

Week 4: Peace



Opening prayer

As we light our candle today, we pray for our troubled world, so full of conflict. Lord, help us to be a people of peace.

(Light the first, second, third and fourth candle on your Advent wreath.)

Scripture

In the countryside close by there were shepherds who lived in the fields and took turns to watch their flocks during the night. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them. They were terrified, but the angel said, “Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you good news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you: he is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.” And suddenly with the angel there was a great throng of the heavenly host, praising God and singing:

“Glory to God in the highest heaven
and peace to men who enjoy his favour”

(Luke 2: 8-14)

Reflection

“Do not be afraid.” With these beautiful words the angel of the Lord greets the shepherds and the heavenly host sing of peace on earth.

In our war-torn world, awash with conflict and division, many people are afraid. We see the suffering caused by conflict in countries such as Ukraine, Syria, Sudan and Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory.

But today we can also hope for restoration and healing, for the baby lying in the manger is the Prince of Peace.

This Christmas let us pray that that we will commit to God’s vision of a just peace and seek to build a world where no one need be afraid of violence, oppression or poverty.

For discussion

- When you picture peace, what images come to mind?
- What steps can we take to make a just peace a reality?
- Jesus is born amongst the oppressed and those in poverty. How does that impact our celebration of Christmas?

Closing prayer

We listen to your word
as it whispers in our hearts:

“Do not be afraid.”

Welcome, Lord, prince of peace.

Grant us the courage
to build peace in our homes,
our local community and our world.

Welcome, Lord, prince of peace.

Lead us in your ways,
as together we make a change
and share your peace with all.

Welcome, Lord, prince of peace.

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