

Sharing the Peace

Right after we receive the forgiveness of Christ in the Confession & Forgiveness, we Share the Peace with one another as forgiven brothers and sisters in Christ.

Sharing the Peace is an ancient ritual that dates back to New Testament times. Originally, Christians shared this peace by kissing one another on the cheek. In fact, Martin Luther wrote about sharing the kiss of peace in his church in Wittenberg. In our culture today, shaking hands or hugging someone you know well is more appropriate. And during this time of pandemic, simply saying, "Peace be with you," and showing some sign without touching anyone is more appropriate.

When we share the peace, we are recognizing that Christ is with the person we are encountering and encouraging one another in their faith. The Sharing of the Peace is not intended to be a time to greet one another and 'touch bases' with one another. It is a time to remind each other of Christ peace in their lives.

Read John 20:19-23.

- This is the first time the risen Christ shares his peace. And the Church continues to share that peace to this very day.

Read 1 Corinthians 16:20.

- The apostle Paul encouraged his churches to share Christ's peace with "a holy kiss".

Read 1 John 4:20-21.

- The Sharing of the Peace is an act of loving God through our love for our neighbors in worship.

Conclude with this prayer from the Individual Confession and Forgiveness service in the Evangelical Lutheran Worship or ELW (Augsburg Fortress Publishers; 2006).

Merciful God, I confess that I have sinned in thought, word, and deed, by what I have done and by what I have left undone. I repent of all my sins, known and unknown. I am truly sorry, and I pray for forgiveness. I firmly intend to amend my life, and to seek help in mending what is broken. I ask for strength to turn from sin and to serve you in newness of life.

By water and the Holy Spirit, God gives you a new birth, and through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God forgives you all your sins. Almighty God strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in eternal life. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your heart and your mind in Christ Jesus. Amen.