

God with Us  
Day 23 PEACE IN THE MIDST OF TROUBLE

**Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and staff, they comfort me. Psalm 23:4**

Life in the trenches during World War I was brutal and gruesome. New technology such as tanks and mustard gas had advanced military capabilities to kill even more efficiently and painfully. But early in the war, during December 1914, many German and British soldiers took peace into their own hands. On Christmas Eve, they played and sang carols to each other across the destroyed no-man's-land. And early on Christmas Day, German soldiers walked across the scarred landscape, unarmed and shouting "Merry Christmas" to their enemies. Allied soldiers crawled out of their trenches and joined them, shaking hands, exchanging gifts of cigarettes and plum pudding, and they sang Christmas carols together. History.com says there was even a documented game of soccer during this unofficial cease-fire. The Christmas Truce was never repeated, but on that special day, enemies placed their shared humanity before their grievances and experienced the Christmas spirit of peace in a truly powerful way.

Similarly, God's peace can fill and rule within us even when we are surrounded by death and evil. God's presence and peace can pierce even dark and painful surroundings and circumstances, including any war or any emotional valley we find ourselves in. Christmas is typically, and rightfully, thought of as a season of joy, but it can be a painful season for many. Even so, we can lean into the God who is with us and experience the comfort of His peace deep within.

***How will you look around for God's presence in your dark valley? Who are your enemies? To whom will you walk across the divide and offer unexpected peace in this Advent season?***