

Missing Peace WEEK FOUR December 21, 2025

SCREEN: Four days until Christmas

Well, the Christmas clock is counting down.

We are in the home stretch of Advent.

And the struggle we face every year when we get down to the wire with Advent is to not give into the attitude of:

Let's get Advent over with so Christmas can begin.

I understand the attitude because I struggle with it too.

And it's natural.

We spend weeks getting ready for something big, and just want to see it arrive.

SCREEN: Missing Peace main screen

For the past month we've been preparing for Christmas and it's almost here.

But if we give in to this feeling we will miss out on the greatest Advent message of all.

It's the one we heard today and it perfectly sums up our Advent message series titled, Missing Peace.

Today was the fourth week in a row that we heard from the Prophet Isaiah. Isaiah is *the* prophet for Advent.

To recap what we've heard from him, remember that Isaiah lived 700 years before Jesus was born.

He was called by God to speak a message to his king and to his people - the people of Judah.

They'd stopped listening to God and following his teachings.

The king was a man named Ahaz.

Ahaz stopped trusting in God.

When he feared that his nation was going to be attacked by outside armies, rather than trust in God, Ahaz entered into foreign alliances, against Isaiah's advice.

When the enemy was at the gate and all seemed lost,

Isaiah spoke this message to Ahaz:

**SCREEN: the Lord himself will give you this sign:
the virgin shall conceive, and bear a son,
and shall name him Emmanuel.**

The message to Ahaz was clear: *new life is coming.*

Your line of descendants will continue and

God's Kingdom will never end.

So, trust, believe, have hope, and be at peace.

Now jump seven centuries forward to the time of Mary and Joseph and we arrive at today's Gospel reading.

The angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she was going to give birth to the messiah.

When Joseph, her betrothed, heard that Mary was expecting and knew he was not the father, he planned to divorce her.

Then an angel appeared to Joseph, told him that Mary had conceived by the Holy Spirit so he should have no fear to take Mary as his wife.

Joseph did what the angel asked, but it couldn't have been easy for him.

Not easy at all.

God was showing Joseph how to find peace amid this incredibly stressful situation but it would require him to make a huge leap of faith -

to trust that God had a plan, that God was in control, and to believe that God was with him.

That God was with him.

SCREEN: God is with us

And this is a message that is meant for us too.

The angel announced that Jesus would be called, Emmanuel, which means,

God is with us.

These four words sum up our Advent message series, Missing Peace.

God is with us...*always!*

No matter what turmoils we face,
no matter what upsets we experience, God is with us.

No matter how broken our government is,
or how divided our nation seems, God is with us.

No matter what struggles you or I face with
family or friends, work or finances, God is with us.

Amid all of this uncertainty and doubt and the worry and fear we feel,
God is always with us.

Always Emmanuel, offering us calm and joy and peace.

And all we have to do to experience Christ's peace
is to be like Joseph - believe and trust that God is with us everyday.

God wants you to have peace this Christmas.

The peace only he can give.

And once you experience God's peace, he calls you to share it with others.

Navigating one's way through the holidays can be really challenging.

The demands of family, friends, and the culture around us can
sometimes feel anything but peaceful.

So let me mention a few practical ways
to experience peace and know that God is with you this week.

Back on Week One of this series,

I encouraged you to set aside 5 minutes each day for quiet reflection.

Just five minutes can transform your day.

It can reduce your anxiety and help you find the peace you are missing.

I guarantee you will need this between now and New Year's.

So at the start of your day or whenever works best for you,

find a spot, and just take a few moments

to listen to the quiet and be aware of God's presence.

Now, let me mention a few ways to share peace with others and
help them realize that God is also with them this week.

If you have last minute shopping or errands to do for Christmas,
try to be cheerful and patient.

Roads and parking lots will be crazy,
stores and restaurants will be hectic, so prepare by packing your patience.
Don't be a grinch or a grump, just smile, take a deep breath
and wish people a Merry Christmas.

Make someone's day by simply being kind and gracious.

And finally, we know we will have hundreds of visitors and guests
joining us for Christmas Mass.

Please help us welcome them by volunteering a few minutes of your time.

We need more greeters at all of our Christmas Masses
as well as more individuals to serve on the parking team at the 4pm Christmas Eve Mass.

You can sign up after Mass in the entranceway or through our bulletin or website.

Now in keeping with our custom the past few years on this fourth Sunday of Advent,
I'm going to end my message with a few minutes of silent reflection.

SCREEN: where in my life am I missing peace?

In these next couple minutes, meditate on this question:

where in my life am I missing peace?

(Pause for a few minutes of silence)