and do God's thing. Be good and get on God's good side." Sounds good, but what? It's impossible for us. As children of Adam and Eve we are born sinners, programmed to fight against God, to argue against God, to think our way better than God's way. As children of Adam and Eve we are born into and under God's judgment. Now before we blame Adam and Eve and God, we

get to look in the mirror of God's law. Every day, by what we say and do, by the way we say "No!" to God, we prove we deserve God's judgment, not just a slap on the wrist but the fires of hell. And so we live in a world fighting against God and under God's judgment, a world where every day we choke on the smoke and dust and wonder: "Where's the peace?"

Where's the peace? Jesus. What did Paul say? "**We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.**" How is Jesus the key to peace? Some would say that Jesus is God's nice guy sent to win our hearts and show us how to be nice. No, we need more than a nice guy to get us to play nice before God. By law, we have a death sentence hanging over our head and playing nice won't fix that.

Paul tells us how Jesus is our peace. He takes us to God's courtroom. Imagine the evidence God has against you; imagine God's judgment - "**the soul that sins, it shall die.**" Now imagine all that evidence God has against you, God puts it on Jesus; he puts it all on Jesus. And with the evidence, so goes the judgment. There on the cross, God cursed and crushed Jesus. You heard Jesus' anguish: "**My God, my God, what have you forsaken me.**" And you know Jesus' peace: "**It is finished.**" You know Jesus' peace: "**Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.**" You know Jesus' peace: "**He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.**"

That's the verse right before our lesson. With Jesus, in God's courtroom, the evidence against you is gone. With Jesus, God's judgment against you has been vacated. With Jesus, God declares you "not guilty," even better, with Jesus, God sees you and calls you right. Right for what? I could say right for life with God. Paul says right for "access," access to God's grace, and so access to God.

What is it that's upsetting your peace? Is it the economy? With Jesus, you have access to God's grace and God's plenty. Is it people not doing what you want, life not going the way you want? With Jesus, you have access to God's grace and so to God's power. I'm not saying that with God's power you will be able to make everyone do what you want, and everything go the way you want. We have a better promise, with his power God will make all things - everything that feels out of control, everything that seems to be against us - God will make all things work for our good. You have access to God, his grace and power. And you have access to God and his paradise.

How did Paul put it? **“We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.”** How about that for peace? No matter what is going on out there - how did we sing it last week? - “I'm a child of paradise.” No matter who is against me - “I'm a child of paradise.” No matter how this bag of bones feels - “I'm a child of paradise.” No matter how this insecure, anxious box of brains feels - “I'm a child of paradise.” I've got a place with God; I've got peace with God.

Gives us a whole new way of looking at trouble, doesn't it? Instead of trouble unsettling us, setting us on-edge, instead of groaning or grumbling, instead of giving up, Paul says **“We rejoice in our troubles.”** We rejoice in our troubles? How? With Jesus we know we have a place with God. With Jesus we know we have peace with God. And so with Jesus, we know that God must be doing something good with our troubles.

Like what? This is what Paul sees: **“we rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.”** Paul sees God using our troubles. I'm not sure how to put this into

words. God uses trouble to help us practice peace. Not just the kind of peace that comes from: “My belly is full, and my bed is soft,” but the kind of peace that comes from: “No matter who might be against me, I’ve got God for me.” “No matter what goes wrong, my God will make things work good for me.” Sounds good, doesn’t it? And what does that lead to? “No matter who is doing wrong around me or against me, I will show my God is good.” “No matter how dark things look, I will shine with the light of God.” And what does that lead to? “No matter what, I get to have hope; no matter what, I will show hope.”

Hope. I want better than hope; I want the reality. And I don’t think I’m alone in that, am I? But today we don’t need to be disappointed by hope, disappointed we’re “still stuck here.” No, look at the love God has already poured out and into you - you have a place with God in the family of God, you have access to God and his grace, access to the plenty of God, access to the power of God, and, yes, some day, access to the paradise of God. So hope doesn’t disappoint us. With all the love that God has already given us, our hope is guaranteed, and we get to live in peace. Amen.

October 1 & 2, 2022

THE SERVICE

IN OUR WORLD TODAY... we see little peace and we are surrounded by people who feel little peace. (Some days we may be those people who feel little peace.

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we are blessed with peace - not the world's kind of peace, but a better peace, with Jesus!

OPENING HYMN

"Good News of God Above"

Hymn 905

Good news of God above is ours to tell abroad,
the Father's everlasting love in Christ the risen Lord.
For neighbors near and far the seed of life is sown;
then spread the seed by word and deed to make the Savior known.

The love of Christ proclaim, who left his home on high;
to live our human life he came, our human death to die.
The Father's only Son became the sinners' friend,
our lot to share, our sin to bear, and death's dominion end.

The Lord of glory lives! From cross and death and grave
his own abundant life he gives to those he died to save.
His righteousness and peace declare from sea to sea;
his praises sound the world around for Christ has made us free.

Hear now the Master's word to those who bear his name:
"So send I you," till all have heard, "make known, declare, proclaim!"
Go forth in all the earth; embrace the path he trod
with Christ beside as friend and guide to bring good news of God.

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves
and the truth is not in us.

**If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just
and will forgive us our sins
and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

Holy God, gracious Father,

I am sinful by nature

and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions.

I have not loved you with my whole heart;

I have not loved others as I should.

I deserve your punishment both now and forever.

But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins

with his innocent suffering and death.

Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Silence for meditation and reflection

Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

LORD, HAVE MERCY

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

Amen.

GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST

CW 176

Refrain: Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. *Refrain*

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. You are seated at the right hand of the Father; receive our prayer. *Refrain*

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father. Amen. Amen. *Refrain*

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Lord, we pray that your peace may fill us and surround us, so that loving you with undivided hearts, we may always show and share your peace in our words and actions; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING

Numbers 6:22–27

The LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron and his sons, 'This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them:

“ ‘ ‘The LORD bless you and keep you;
the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you;
the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.’ ’
“So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.”

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Refrain

Taste and see, taste and see that the Lord is good, that the Lord is good;
bless - ed, bless - ed is the man who takes ref - uge in him.

Psalm tone

I will extol the LORD at `all times;
His praise will always be `on my lips.
My soul will boast `in the LORD;
Let the afflicted hear `and rejoice.

Glorify the `LORD with me;
Let us exalt his name to `gether.
I sought the LORD, and he `answered me;
He delivered me from `all my fears. *Refrain*

Those who look to him are `radiant;
Their faces are never covered `with shame.
This poor man called, and the LORD `heard him;
He saved him out of all his `troubles.

The angel of the LORD encamps around those who `fear him;
And he de `livers them.
Taste and see that the `LORD is good;
Blessed is the man who takes re `fuge in him. *Refrain*

Fear the LORD, `you his saints.
For those who fear him lack `nothing.
The lions may grow weak and `hungry.
But those who seek the LORD lack `no good thing.

**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. Refrain**

SECOND READING

Romans 5:1–10

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

John 16:33

Alleluia. "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." Alleluia.

GOSPEL

Luke 6:17–26

He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon,

who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by impure spirits were cured, and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all.

Looking at his disciples, he said:

“Blessed are you who are poor,
for yours is the kingdom of God.
Blessed are you who hunger now,
for you will be satisfied.
Blessed are you who weep now,
for you will laugh.
Blessed are you when people hate you,
when they exclude you and insult you
and reject your name as evil,
because of the Son of Man.

“Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their ancestors treated the prophets.

“But woe to you who are rich,
for you have already received your comfort.
Woe to you who are well fed now,
for you will go hungry.
Woe to you who laugh now,
for you will mourn and weep.
Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you,
for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise be to you, O Christ!**

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Blest Are They”

Hymn 690

Blest are they, the poor in spirit, theirs is the kingdom of God.
Blest are they, full of sorrow, they shall be consoled. *Refrain*

Refrain

Rejoice and be glad! Blessed are you, holy are you!

Rejoice and be glad! Yours is the kingdom of God!

Blest are they, the lowly ones, they shall inherit the earth.

Blest are they who hunger and thirst, they shall have their fill. *Refrain*

Blest are they who show mercy, mercy shall be theirs.

Blest are they, the pure of heart, they shall see God! *Refrain*

Blest are they who seek peace, they are the children of God.

Blest are they who suffer in faith, the glory of God is theirs. *Refrain*

Blest are you who suffer hate all because of me.

Rejoice and be glad, yours is the kingdom; shine for all to see. *Refrain*

SERMON

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Brief intercessory prayers may be added at the end of the litany.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, you love your whole creation and forget none of your creatures. We bring you our supplications for all your children, for all those we love and all those committed to your care:

We implore you to hear us, good Lord.

For all who have blessed us with kindness, led us with patience, and restored and refreshed us by their sympathy and help:

We implore you to hear us, good Lord.

For all who have wished or done us ill, that you would turn their hearts to penitence and ours to blessing:

Lord, have mercy.

For all prisoners and captives and all who suffer from oppression, that you would lead them to know the perfect freedom of your Son's forgiveness, relieve their suffering, and move us to imitate you by assisting them with works of mercy and compassion:

Lord, have mercy.

[For... *here name the person and the cause of the petition*, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.]

For all who bear the cross of suffering, who are sick in body or in mind:

Be merciful and spare them, good Lord.

For all who are troubled by the suffering or sin of those they love:

Lord, hear our prayer.

For all who have experienced worldly loss, that in the midst of darkness and confusion they may find their peace in you:

We implore you to hear us, O God.

For all who are absorbed in their own grief, that they may be raised to share the sorrows of their brothers and sisters and to know and appreciate the fellowship of those who bear Christ's cross:

We implore you to hear us, O God.

For all who are suffering because of their faithfulness to conviction and duty, that in sacrifice they might find strength and joy; and that you, who see in secret, may uphold them by your grace, so they may at last come to an open reward:

Lord, have mercy.

For all who are undergoing temptations of the flesh or who imagine evil in their hearts, that you would enable them to overcome and obtain the victory through Christ:

Be merciful and spare them, good Lord.

For all who are lonely and sad in the midst of the joys of others, that they may know you as their Father, Friend, and Comforter:

Lord, hear our prayer.

For the infirm, the aged, and all who are approaching death, that they may find their strength in you and obtain a blessed end:

Lord, hear our prayer.

For all for whom we have forgotten to pray but who are dear to you:

Assist them according to their needs, and bring them to your heavenly kingdom, through Christ our Lord.

O God our Father, hear our intercessions, answer them according to your will, and make us the channels of your infinite pity and helpfulness.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

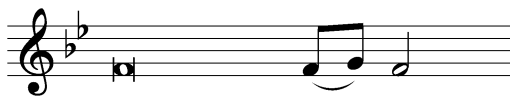
LORD'S PRAYER

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.

THE SACRAMENT

(Guests, please see our communion practice on page 2.)

(Individually packaged wafers are gluten-free.)



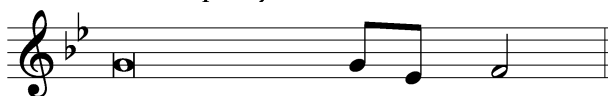
The Lord be with you.



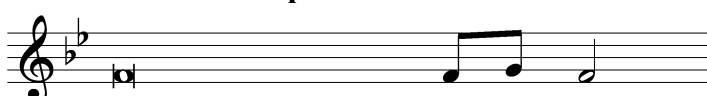
And al - so with you.



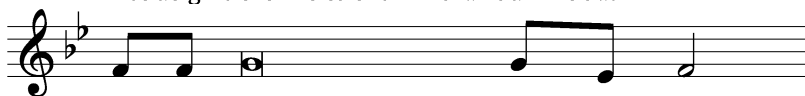
Lift up your hearts.



We lift them up to the Lord.



Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.



It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who promised that wherever two or three come together in his name, there he is with them to shepherd his flock until he comes again in glory. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power, God of might.

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest!

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my T body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my T blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Amen.

JESUS, LAMB OF GOD

Jesus, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Jesus, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Jesus, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us your peace.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN

“What Is This Bread”

Hymn 665

What is this bread? Christ’s body risen from the dead:
this bread we break, this life we take,
was crushed to pay for our release. O taste and see—the Lord is peace.

What is this wine? The blood of Jesus shed for mine;
the cup of grace brings his embrace
of life and love until I sing! O taste and see—the Lord is King.

So who am I, that I should live and he should die
under the rod? My God, my God,
why have you not forsaken me? O taste and see—the Lord is free.

Yet is God here? Oh, yes! By Word and promise clear,
in mouth and soul he makes us whole—
Christ, truly present in this meal. O taste and see—the Lord is real.

Is this for me? I am forgiven and set free!
I do believe that I receive
his very body and his blood. O taste and see—the Lord is good.

CLOSING PRAYER

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his mercy endures forever.

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

We give you thanks, O Lord, for the foretaste of the heavenly banquet you
have given us in this Sacrament. Through this gift you have fed our faith,
nourished our hope, and strengthened our love.

By your Spirit, help us to live as your holy people until that day when you
will receive us as your guests at the wedding supper of the Lamb, who
lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace. **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN

“May the Peace of God”

Hymn 929

May the peace of God our heav’nly Father,
and the grace of Christ the risen Son,
and the fellowship of God the Spirit
keep our hearts and minds within his love.

Refrain

And to him be praise for his glorious reign
from the depths of earth to the heights of heav’n.
We declare the name of the Lamb once slain—
Christ eternal, the King of kings.

May this peace which passes understanding,
and this grace which makes us what we are,
and this fellowship of his communion
make us one in spirit and in heart. *Refrain*

OFFERING

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Special Voters' Meeting Agenda Items

On Wednesday, October 12, at 7pm, the Voters' Assembly will meet to act on the following items of ministry and business:

1. Call for Principal / Staff Minister of Outreach - The "Call Season" opens October 12, and we want to show that we're ready and eager to move forward.

2. Classroom Heating/Cooling Project - Through a special COVID-relief grant, our classrooms and office now have new air-quality improving, air filtration, heating/cooling units. They are incredibly quiet and early results show that they are highly energy efficient. Due to increased costs and additional costs and work beyond the parameters of the grant, we have exceeded the grant we received for the project. Therefore, we ask that we add the entire project to the Classroom Renovation Project to allow for these costs, landscaping upgrades, and future wall repair and window-well capping costs. Funding for the Renovation project continues to be: Special Gifts, Match from Facility Improvement Fund, 2020-2021 Dr Office Transfer (\$30k), and finally "Overage" from Fiscal Year 2020-2021 (about \$44k after special gifts to WELS and Shoreland).

3. Kitchen Project - Our Kitchen Renovation Committee is ready to move forward with the "Next Steps" they outlined for us on a recent Sunday. Therefore, we recommend that we authorize the Kitchen Renovation Committee to move forward with: 1) replacing the kitchen floor, 2) purchase and installation of a new range/oven, and 3) other lesser peripherals that may arise as they prepare project plans for MC and then Voter approval for a summer 2023 renovation project. Kitchen Renovation Committee members are Dale Villiard, Sheryl Linnemann, and Mark Hirons.

Lord's Supper Together Again!

This weekend, we are returning to communing together by "table" rather than by family. Ushers will invite ~5 people from each side (seeking to keep families together) to go forward up the center aisle to the front pew. From there, another usher will indicate when to go forward to fill in behind the "table" being served. As the "table" being served is dismissed and returns to their seats, the next "table" steps forward.

As we are being served, we stretch out an open hand to receive the body of our Lord given to us in, with, and under the bread. If you prefer a gluten-free wafer, please indicate so to Pastor (he won't mind a reminding wave). When your "table" has all received the bread, we will eat together as Pastor invites: "Take, eat." Then, as Jesus shares his blood in, with, and under the wine, please take a cup nearest to you. When your "table" has all received the wine, we will drink together as Pastor invites: "Take, drink." Then the pastor will bless you and dismiss you. As you go out toward whatever side you were sitting, you will find a basket for your empty communion cup. Then we return to our seats with smiles enjoying peace with our Lord and his people!

If you are at that point in life where steps and balance are a questionable challenge, please let Pastor know, sit toward the front, or (if you prefer) at the end of the line come and stand before a front pew - and we will come to serve you.

If you have any concerns, please share with Pastor.