

Thankful for Peace

Season of Thanks: Part 2 “Thankful for Peace”

Rev. Cameron D St.Michael – November 27, 2022

2nd Sunday of Advent

Readings: Isaiah 11:1-10; Romans 15:4-13; Matthew 3:1-12

Reflection: Psalm 72

Greeting: Go up on a high mountain, messenger Zion! Raise your voice and shout, messenger Jerusalem! Raise your voice and don't be afraid; Say to the cities of Judah, “Here is your God!” (Isaiah 40:9)

Prayer: In this season of Advent, we give thanks that you are with us, Lord. We come together to prepare for our Emmanuel, our God with us, that we may ready our hearts in your presence. Let us remember the words of the prophets as we prepare our hearts for hope, peace, joy, and love and help us to be thankful for the many ways you have blessed us and kept us. Strengthen us by your steadfast faithfulness that we may boldly proclaim your message of salvation. My we worship you in a spirit of truth and may we learn to love one another as we grow in our love for you, through Jesus Christ our savior. Amen.

Reflection: Psalm 72

I Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to a king's son. May he judge your people with righteousness and your poor with justice. May the mountains yield prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness. May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor. May he live while the sun endures and as long as the moon, throughout all generations. May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth. In his days may righteousness flourish and peace abound, until the moon is no more. May he have dominion from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. May his foes bow down before him, and his enemies lick the dust. May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles render him tribute; may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts. May all kings fall down before him, all nations give him service. For he delivers the needy when they call, the poor and those who have no helper. He has pity on the weak and the needy and saves the lives of the needy. From oppression and violence he redeems their life, and precious is their blood in his sight. Long may he live! May gold of Sheba be given to him. May prayer be made for him continually and blessings invoked for him all day long. May there be abundance of grain in the land; may it wave on the tops of the mountains; may its fruit be like Lebanon; and may people blossom in the cities like the grass of the field. May his name endure forever, his

fame continue as long as the sun. May all nations be blessed in him; may they pronounce him happy. (Psalm 72 NRSV)*

We read the words of Psalm 72 and we hear of finding peace with the Lord. That God cares for his people and delivers them from injustice. What does it mean to you to have peace in your heart? How do you share in the peace that you find in God's care? What does it mean to find peace in God's presence? What are some ways that you can share God's justice with others? How can we share in the hope of Christ this Advent?

Prayer: O God, help us to make this Advent be a season of thanks. May you help us to prepare our hearts for the coming of our Savior. May we find hope, peace, joy, and love as we share in your blessing. We ask that as we lay our joys and concerns before you that you will strengthen us by your spirit. We pray that you'll be with us in celebration and sorrow. May your love lift us up in both laughter and tears. And from the darkness may we see your great light in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Now let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

Sermon:

Our scripture readings for today come from the New Revised Standard Version Bible. Our first reading for today comes from Isaiah chapter 11 verses 1 through 10.

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see or decide by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge for the poor and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist and faithfulness the belt around his loins. The wolf shall live with the lamb; the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the lion will feed together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious. (Isaiah 11:1-10 NRSV)*

Our next reading for today comes from Romans chapter 15 verses 4 through 13.

For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. For I tell you that

Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the ancestors and that the gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "Therefore I will confess you among the gentiles and sing praises to your name"; and again he says, "Rejoice, O gentiles, with his people"; and again, "Praise the Lord, all you gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him"; and again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the gentiles; in him the gentiles shall hope." May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:4-13 NRSV)*

Our last reading for today comes from Matthew chapter 3 verses 1 through 12.

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.'" Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region around the Jordan were going out to him, and they were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore, bear fruit worthy of repentance, and do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. "I baptize you with water for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I, and I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." (Matthew 3:1-12 NRSV)*

This is the word of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God.

This On the second Sunday of Advent, we celebrate that we are thankful for peace. I think that this peace is something that is multi layered in that it's both a peace that we obtain now and a peace that we pray for. And this comes on the tail of last week when we discussed hope. And here we have a hope for peace and a thankfulness for peace. Today we'll be walking backwards through our readings beginning in Matthew. Here we have John the Baptist out by the Jordan, calling people to a baptism of repentance. And the people are coming to him they're baptized and confess their sins. One might ask where the peace is here. I would say it's right there. Because one of the things that we see is that when John is inviting these people to come and repent, they are changing their lives. They're confessing and turning their hearts towards God to try to live better lives. And there is a peace to be found in that journey. Bearing fruit worthy of repentance brings peace. Of course, when the Pharisees and the Sadducees, all the religious experts, come down as well John wants to know who warned them. But he doesn't withhold. No, he gives them the same offer but makes sure that they understand that their titles mean nothing if they don't bear fruit worthy of repentance. That they will not find peace if they do not change. And we see people going and changing their lives. John also tells them

somebody else is coming who is even greater, so they should prepare for that. Of course, he's talking about Christ.

In Paul's letter to the Romans, Paul talks about a hope and a peace for the people. And Paul makes reference to our reading from Isaiah. That Paul is praying for peace for the people he is writing to. That everything written in former days is for their encouragement. That they should welcome one another just as Christ has welcomed them. That it is a call open to all people. Paul brings this message to the Gentiles, this idea that peace and hope in God are for them. Paul goes not to the people who are "God's chosen," the Israelites, but to the people outside the circle. He says peace is for them too. That hope is for them. And he quotes from chapter 11 of Isaiah, our reading for today. A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse and a branch shall grow out of his roots. That he'll judge with righteousness and decide with equity for the meek of the earth. And people will find peace. Peace so great that it applies to everything. The wolf living with the lamb, the leopard laying down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together and a little child shall lead them. If that doesn't speak peace, I don't know what does. The cow and the bear graze and their young lay down together. The earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord. On that day, the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples that nations shall inquire of him. And this is the part that Paul was quoting. That the root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles. In him the Gentiles shall hope. Gentiles will find peace because God has declared that all are welcome. That all nations may find peace. That God has peace for everyone.

As I thought about all this, I started thinking, how do we prepare our hearts for peace? And how do we share the peace that we find in Christ? And I think it's a wonderful question because I think sometimes, we struggle to figure out how to share peace in chaotic times. And the holidays can feel chaotic. It can feel rushed and busy. It can feel like there's always something more to plan for and something more to do and that there's always catching up to do. And I think part of how we prepare our hearts for peace is by finding peace now, extending it to others, and letting that be our guide for the peace that we seek in the future. Sometimes I'll do this just by making sure that I take a moment just to sit. And it may seem silly but some nights I will just sit with just the Christmas tree on, and I read the Christmas story. It isn't very long to read the passages from Matthew and Luke, and sometimes I include the first part of John. I encourage you to try it. Because there's something about this familiar story, the birth of a child with the promise of peace. The declaration of peace on earth and goodwill to men. There's something about all those things that helps me to find calm in the midst of everything. And in those calm moments it helps me to think about how I can continue to share that peace with others. And it helps me to reflect on the ways that I want to make sure peace continues. I think about what that story really means to me and what it means for the world that I want to see. And what it would mean for the world to find peace. And maybe I can't do a lot. But I know I can at least do something. Maybe it's just giving somebody a hand with the door. Maybe it is giving money to a person on the street corner. Maybe it's calling a friend I haven't talked to in a

while. Maybe it is greeting a stranger with a friendly hello. Maybe it's something just as small as that, but if all of us did it every day, think of the peace we would spread. Maybe it's just telling somebody they're doing okay, because sometimes that's all we need to hear. You're doing okay, God loves you, and Merry Christmas. Maybe we think that won't change much. But maybe it changes one person's life. And one more person finds peace. And one more person shares that peace. And one more person gains hope. But if each of us tries, each of us reaches out to one person how many people would we reach? Just how far would it go and where would it end? If we can share the peace of Christ with others, shouldn't we? As we prepare our hearts for the birth of our Savior, certainly we can share that peace and all that it means to us. So let us be thankful for the peace that we have, thankful for the promise of peace, and thankful that we can share the peace of Christ. That anywhere and everywhere, all may know and prepare for the peace of Christmas. Amen.

Prayer of Confession and Pardon: God, you are with us even when we turn away from you. Guide us back into your loving arms. Judge us not by the perfection of our actions but show us mercy and love. We have strayed like lost sheep from your ways, failing both in what we have done and what we have failed to do. Bring us back into your fold that you may guide us and lead us in all things. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy upon us and forgive us. May we walk in your love and trust your ways. Amen.

Almighty God have mercy upon you. May the Lord forgive all your sins and lift you up in love through Jesus Christ our Lord, and by the Holy Spirit keep you in life eternal. Amen.

Offering: If you are so moved to make an offering, you may send it to the church treasurer, or you may send it to the PO Box listed below. We are still the church, and the church still needs your support to keep doing all the important work that we do.

Lord's Prayer

Dismissal with Blessing: May we go forth reflecting God's love in our lives as we go forth in the peace of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Our Current Series – Season of Thanks

Our current series is a look at the ways that God is a part of our lives, and all that God can do. We will spend five weeks exploring the ways that God acts. In them, we will see the ways God responds to us and how we can respond to God.

November 27th – *Thankful for Hope* – Isaiah 2:1-5; Romans 13:11-14; Matthew 24:36-44

December 4th – *Thankful for Peace* – Isaiah 11:1-10; Romans 15:4-13; Matthew 3:1-12

December 13th – *Thankful for Joy* – Isaiah 35:1-10; James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11

December 18th – *Thankful for Love* – Isaiah 7:10-16; Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-25

December 24th – *Thankful for a Child* – Isaiah 9:2-7; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-20

Prayer List

Rev Charliam Renner	Bishop Frank Beard	Our Conference	Our Healthcare Workers
Patti Corder and the Greenup Ambulance Crew		Eric Veach	Ed & Verna Titus
Henry Catey	Jake Kiser	Cindy Cisney	Tricia Adkins
Don Stewart	Ronnie Winstead	Lauren Stewart	Phyllis Gabel
Ruth Ann Finley	Tom Finley	Laura Carlen	Rosie Chancellor
Kenny Holmes	Chuck Hogan	Brittany Gilbert	Jeremy Klinger
Phil Hawickhorst	Ray Carr	Jane Williams	Alice Sherwood
Dean Carlen	Ross Matteson	Richard Durham	Carol Miller
Donna Carlen	Emily Blade	Tim Schnauzer	Steve Carlen
Connie Brown	Family of Leroy Kemper	Kyle Lehman	Kathy Hanks
Gary & Mary Winterrowd	Leo Smith	Sue & Bob Smyser	Larry Thompson
Nick & Leana Ochoa	Evelyn Sue Icenogle	Kristen & Zach Morecraft	Greg Williams
Martha Roberts	Charlie & Charlotte Baxter	Paul Schulte	

Rev Camron D St. Michael

<https://stmichael.pw>

cdstmichael@outlook.com

(316)530-3182 (call or text)

PO Box 54, Charleston IL, 61920

* Scripture quotations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

+ Scripture quotations are from the Common English Bible, Copyright © 2011 by Common English Bible.