CORNERSTONE REFLECTION GUIDE
DECEMBER 21, 2025

Title: **Advent: Disturbing the Peace**
Preacher: **Hannah Buchanan**
Scripture: **Luke 2**

Luke 2 proclaims peace—but not the kind offered by the world. Jesus was born during the Pax Romana, the "peace" of Caesar Augustus, which was enforced through power, military strength, and control. Caesar's peace depended on domination and fear, rewarding loyalty and crushing opposition. It was orderly on the surface, yet fragile and costly beneath it.

Luke intentionally sets the birth of Jesus within this context to reveal a sharp contrast. While Caesar rules from a throne, Jesus is born in a manger. While imperial decrees are enforced by soldiers, God's good news is announced by angels to shepherds. This is not a sentimental story but a declaration that a new king and a new kingdom have arrived.

The peace Jesus brings is different in every way. He does not conquer by force but brings peace through humility, self-giving love, forgiveness, and the cross. Instead of demanding control, he invites surrender. Instead of eliminating enemies, he reconciles them. His peace does not depend on circumstances; it meets us in fear, chaos, and suffering and begins within the heart. We are invited to choose between these two kinds of peace: the fragile peace of control offered by the world, or the lasting peace of Christ, found in surrender to the true king whose kingdom will never end.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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1. What stuck out to you about this sermon? Was there an idea that was particularly meaningful or challenging for you?

2. Read Luke 2. What kind of peace do you think the angels are announcing in verses 14–15? How is it different from peace as the world understands it?
3. How does the peace offered by Jesus differ from the peace offered by Caesar—or by the world today?
4. When you hear the phrase *"peace on earth"* in Luke 2, what images or assumptions usually come to mind? How did this sermon challenge or expand those assumptions?
5. Can you think of a time when it felt like things were not going your way, yet you still experienced a sense of peace? What made that possible?

WEEKLY PRACTICE

This week, intentionally create space to receive the peace Jesus offers by practicing peace in two ways: **practically** and **prayerfully**.

Practically:
Identify one or two things in your daily rhythm that consistently disrupt your peace—an overfull schedule, constant phone notifications, unrealistic expectations, or unnecessary commitments. Choose one concrete action to reduce that noise. This might mean saying no to an extra obligation, putting your phone away during meals, simplifying a task, or letting go of something that does not truly matter. Treat this not as avoidance, but as wisdom—making room for peace rather than trying to control everything.

Prayerfully:
Each day, pause for a few minutes and intentionally slow down. Sit quietly, take a few deep breaths, and acknowledge Jesus as king. Pray the words, *"Your kingdom come, Your will be done."* Notice where you are gripping for control and gently surrender that area to God. Ask Jesus to speak his peace into whatever fear, stress, or uncertainty you are carrying.

As you move through the week, pay attention to moments when you feel the urge to "manufacture" peace through control. When that happens, return to this simple prayer: *"Jesus, I trust your way of peace."*