**Luke 2:11-14 For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.” 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: 14 “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”**

Today we lit the Advent candles of Peace and Love. We started four weeks ago with Faith. Our Faith leads to Hope. In our Hope, we find Joy. In Joy, we embrace the Peace only Jesus brings. In Peace through Jesus, we find the true Love of God.

Luke 2:11 gives us the announcement that the angel is bringing – an announcement of great joy unto all people. John 3:16 says *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.* All people have the opportunity to believe in Him and be saved… not by our works, but by Faith… because God loved us. But we must first believe in verse 11 *For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.* Christ our Savior, born that He might die, to save whoever believes in Him, so they might have everlasting life.

Verse 12 - *And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.”* 700 years before Jesus, there was a prophet named Isaiah. 700 years... if we went back 700 years, we’d be in the 1300’s… before Christopher Columbus… In Luke 2:12 we find fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14 *Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.* Immanuel means God with us. Listen to Isaiah 9:6 – 700 years before Jesus - *For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.* A Child born, a Son, Mighy God, Everlasting Father given unto us. That sounds like God with us - Immanuel.

Verses 13 & 14 *And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: 14 “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”* Jesus brings Peace. Jesus leaves Peace. In John 14:27 we read *Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.* In John 14:26, just one verse earlier, we read - *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.* The Mighty God, Prince of Peace leaves with us His Peace – Let not our hearts be troubled, but let us find in this Season that wonderful Peace that only Jesus brings.

The dove is a symbol of peace. A dove with an olive branch is viewed worldwide even today as a symbol of peace. The world might use it today, but where did we first see it? In Genesis 8:11 - *Then the dove came to him in the evening, and behold, a freshly plucked olive leaf was in her mouth; and Noah knew that the waters had receded from the earth.* The waters had receded. In Genesis 6:6 we see that God regretted making man. God was making peace with mankind again. He saved us through a faithful man and the ark. In Luke 3:21-22, we read the story of Jesus being baptized - *When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, “You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.”* The Holy Spirit, the same Holy Spirit promised in John 14:26, descending in bodily form like a dove, like the dove we see in Genesis 8:11, bringing Peace to all mankind, through belief in Jesus Christ.

And through Jesus, we not only receive the Peace, but we receive Love. 1 John 4:15-16  *Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. 16 And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.* It really gets no clearer than that in life. This is like reading the instructions and the very first line says – plug in power cord. When we confess the Son of God, we, in Faith and Hope, plug in the power cord, through it we receive Peace and Joy. But the Power that drives it all, from the very beginning of time, when the Word was with God, and the Word was God, is Love. God is Love. He planned it. He’s driving it and He will accomplish it.

1 John 4:17-19 *Love has been perfected among us in this (****that’s Faith****): that we may have boldness in the day of judgment (****that’s Hope****); because as He is, so are we in this world (****that’s Joy****). 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear (****that’s Peace****), because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. 19 We love Him because He first loved us. (****that’s Love****).* At this time for Christmas, may we remember the Advent – our expectation of the Second Coming, when Jesus will come again. May we look to the sky in Faith, cast our eyes in Hope, search daily in Joy, while living in the Peace of our reassurance, that the God of Love, Who is Love, will fulfill His Word, and we will one day abide with Jesus in glory, just as He promised.