



The Faith Messenger

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2330 Hickory Valley Road,
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Sundays

with Our Savior

Worship Service: 11am

Sunday School: 10am

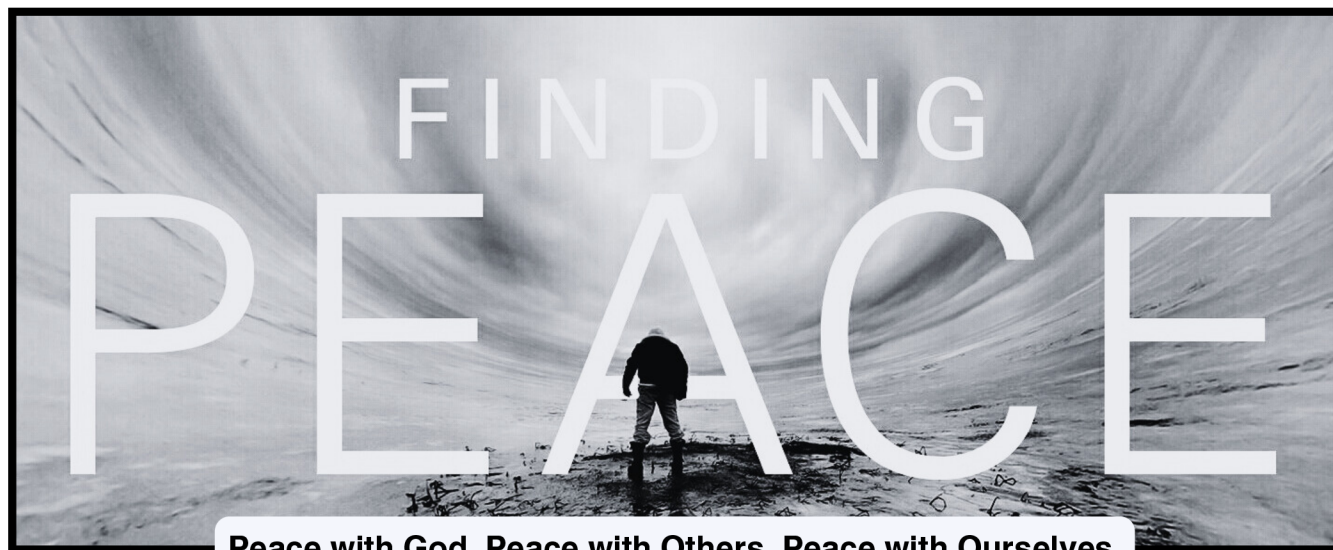
Issue Focus:

The Fruit of the Spirit:

Peace (Part Two)

Volume 2, Issue #6

November/December 2024



Peace with God. Peace with Others. Peace with Ourselves.

Welcome to the Faith Messenger newsletter. Our 2024 journey has been focused on the Fruit of the Spirit. In this issue, we'll take second deep dive into the Fruit of the Spirit: **PEACE**. This issue's focus is completely different than May-June issue on Peace.

Today we'll address the concept of internal and external harmony. Harmony (a lasting peace) with God, with others, and ourselves.

As we enter the seasons of Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas, our hearts hunger for a peace that the world cannot offer us.

God's Peace flows from the new birth that He freely gives us when we surrender our hearts and wills to Him, through our utter trust in the atonement purchased for us on the Cross, by God the Son, Jesus Christ. Reconciliation is the aim.

Our sins are forgiven, and God, the Holy Spirit, arrives to dwell within our heart to provide the desire and power to obey our heavenly Father, and align our will with His.

The peace of God that surpasses all rational understanding comes directly from the Holy Spirit, and it produces a unity and oneness with Him, with others and ourselves.

*"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."
(John 14:27)*



JESUS IS OUR PEACE



Christ Our Faith. Christ Our Hope. Christ Our Life.



Understanding God's Peace: From Old to New Testament

Shalom: More Than Just Peace

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word for peace is "shalom" (שָׁלוֹם).

But shalom means much more than just the absence of conflict. It represents a state of completeness, wholeness, and well-being in every area of life.

When God blessed His people with shalom, He was giving them:

- Physical health and safety
- Emotional well-being
- Harmonious relationships
- Prosperity and fulfillment

Think of shalom as a beautiful tapestry where every thread of life is in its right place, creating a picture of God's perfect and complete design for us.

Eirene: Peace in the New Testament

In the New Testament, written in Greek, the word for peace is "eirene" (εἰρήνη).

While it carries forward the rich meaning of shalom, it takes on an even deeper significance in light of Christ's work.

Eirene in the New Testament often refers to:

- Peace with God through faith in Jesus (Romans 5:1)
- The inner peace that comes from trusting God (Philippians 4:7)
- Harmony between people, especially in the church (Ephesians 4:3)

Jesus:

The Prince of Peace

Isaiah 9:6 prophesied that the Messiah would be called the "Prince of Peace." Jesus fulfilled this in ways beyond what anyone expected:

He brought peace between God and humanity:

*"For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross."
(Colossians 1:19-20)*

He offers inner peace to all who trust in Him:

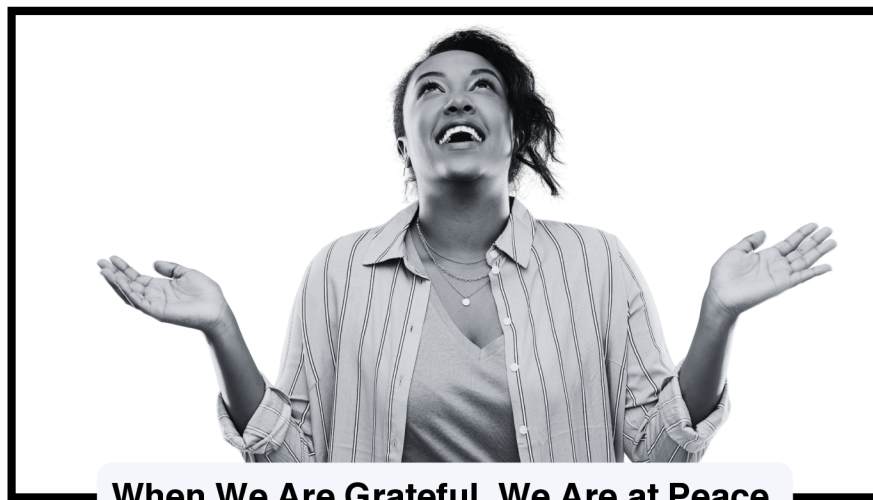
*"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."
(John 14:27)*

He teaches us how to be peacemakers:

*"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."
(Matthew 5:9)*



JESUS IS OUR STRENGTH



When We Are Grateful, We Are at Peace.

The Peace-Gratitude Connection: Cultivating Calm in a Chaotic World

In our fast-paced world, finding peace can seem like an elusive dream. Yet, the Bible offers us a stunning insight:

**True peace is deeply
connected to gratitude.**

Cultivating thankfulness can lead us to a more peaceful life, regardless of our circumstances.

The Biblical Foundation

The Apostle Paul, writing from a prison cell, gives us a powerful formula for peace in *Philippians 4:6-7*:

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Notice the key ingredients here: prayer, petition, and thanksgiving. But look at *Philippians 4:4* for the foundation for peace:

*"Rejoice in the Lord always.
Again I will say, rejoice!"*

It's not just about asking God for help; it's about approaching Him with a grateful, joyful, heart. This gratitude opens the door to a true and lasting peace that because it has the Christ as the center of the crisis, not the circumstance!

The Ripple Effect of Gratitude and Peace

As we nurture gratitude and experience more peace, we become better equipped to be peacemakers in our communities. Jesus said in *Matthew 5:9*,

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."

The Science Behind Gratitude and Peace

Modern research supports what the Bible has long taught. A 2015 study published in the *Journal of Positive Psychology* found that grateful people experience less depression and anxiety.

Another study from the University of California, Davis, showed that people who practiced gratitude consistently reported feeling 25% happier than those who didn't.

But how does gratitude lead to peace?

- **Perspective Shift:** Gratitude helps us focus on what we have rather than what we lack. This shift in focus can dramatically reduce anxiety and increase contentment. Go ahead and read *Colossians 3:2* for insight into where we should focus.
- **Stress Reduction:** Expressing gratitude lowers cortisol levels (the stress hormone) by up to 23%, according to a study from the University of California.
- **Improved Sleep:** Grateful people sleep better and longer, which contributes to overall well-being and peace of mind.





True peace seeks wholeness and well-being for all involved; it's not just ending disagreements.

Overcoming Obstacles to Gratitude and Peace

Sometimes, circumstances make it challenging to feel grateful or peaceful. Job losses, health issues, or relationship struggles can test our faith and peace. In these moments, we can draw inspiration from Paul's words in Philippians 4:11-13:

"I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength."

A Challenge for Lasting Peace

Developing peace through gratitude is not a one-time event but a lifelong journey.



As we consistently practice thankfulness, we'll find ourselves experiencing more of the peace that Paul describes – a peace that guards our hearts and minds, surpassing all understanding. The Greek word for "guard" (phroureo) refers to a garrison or military soldiers assigned to protect and preserve a city's safety and security from hostile invasion.

Peace and contentment are not dependent on our circumstances but on our relationship with God.

By anchoring our gratitude in God's unchanging love and provision, we can find peace even in life's most unnerving storms.

A study from the University of Kentucky found that grateful people are more likely to help others and less likely to retaliate against others, even when given negative feedback.

Scriptures to Study About Peace

Old Testament:

Numbers 6:24-26,
Deuteronomy 31:6,
1 Chronicles 22:9, Psalm 29:11,
Psalm 34:14, Psalm 85:8,
Psalm 119:165, Proverbs 3:17,
Proverbs 16:7, Isaiah 9:6,
Isaiah 26:3, Isaiah 32:17,
Isaiah 53:5, Isaiah 54:10,
Jeremiah 29:11

New Testament:

Matthew 5:9, Mark 4:39, Luke 2:14,
John 14:27, John 16:33,
Romans 5:1, Romans 8:6,
Romans 12:18, Romans 14:17,
Romans 15:13, 1 Corinthians 14:33,
Galatians 5:22-23, Ephesians 2:14,
Philippians 4:6-7, Colossians 3:15,
1 Thessalonians 5:23, 2
Thessalonians 3:16, 2 Timothy 2:22,
Hebrews 12:14, 1 Peter 3:11





Christ Our Faith. Christ Our Hope. Christ Our Life.

Hymns Focused on Peace



Storms Steal Peace. Jesus Calms Chaos.

**"Peace, Perfect Peace" by
Edward H. Bickersteth**

Edward Henry Bickersteth, an English evangelical clergyman, wrote this hymn in 1875 after visiting a dying relative. The visit prompted him to contemplate the nature of God's peace in the face of life's uncertainties and challenges.

Inspired by Isaiah 26:3, *"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee,"* Bickersteth composed the hymn during a Sunday service. Each verse of the hymn presents a different challenge to peace, followed by the reassurance of God's perfect peace.

The hymn addresses concerns such as sin, sorrow, and death, offering comfort and hope through faith in Jesus Christ.

It has since become a beloved hymn, offering solace to many facing difficult times and reminding believers of the peace available through trust in God.



**"Like a River Glorious"
by Frances R. Havergal**

Frances Ridley Havergal, an English religious poet and hymn writer, penned this hymn in 1876. Havergal, known for her deep devotion to Christ, often wrote hymns that reflected on the peace and joy found in a close relationship with God.

The hymn draws its imagery from Isaiah 48:18, *"Then your peace would have been like a river."* Havergal expands on this metaphor, describing God's peace as a river that is "perfect," "endless," and "boundless."

Despite facing numerous health challenges throughout her life, Havergal's faith remained strong, and this hymn reflects the deep peace she found in trusting God. The refrain, *"Stayed upon Jehovah, hearts are fully blest; finding, as He promised, perfect peace and rest,"* embraces the central message of finding true peace through faith in God's promises.



**"It Is Well With My Soul"
by Horatio Spafford**

Horatio Spafford, a successful lawyer and real estate investor, wrote this hymn in 1873 following a series of tragic events. In 1871, his young son died of pneumonia, and in the same year, he lost much of his business in the Great Chicago Fire.

Two years later, his four daughters perished in a shipwreck while crossing the Atlantic Ocean. His wife Anna survived and sent him the famous telegram, *"Saved alone."*

As Spafford traveled to meet his grieving wife, his ship passed near where his daughters had died. It was at this moment, in the midst of unimaginable sorrow, that he penned the words to *"It Is Well With My Soul."*

The hymn is a powerful testament to the peace that comes from faith in God, even in the darkest of times.

The first verse, *"When peace like a river attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll, whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul,"* beautifully captures Spafford's unwavering faith and the peace he found in God despite his circumstances.



Q&A: Finding Peace in Difficult Circumstances (Part One)

Q: How can I maintain peace when I'm constantly worried about my financial situation?

A: Financial stress can certainly challenge our peace, but remember that God cares for your needs. Jesus taught us not to worry about tomorrow (Matthew 6:34). Start by bringing your concerns to God in prayer (Philippians 4:6-7). Then, take practical steps: create a budget, seek financial advice if possible, and focus on what you can control. Remember that wants does not equal needs.

True peace comes from trusting God (Jehovah-Jireh), not from perfect circumstances. Practice gratitude for what you have, and let that gratitude crowd out worry.

As you take these steps, you may find that the peace of God, which surpasses understanding, begins to guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:7).



Q: How can I find peace while grieving a significant loss?

A: Grief can shake us to our core, but even in our deepest sorrow, God offers comfort and peace.

Remember that Jesus himself was *"a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief"* (Isaiah 53:3). He, Jehovah-Shalom, understands your pain.

Allow yourself to grieve; it is a natural and necessary process. Bring your raw emotions to God in prayer - He can handle your questions and pain.

Lean on your faith community for support. Meditate on scriptures that speak of God's comfort, like Psalm 34:18. Visit: www.griefshare.org

While the journey through grief is challenging, trust that God is with you every step of the way. In time, you may find that your grief is transformed into a deeper peace and understanding of God's love and presence.

Q: How can I find peace when facing a serious health challenge?

A: Health challenges can shake our sense of security, but they do not have to rob us of peace.

Remember that God (Immanuel) is with you in this struggle (Isaiah 41:10). Bring your fears and concerns to Him in prayer, and trust in His love and care for you.



Educate yourself about your condition, follow your doctor's advice, and take care of your overall well-being.

Find support in your faith community. Meditate on scriptures that remind you of God's faithfulness and love. He is El-Emunah.

As you lean on God's strength, you will discover a deep, abiding peace that does not seem to make sense, even in the midst of health challenges (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).





Q&A: Finding Peace in Difficult Circumstances (Part Two)

Q: How do I maintain peace in a troubled relationship?

A: Relationship struggles can deeply affect our peace, but God offers guidance and strength.

First, pray for wisdom and for the other person involved (James 1:5). Practice forgiveness, remembering how God has forgiven you (Colossians 3:13). Communicate openly and honestly, speaking the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). Set healthy boundaries when necessary. Remember...

→ **You can't control others, but you *can* control your responses.**

Focus on your own growth and on showing Christ's love. Trust that God is working, even when you cannot see it.

As you do these things, you will find a peace that does not depend on the relationship's perfect resolution, but on your trust in God's ultimate and sovereign plan (Romans 8:28).

Q: How can I find peace when struggling with anxiety or depression?

A: Mental health challenges like anxiety and depression can make peace seem elusive, but God's peace is still available to you. Remember, many biblical figures, like David (Psalm 31:9-24) and Elijah (1 Kings 19:1-21), experienced similar struggles.

First, know that these feelings do not reflect a lack of faith. Practice self-care and establish dietary, emotional and physical routines that support your mental health.

Meditate on scriptures that remind you of God's love and care, like Psalm 23 or Matthew 11:28-30. Surround yourself with supportive people.

Be patient and gentle with yourself. God's peace often comes gradually as we learn to cast our anxieties on Him (1 Peter 5:7). Trust that even in this struggle, God is with you and working for your good. You are not invisible to God. He sees you. You matter to Him.

Q: How can I find peace when I am struggling with doubts about my faith?

A: Doubts can be unsettling, but they're a normal part of faith journey for many. Even great biblical figures like Thomas (John 20:24-31) and Job (Job 16:19, Job 19:25) wrestled with doubts.

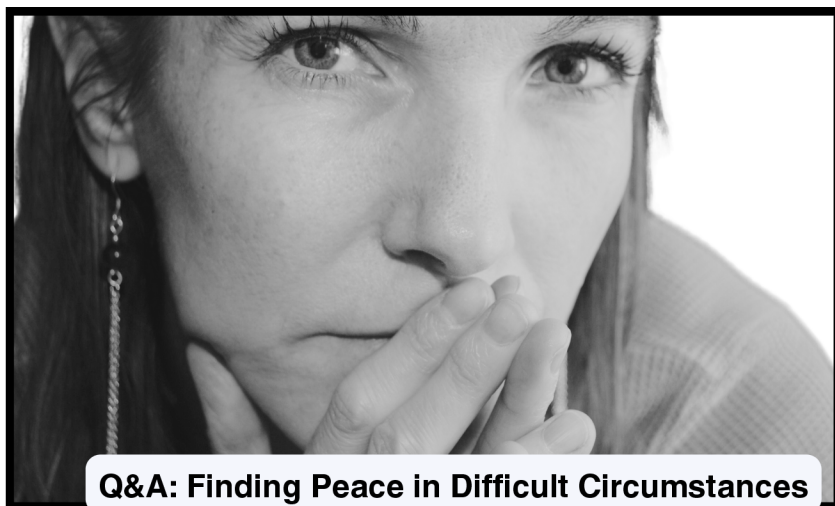
Remember, God is big enough to handle your questions. Bring your doubts to Him honestly in prayer. Study the Word, seeking answers to your questions.

Don't be afraid to discuss your doubts with mature believers who can offer guidance. Seek pastoral counsel to biblically-sound advice.

Remember that faith and doubt often coexist - even the father in Mark 9:24 cried, "*I believe; help my unbelief!*"

Trust that God is faithful even when our faith wavers (2 Timothy 2:13). As you wrestle honestly with your doubts, you will find they lead to a stronger, more grounded faith and a deeper peace that comes from authentically engaging with God.





Q&A: Finding Peace in Difficult Circumstances

(Part Three)

Q: With so much uncertainty in the world, how can I keep my peace of mind?

A: Global uncertainties can be overwhelming, but **our peace is not rooted in world circumstances.** Jesus said,

"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

Focus on what you can control: your response to events, your daily habits, and your trust in God. Limit your media consumption if it is causing anxiety. Also check out Colossians 3:2 and Philippians 4:8 to help you regain perspective.

Remember that God is sovereign over all world events (Daniel 2:21). As you trust in His control, you can experience peace even in uncertain times. Peace comes from letting God be Himself-Ruler of all.



Q: How can I maintain peace when I am feeling lonely and isolated?

A: Loneliness can be a heavy burden, but remember that **you are never truly alone.** God promises, *"I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).*

Set boundaries on your technology use. The constant flow of information can indeed disrupt our peace. Practice being fully present in the moment, whether in prayer, with loved ones, or in nature.

Develop a habit of turning to God first for guidance and comfort, rather than immediately seeking answers online or from others. Start by deepening your relationship with God through prayer and studying and memorizing His Word.

Trust that God can use this season of loneliness to draw you closer to Him and to develop the peace that comes from knowing you are deeply loved by your Creator.

Q: How can I maintain peace during major life transitions?

A: Life transitions, whether positive or negative, can disrupt our sense of peace. But remember, God is constant even when everything else is changing (Hebrews 13:8).

Start by acknowledging your feelings about the transition to God. Trust in His guidance, being mindful that He has good plans for you (Jeremiah 29:11) full of hope.

Maintain routines where possible to create a sense of stability. Stay connected to your support system.

Focus on what you can control, and surrender what you cannot. *"Give it to God, and go to sleep"* is a popular meme that makes sense.

Be careful about making major changes during significant transitions. You need a clear head to make wise choices.

Go find opportunities to volunteer your time by serving others. Make your time about others instead of yourself.

Intentionally build up gratitude for God's faithfulness in the past, which can give you confidence for the future. He will never leave you.

As you navigate this transition with God, you will discover a deeper peace that comes from trusting in His unchanging nature in the middle of life's changes.

JESUS IS OUR HOPE



Christ Our Faith. Christ Our Hope. Christ Our Life.



Holiday Stress is Mostly Our Own Fault

Tips for Stress Management During the Busy Holiday Season

Create a "Peace Plan"

- Develop a personalized plan for maintaining peace during the holidays. Include elements like daily prayer time, scripture reading, and moments of quiet reflection. Stop doing things out of "obligation" or "it is always been done that way." Delegate.

Set realistic expectations

- Discuss the importance of setting achievable goals for the season. Emphasize quality over quantity in activities and gift-giving.

Cease trying to be "everything to all people."

- Say "NO" to overcommitment. Set boundaries!



Take Care of Yourself

- As radical as it may sound, God is often left out of Thanksgiving and Christmas. Stop surrendering (physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually) to the tyranny of the urgent.
- Make the holidays a time for Christ-honoring delight instead of duty!

Remember the Reason for the Season

The traditions of Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas began and should continue to be all about God. Thanksgiving should never be about "Black Friday" shopping.

Advent should be honored as a time of hopeful expectancy. Christmas joy comes from remembering is not about the presents, but rather about Christ's Presence.



Heavenly Father, we come before You seeking the peace that surpasses all understanding. As Your Word reminds us in Philippians 4:7, may Your peace stand guard over our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Lord of Peace, we lift up our relationships to You. As we have learned that peace is intrinsically linked to how we interact with others, we ask for Your guidance. Help us to be peacemakers, as Jesus called us to be in Matthew 5:9. Give us the wisdom to forgive as we have been forgiven, to love as we have been loved. To put others' interests above our own; doing nothing out of selfish ambition. May we self-deney.

Remind us that Your peace is not dependent on our circumstances. Help us to cast our anxieties on You, knowing that You care for us. We pray for the faith to trust Your sovereign plan, even when we do not understand. May we, like Paul, learn to be content in all circumstances, finding our peace in Your presence.

Grant us the grace to be thankful in all situations, recognizing Your faithfulness. In Jesus' name, Amen.





Christ Our Faith. Christ Our Hope. Christ Our Life.



CHECK OUT OUR NEW DIGITAL PRESENCE



Exciting news! Faith Community Wesleyan Church-Chattanooga has launched a brand new website and Facebook page to better serve our congregation and connect with our community.

Use your smartphone camera to scan this QR Code for fast access to our website. Just hover over this and click onto the link that will pop up.



Visit: www.yourfaithcommunity.com to discover a wealth of resources tailored to enrich your spiritual life. We regularly add new content including inspiring videos.

Our website features blog posts that offer practical guidance for living out our tagline: **"Christ Our Faith. Christ Our Hope. Christ Our Life."** Join us as we build a vibrant faith community, both online and in person. We also expanded our online community through Facebook at: <https://facebook.com/yourfaithcommunity/>

Together in Faith, we are here to serve with love and grow in grace. Welcome to our digital home!

Peace Quotes

- **C.S. Lewis:** "God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it is not there. There is no such thing."
- **Elisabeth Elliot:** "Peace is the deliberate adjustment of my life to the will of God."
- **Charles Spurgeon:** "The peace offered by the world is an empty promise. The peace offered by Christ is a firm assurance."
- **John MacArthur:** "God's peace is not the peace of inactivity or the peace of escape. It's the peace of confidence in God's control."
- **Tim Keller:** "The peace of God is not the absence of fear. It is the presence of God."

November 2024						
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December 2024						
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29	30	31				



Rev. Ashley

Rev. Phillip

We Praise God for Sundays

Worship Service: 11am Eastern
 Sunday School: 10am Eastern
www.yourfaithcommunity.com



Our Team

Lead Pastor: Rev. Ashley Mew
 Associate Pastor: Rev. Phillip Bartlett
 Worship Leader: Beth Pickering
 Vice Chair: Eddie Galyon, Jr.
 Ushers: Greg Holland & Donald Glen
 Prayer Chain: Charlotte Brumley