Order of Communion Service Sunday 6th December 2020 (2nd Sunday in Advent)

Communion led by Rev. Richard Bradley; service led by Debbie Wood

**Welcome and intro to first song- Debbie**

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6 NIV) Welcome to worship, here at Bamford Chapel and Norden URC, on this second Sunday in Advent where we will focus on Christ’s gift of peace, the peace of God which passes all understanding, the peace of being filled with the Holy Spirit. We will begin our worship with a song called Prince of Peace, by Hillsong

**Song-** Prince of Peace Hillsong

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| My heart a storm, clouds raging deep within The Prince of Peace came bursting through the wind The violent sky held its breath And in Your light I found rest.  Tearing through the night Riding on the storm Staring down the fight My eyes found Yours Shining like the sun Striding through my fear The Prince of Peace met me there.  You heard my prayer  Hope like the sunlight piercing through the dark The Prince of Peace came and broke into my heart The violent cross, the empty grave And in Your light I found grace.  Tearing through the night Riding on the storm Staring down the fight My eyes found Yours Shining like the sun Striding through my fear The Prince of Peace met me there.  You're always there And You hear my prayer  Your love surrounds me When my thoughts wage war When night screams terror There Your voice will roar Come death or shadow God I know Your light will meet me there | When fear comes knocking There You'll be my guard  When day breeds trouble There You'll hold my heart Come storm or battle God I know Your peace will meet me there.  Again  Oh, be still my heart Know that You are God Oh fear no evil For I know You are here.  And my soul will know Your love surrounds me When my thoughts wage war When night screams terror There Your voice will roar Come death or shadow God I know Your light will meet me there.  And my soul will know When fear comes knocking There You'll be my guard When day breeds trouble There You'll hold my heart Come storm or battle God I know Your peace will meet me there.  Oh, be still my heart And my soul will ever know that You are God And You heard my prayer.  -------------------------  Song by Hillsong UNITED  Ccli 169737  Streaming licence 595811 |

**Voiceover for the lighting of the Candle of Peace on the Advent Wreath (Debbie)-**

Last Sunday we lit the First Candle of Hope in our Advent Wreath; we light it again as we place our hope in Jesus, our gift from God for all nations. And now, may your hearts be filled with the peace of our saviour as we light our second candle on the Advent wreath- the candle of Peace.

Through John the Baptist and all the other prophets, God asks us to prepare the way of the Lord, whom the prophet Isaiah calls “the Prince of Peace.” As we light this candle today Lord in your name as the Prince of Peace, we look with hope for the day that your peace will reign in our hearts, in our homes, in our communities, and in our world. As we light this candle, we are reminded to ask that this gift of peace will fill us through the power of the Holy Spirit and flow through us to others in all that we do in His name. Amen.

**Prayers- Debbie:**

Let us pray:

Loving God, we thank you for the gift of peace that you have given us through Jesus. Help us prepare our hearts for the Lord’s coming by working for Christ’s peace to take root in our lives. We ask Jesus, the Prince of Peace, to come into our hearts and guide us as we come together in His name to hear Your message of peace this Advent. We ask this in the name of the one born in Bethlehem, Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Let us join together now in saying the 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, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Children’s Address- Debbie:**

In this second week of Advent as we focus on peace, I asked some of our children and young people what they thought peace is.

**Powerpoint**:

Slide 1: Let’s listen to what they had to say.

Slide 2: Peace is when everyone’s happy

Slide 3: Peace is kindness

Slide 4: Peace is living a happy life and being quiet

Slide 5: Peace is when you are being silent

Slide 6: Peace is understanding that people have different opinions and that’s ok.

Slide 7: What is peace? I think peace to me is that moment when I lie down and everything’s silent, I can take a breath and just relax and think about my day and take it all in.

Slide 8: Peace is where there is no conflict.

Slide 9: Peace is calm, quiet and relaxing.

Slide 10: I think peace means no conflict and to be free from any disturbances.

Slide 11: The meaning of peace is to be free from conflict in the world and within yourself; it is to spread love and it symbolises wholeness.

Slide 12: To me, peace is happiness.

Slide 13: I think that peace is equality for everyone.

Slide 14: Peace is having friends and family who you know will support you and love you no matter what.

As we have just heard peace comes in many forms and can mean different things to different people- for me I find peace when I am walking alone with my beloved dog, Hugo, in God’s incredible creation or sitting in the quiet of an empty church listening for God. What about you? Where do you find peace? What does peace mean to you? Spend a moment thinking about that.

But throughout all we heard, there were some common threads: a need for stillness, quiet and calm, for time on our own but also a need for the love of others and to value and love others; for there to be no conflict, rather kindness so that we might find happiness in peace. So, this Christmas as we are maybe rushing around, consumed with the busyness of preparations I pray you will find time for stillness and calm that you might pause and remember that ‘Jesus is the reason for the season’ and find peace in Him.

Now join us in our second song, Peace in Christ:

**Song-** Peace in Christ (Video Clip)

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| There is peace in Christ When we learn of Him Feel the love He felt for us When He bore our sins.  Listen to His words Let them come alive If we know Him as He is There is peace in Christ.  He gives us hope When hope is gone He give us strength When we can't go on He give us shelter In the storms of life When there's no peace on Earth There is peace in Christ.  There is peace in Christ When we walk with him Through the streets of Galilee to Jerusalem Mend the broken hearts Dry the tear-filled eyes When we live the way He lives There is peace in Christ. | He give us hope When hope is gone He give us strength When we can't go on He give us shelter In the storms of life When there's no peace on Earth There is peace in Christ.  He give us hope When hope is gone He give us strength When we can't go on He give us shelter In the storms of life When there's no peace on Earth There is peace in Christ When there's no peace on Earth There is peace in Christ.  ----------------------  Song by McKenna Hixson  ccli 169737  Streaming Licence 595811 |

**Reading 1: Isaiah 9:2 and 6-7**

2The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned… 6For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.”

**Reading 2: John 14:15-21 and 25-27**

15"If you love me, keep my commands. 16And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever- 17the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. 18I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. 20On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. 21Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them…. 25"All this I have spoken while still with you. 26But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. 27Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

**Reflection Debbie**

So, what of this promise of a Prince of Peace given in the Messianic prophecy in Isaiah? In what ways is Jesus the Prince of Peace?

The title Prince would be understood to mean a leader among a group of people. Jesus certainly fits this role as leader of all the people of the world. He is the Prince of Peace because He is the Son of God –who is the King of Peace- and it is through Him that the doors of the heavenly kingdom of peace are opened. It is because of Jesus that we can truly live peacefully with God it is because of His sacrifice that the broken relationship between man and God is healed “For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus” (1Tim 2:5). His death on the cross means that we can have peace with God, with others and with ourselves. Through Christ we are freed from sin and therefore at peace because the deeper, truer meaning of peace is the spiritual harmony brought about by our restoration with God. The Prince of Peace has restored the peace.

Jesus is also the Prince of Peace because He is our way to everlasting peace. He has given us an assurance of salvation through his sacrifice on the cross and the promise of eternal life with Him; a life of peace with our Creator-a life free from evil, sin, and death. He is the “author of life” raised from the dead by His father (Acts 3:15). He will return and take us with Him to His heavenly Kingdom where there is true peace so there will be no pain, no suffering, no conflict. It is through the Son that we reach our Father (John 14:6) “6Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

In the words of a well-known hymn: “peace perfect peace is the gift of Christ our Lord.” I am in no doubt that Jesus wants us to live our lives right now in His peace. It is his gift to us manifested in His advocate- the Holy Spirit. “27Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid” our second reading from John ended. We need to trust in God working in our lives, leading the way and working through us if we are to be able to find any peace in our lives in a world that is so often so fraught, so busy, so demanding. If we keep our eyes on Christ we will get through the trials and tribulations that we face in our daily lives. The mission of Christ was to bring peace to the world through His death and resurrection and referring to Jesus as the Prince of Peace acknowledges His mission. God longed to transform our chaotic and hateful world into a world filled with His peace and love “For God is not a God of disorder but of peace “ (1 Corinthians 14:33) and He did this through His Son. He is a God of peace and order – the fruits of the Spirit (of which peace is one) are evidence of this.

And there is no doubt in my mind that what our world needs right now is peace. Peace starts with Jesus but the response lies with us. As Christians filled with His Holy Spirit, we are expected to take His peace out into the world. Jesus Himself charges us with this mission that we are to continue on His behalf: “Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." 22And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit.”” (John20:21-22) We have to be willing to accept his Holy Spirit into our lives to be guided by the Spirit in all that we do, in how we treat others. If we want to live in peace, we must respond in all situations with love: 35By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:35)

But we cannot find true peace alone, “Lord you establish peace for us; all that we have accomplished you have done for us.” (Isaiah 26:12). We must turn to Christ, we must pray to God as Jesus Himself did, we must be moved by His Spirit. We read so often in the gospels how Jesus went off on His own to pray, to commune with His Father, to have time alone with Him, to be reassured by Him, to renew His strength for what He would face. And if Jesus did that we most definitely need to! To be Jesus-shaped we must spend time in prayer too. All I know is that whenever things are going wrong in my life, whenever I am feeling anxious or stressed when I stop for a moment. I realise that I have taken my eyes off the Prince of Peace and when I turn back to Him and spend time in prayer I feel His gift of peace again. As Paul says in his letter to the Philippians 4:6-7” 6Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

With the peace of God reigning over our lives, we will see heaven on earth as we expectantly await the second coming of the Prince of Peace. As John Calvin said, “True peace will be found nowhere but in Christ”. Let us thank God for the Prince of Peace and be prepared to go out and be peacemakers in His name; for as Matthew says (5:9): “Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God “

Amen

As we come now to find peace at the Lord’s table, as we share in and are spiritually refreshed by His body and His blood, let us sing together Be Still for the presence of the Lord.

**Song:**  Be Still for the presence of the Lord

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| 1.. Be still for the presence of the Lord The Holy One is here Come bow before Him now With reverence and fear In Him no sin is found We stand on holy ground Be still for the presence of the Lord The Holy One is here. | 3.. Be still for the power of the Lord Is moving in this place He comes to cleanse and heal To minister His grace No work to hard for him  In faith receive from him  Be still for the power of the Lord  Is moving in this place |
| 2.. Be still for the glory of the Lord Is shining all around He burns with holy fire With splendour He is crowned How awesome is the sight Our radiant King of light Be still for the glory of the Lord Is shining all around. | David J Evans © 1986 Thankyou Music/Capitol CMG Publishing/Integritymusic.com  ccli 169737 Streaming Licence 595811 |

**Communion -Richard**

We come to gather at the Lord’s table…for us that is not a Lord’s Table in our churches but in our homes. Places that are holy ground. We gather in our homes but are united in the presence of God by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Let us pray….Lord, we come to your table, trusting in your mercy and not in any goodness of our own.

We are not worthy even to gather up the crumbs under your table, but it is your nature always to have mercy, and on that we depend.

So feed us with these symbols of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, your son, that we may for ever live in him and he in us. Amen.

The Lord is with us, we are with him.

God of all glory and light of our salvation,  
we offer you thanks and praise through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

By your living Word you called all things into being,  
breathed into life the desire of your heart  
and shaped us in your own likeness.  
Though we rejected your love,   
you did not give us up or cease to fashion our salvation.

You made a covenant to be our God, spoke to us through the prophets,  
and prepared the way for our redemption.

We praise you that in the fullness of time  
you sent your only Son Jesus Christ.

The Lord of eternity,  
announced by angels and born of Mary,  
he became incarnate,  
fulfilling the promise of your salvation.

And so we offer our praise with all people, on earth and in heaven.

We praise you, Lord God, King of the universe, through our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who, on the night in which he was betrayed, took bread, gave thanks, and broke it,   
and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take this and eat. This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

In the same way, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying,

“Drink from it all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many,   
for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

Generous and holy God, pour out your Holy Spirit that these gifts of bread and wine may be for us symbols of the body and blood of Christ.

Refashion us in your image that we may be found ready at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessing and honour and glory and power be yours, O Lord, for ever and ever. Amen.

As we heard, at the meal with his friends, Jesus took bread, he gave thanks and broke it and gave it to them. We take this bread, give thanks, and eat in remembrance and thanksgiving.   
*(we eat the bread and pause)*

After the meal with his friends, Jesus took the cup, he gave thanks and gave it to them.

We take the cup, give thanks, and drink in remembrance and thanksgiving.

*(we drink the cup and pause)*

Let us pray…..

Holy God, thank you for feeding us with this bread and this wine, elements that remind us of your body and blood. In this Advent period of waiting and preparing, may we having eaten and drunk, be made ready and be prepared for the coming of the Christ child, who came to change and transform lives and to being eternal life. Amen.

**Prayers of Intercession- Debbie**

We now come to our prayers of intercession. After each prayer focus please join in with the words:

“**Hear our prayers Lord, and fill us with your peace**”

Dear Lord, we come to You in prayer, in the stillness of peace, knowing that You hear us.

We pray for our precious world, asking that you might restore peace to Your creation: that the onslaught of man upon the natural world be ended; that man’s greed and destruction be halted before our beautiful planet is destroyed. We pray for mankind to recognise the harm it is causing and that ways will be found to reverse this damage before it is too late and that each one of us will take responsibility and act now restoring our oceans and natural habitats, rewilding and reforesting until we once again have the peace of Eden in our natural world.

**Hear our prayers Lord, and fill us with Your peace.**

We pray for the governments and religious leaders of our world asking that they will work together for the good of all mankind. We pray that they will have the vision and desire to ensure we have a world that is at peace and that is fair and just for all. We pray particularly at this time that the governments of the world will work together to ensure that all nations benefit from the vaccines that are being created to bring global peace from the pandemic

**Hear our prayers Lord,** **and fill us with Your peace.**

We pray for the Church across the world and ask that it be Jesus-shaped in all that it does. We pray that You will guide and equip our churches to reach outwards to share the peace that comes from our hope in Christ with those waiting to hear the good news of the Gospel. We particularly remember those Christians who are persecuted for their faith- who share our faith but not our freedom. Give them strength and peace Lord as they bear their cross in Your name.

**Hear our prayers Lord, and fill us with Your peace.**

We pray for those in need: We pray for peace for those affected by war. We pray for peace from poverty especially at the moment for those who are struggling through job losses and wage cuts because of the pandemic and ask for a fair sharing of wealth across the world. We pray for peace for those who are victims of trafficking and abuse and for those who work to help them. We pray for peace for refugees and all people who find themselves displaced and those experiencing homelessness and ask that all people across the world have their basic human rights met so that they may have some peace.

**Hear our prayers Lord, and fill us with Your peace.**

We pray for peace for all those who are sick and give thanks for those caring for them. We pray for the bereaved and ask that You will comfort them and give them peace. We thank you for those who work hard to save lives across the globe- the emergency services and aid workers and charities. We thank you especially for all those who continue to care for those suffering across the world from Covid-19 and for those developing vaccines to give us some peace from this virus and we particularly remember those whose mental health is exacerbated by the isolation, anxiety and stresses caused by this pandemic and pray that they may know Your peace.

**Hear our prayers Lord, and fill us with Your peace.**

We offer all these prayers Lord and those in our hearts in the name of our great intercessor, Your son, Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. **AMEN.**

We will now sing our final hymn; the prayer of St. Francis, Make me a Channel of Your Peace

**Song-** Make me a Channel of Your Peace (video clip) [verse 1, chorus, verse 2, chorus, verse 3]

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| 1.. Make me a channel of Your peace.  Where there is hatred  let me bring Your love;  where there is injury,  Your pardon, Lord;  and where there's doubt  true faith in You. | Chorus:  *O Master, grant that I may never seek,*  *to much to be consoled as to console;*  *to be understood as to understand;*  *to be loved as to love with all my soul.* |
| 2.. Make me a channel of Your peace.  Where there's despair in life  let me bring hope;  where there is darkness, only light;  and where there's sadness, ever joy. | 3.. Make me a channel of Your peace.  It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  in giving to all men that we receive;  and in dying that we're born to eternal life. |
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**Blessing- Debbie**

Dear Lord, we thank you for all that we have shared together today. At this time of Advent help us to remember the real meaning of Christmas and to go out and share the message of peace that we have in our hope in you with anyone we meet. In the words of Paul in his letter to the Thessalonians, “May the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance” and may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us today, this Advent and always.

Amen