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“Peace on Repeat” The Rev. Garrett Lane (04/14/2024, The Third Sunday of Easter)

let us pray. May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Many critics would disagree with me, but some of the peak cinema, best movies, are the rom-coms from the 90s and early 2000s in my book. I very much love these movies. They're great. They're funny movies. They're laundry-folding movies, or at night with popcorn. You can watch them at any time. I really like the ones with Adam Sandler, generally, which tend to be a little more crass, and my mom didn't like me watching them as much when I was growing up, but one of my favorites came from the year 2004, 51st dates. Have we seen it? Drew Barrymore, Adam Sandler. I'm getting a few nods, and that's concerning. Okay. I hope, yeah, we could do the wedding singer instead. Adam Sandler plays this marine veterinarian. He lives in Hawaii, and he is a man who only dates tourists. He refuses to date anyone who actually lives on the island. He meets Drew Barrymore's character in a cafe, and he hits it off with her, and they get to know each other. There's this meat-cute. They're having a good time, and he decides the next day to go back and to find her again to kind of pick up where they left off, and to his surprise, she doesn't know who this man is. She's completely forgotten about him. Throughout the movie, he discovers that she has a neurological condition, where her short-term memory is not great. She's in a car accident, and really just remembers her life up until the day of the car accident, which happens to be her brother's birthday, so they celebrate her brother's birthday every single day for her. It's a silly thing. Anyway, so as the movie progresses, Adam Sandler's character creates this video for her to watch

every morning. She wakes up. She watches this video, and she remembers that she's in her relationship with Adam Sandler. They learn by trial and error that she will not always remember their married ever together, and so they make this video, and she watches it every single day, and reminds her of her life kind of up to that point. And this daily rhythm, this daily kind of cycle that she gets in is really what I want to pull from that. It's a great movie, and it's funny for a lot of reasons, but this cyclical nature of life is something that we all are a part of. All of you woke up this morning, maybe some of you stayed up all night, that could have happened, but some of you got up today, and you will go to bed tonight. We have a cycle there. We have the cycles of the week. We come on Sundays to certain places, on Mondays, we go to certain places. At Friday is at 5 pm, we go to certain places. All of these things, these cycles, these seasons, these years, and we have these cycles and relationships, too. We meet someone for the first time. It's going great. A couple of years later, it's still going great, but you need to talk. These emotional tolls of these relationships, you have children that grow up, and it's the rhythm and the cycle of raising a child. When you need, this is more of a sad one, but the choice to get a new dog after your beloved dog has passed away as a choice, and a cycle that we all, maybe not all of us, if you're cat people, or bird people. But our lives here at the church are also cyclical. In those red books in front of you, in the Purek, the book of common prayer has a daily prayer cycle for us. We come here every Sunday. We gather together. We have this cycle, this rhythm. At this font in the center of our church, there are babies baptized. Later in life, they might be married in this church. And God willing, they might be buried in this church as well. The cycles of prayer and the cycles that the church invites us into all exist. And so given the cyclical nature of our life, it isn't unusual that we hear a similar message from our readings, not just today, the third Sunday of Easter, but kind of all throughout Easter. And if you're like me, at some point in going to church, your ears might be picking up and saying, you know, I'm kind of hearing the same message from a lot of these readings. I'm hearing the same message from a lot of the sermons that are

given. And I am here to assure you that it's not a bug that you're hearing the same thing. It's actually a feature of what we do. I've got one thing, and I get to do it here, and that's it. I'm worthless anywhere else. These stories that we hear and have been hearing about how Christ immediately following his resurrection appears to his disciples. He shows up. He walks in rooms. He asks them, why are you weeping? Peace be with you. Touch my hands. Let me eat some fish. All of these things that are happening are happening to show the message of grace and the message of peace that Christ our resurrected Lord gives us. So looking to the passage, this gospel of Luke opens on the disciples that are gathering, and Jesus appears to them, it says, and his first words are peace be with you. Peace. His disciples are worried. They are scared. They are frightened, because dead people don't typically rise up from the dead, and they're surprised. They're almost they are unsure. It says in their joy in seeing him, they were still disbelieving. And the gospel of Luke, Luke goes to great lengths to show that Jesus is in fact alive. He's not a ghost showing up. He is not some spirit showing up. He, like us, like these hands that we have, has flesh, and has blood, and is something, right? He is something. And he eats this fish too, to show, not just that they can touch his hands and they can touch his feet, but that he eats. He's a human. His resurrected body fully is functional. He's back. The disciples, it's this thing where they're figuring out for the first time that everything that he's preached about for these three years has been true, has been real, has been substantive. His coming back in the substance that he comes back in is not just him coming back with a body, but it's the promises that he made coming into fulfillment. It's the promises that were made in the law, the promises that were made to Moses, to Aaron, to David, to Abraham. All of this is fulfilled in his resurrection and in his coming back and presenting himself to his followers. And they are so joyful and also disbelieving at the same time, holding these two things together. The promises that God makes, what we are told in this passage that the promises that God makes, promises of grace and peace, promises to care for creation, promises to make all things new, are fulfilled in this risen Lord. That cyclical way

of living comes out. The promises that are made to the people of Israel that are made by the prophets all come to fruition in this resurrected body, in this resurrected God. Christ fulfills promises and God is faithful. And I'm not sure about all of you, but I hear from people that on occasion promises are broken. I don't do this myself, never. But I hear that it happens. Many people are saying, I'll do the dishes when I get home and you're really tired. I'll water your plants while you're out of town in July and you come back and they're all dead. That's a personal one. They don't go to this church, I'll tell you that. But these promises that we make and so often break are not the promises that Jesus makes, are not the promises that God makes, are not the promises of peace that we are given when we are baptized by water in the Holy Spirit, it binds us together and brings us closer to God, it brings us closer to one another. The peace that Jesus gives is real and it plays on repeat, it plays every day and the peace plays in this loop that we so often need to hear. I think you need to hear it. If you've ever been at a crossroads in your life, taking a job, states away, unsure of what the future brings, peace be with you. If you've set awake at night trying to balance a budget that can't be balanced, peace be with you. If you've ever made or not made the decision to leave someone or have someone leave you, peace be with you. If the only option you're given is the aggressive form of treatment, peace be with you. When we gather today, when we gather on Sundays in this space, we do something together at some point in the service that makes some people a little antsy. We pass the peace. The priest stands up and says, the peace of the Lord be always with you and also with you is the response and you shake someone's hand, you slap someone on the back and you tell them peace and it can feel a little trite. It can feel a little, we're just kind of doing this thing. I'm touching hands with other people. I don't know about that and in general, these kind of things go on in my mind, maybe in years, while this is happening. But let me tell you, this used to be a kiss of peace that the church would share. It could be worse. It could be a lot

worse. We're already sharing a cup. I don't need anyone's mouth near mine.

But the people that study the liturgy have said that this is one of the oldest parts of when Christians gather together to offer each other peace, to say the peace of Christ be with you, because it's not just words. We are enacting what we hear in the gospel. We, in giving peace to one another, says a bishop from southern Turkey many, many years ago, in giving the peace to one person, you are giving Christ's peace to everyone in this room. In effect, we give it to everyone, and it's an acknowledgement that we have become a part of the body of Christ, that we, from one, are many and we share this body and we share this blood together. We are telling each other that we regard the needs of others as that they matter for the whole assembly, the needs of one matter for all because we are one body in Christ. It's like that tape that plays every single day for Drew Barrymore. Just to watch it, it orients her, and this peace does the same for us. It binds us together, reminds us there's a unity to what we do, a unity in Christ, a unity in the promises of God that are fulfilled by Jesus. That Christ has come to proclaim repentance and forgiveness of sins to everyone, and due to that cyclical way of life that exists, we are witnesses of these promises, just like the disciples who are witnesses of these promises. These promises that are fulfilled in that baptismal font and that are fulfilled on this altar when we break bread and when we share wine. Pray with me. Holy God, give us your peace. Give us the peace that only you can give that we might know you and that we might know others. We pray all these things in your Son's holy name. Amen.