



## Wednesday Prayer

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter – Peace be with you

**When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” John 20:19**

Sharing of the peace. A practice many of us have missed doing in person this past year as we’ve worshipped from our homes. Some have begun to gather again, and others are waiting a bit longer, perhaps making plans for what church looks like “post-COVID-19”. As a guest in many churches in my role with Cherish All Children, I’ve enjoyed seeing the variety of ways people share the peace. In some churches, people greet those closest to them, shaking hands and offering “Peace be with you.” In other churches, people walk all about, greeting with hugs, fist bumps, handshakes, and not only “Peace be with you” but also a brief catch-up, and it’s hard to get some back to their places!

Whatever works best for a worshipping community, right? Of course, *and...* Coming out of a time when we haven’t been in person seems a really good time to look at how we honor the needs of all. Some are not comfortable with hugs but receive them anyway from the “huggers” in our midst. Some may be dealing with trauma in their history but the culture is one of outgoing interaction so they end up feeling uncomfortable. Others may want to reach out *more*, to develop a more open relationship, but the culture may be more reserved.

Recently, a group from my church attended an online workshop [Consent in Community Building](#) offered by Reconciling Works. We learned how building healthy boundaries, honoring and respecting the wishes of all, strengthens our welcome as a church. Asking for consent is a key principle in healthy relationships, and one which we have not honored well as a society. Modeling consent in our church practices *and* teaching people what this means and looks like, can help individuals and families practice consent in relationships outside the church walls as well. Consent = someone giving permission for something to happen or agreeing to do something. It can look like this:

*I ask, “Are you good with hugs?”  
Response, “Not really, but it’s ok.”  
Me, “How about a fist bump instead. Peace be with you.”  
Response, “Thanks, Peace be with you.”*

**Dear God, help us to break out of old patterns that may have harmed others. Help us to see all those around us in the way they would like to be seen, sharing true peace that respects all. Amen.**

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Written by Joy McElroy, Cherish All Children Executive Director, and community advocate for racial justice.

2021 [Consent in Community Building](#) online trainings coming up!