

**Building God’s House of Peace**

Congregations of many denominations extend the peace of Christ with a blessing during their service. “The peace of Christ be with you (and also with you).” It is a blessing offered and a blessing returned in kind. Let’s try it out: When I say “the peace of Christ be with You,” you say, “and also with you.” **“The Peace of Christ be with you”** (“and also with you”). The peace of Christ is part of what our faith offers to us. *Extending* the peace of Christ is part of an active, engaged faith—a witness to what it means for us to be building the household of God.

In God’s house, there are people of every background. In God’s house, there are people of every race, age and gender. In God’s house, people who are different from each other in almost every way live together and seek ways to bring about Christ’s peace in every part of our lives. We speak out and claim the truth in Second Thessalonians, “May the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in all ways.” In our church gatherings, we practice offering Christ’s peace, trusting that the blessing offered will also be returned.

On World Communion Sunday, we celebrate that Christ’s peace extends throughout all creation. We celebrate that we are all together at the table, in God’s house. We celebrate that we are offered what we need to continue the work of building the household of God with active peacemakers here at home and around the world.

We take action today by offering a blessing of our own. Through our participation in the Peace & Global Witness Offering, our church is extending Christ’s peace throughout our community—25 percent of the gifts received will stay right here at the church to build God’s house alongside (NAME THE ORGANIZATION OR GROUP ASSISTED IN YOUR MINISTRY). Twenty-five percent will support regional efforts in our mid councils, and 50 percent will go the Presbyterian Mission Agency for its ministries of education and partnership with active peacemakers all around the world.

Peacemakers in places like Cameroon, where violence and conflict threaten, peacemakers providing ministries of reconciliation inside prison walls, and peacemakers seeking to eradicate diseases like HIV-AIDS and their impacts on the most vulnerable, all gather with us at the table in God’s house, and greet us, saying, “The peace of Christ be with you” **(let the people respond “and also with you.”)**

Please give generously.

***Prayer:***

*Extend your peace to us, O Christ, that we might build places of kindness and generosity, reconciliation and compassion. May our gifts join our voices in blessing all of creation with your justice and peace, at all times, in all ways.* **Amen**.