

Second Sunday of Advent “Light of Peace”

“Light of Light”

Advent is a time to turn away from meaningless distractions.

Prince of Peace, clear our minds and calm our hearts.

Advent is a time to notice and count our many blessings.

Prince of Peace, help us recognize all that is good in our lives.

Advent is a time to let go of bitterness and resentment.

Prince of Peace, Make us slow to anger and quick to forgive.

Advent is a time to spread peace to the world around us.

Prince of Peace, open our eyes to the needs of others.

Today we light two candles– the candle of hope and the candle of peace. This second candle reminds us that in sending Christ, God sent us peace that passes all understanding. Peace of heart and mind, because through God’s grace, we were given a savior. Because of Christ, we can live our lives with a sense of calm assurance, and we can be instruments that spread peace out into the world.

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God of light, we thank you for the sacrifice you made in sending your Son, and we pray today that you will fill us with a deep sense of peace. Lighten our anxious moments. Help us keep our minds focused on your love and take away our feelings of hopelessness and despair. May we remember that we are your instruments of peace and help us to spread that peace to the world among us. Amen.

Scripture: Matthew 3:1-12 Romans 15:1-13

Romans 15:4-13 New International Version

⁴ For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope. ⁵ May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, ⁶ so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷ Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. ⁸ For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, so that the promises made to the patriarchs might be confirmed ⁹ and, moreover, that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written: "Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing the praises of your name." ¹⁰ Again, it says, "Rejoice, you Gentiles, with his people." ¹¹ And again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles; let all the peoples extol him." ¹² And again, Isaiah says, "The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; in him the Gentiles will hope." ¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 3:1-12

3 In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea ² and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." ³ This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: "A voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'" ⁴ John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. ⁶ Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. ⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸ Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. ⁹ And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.'"

I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. ¹⁰ The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. ¹¹ “I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

Sermon: “Peace”

Silent Pastoral and Lord’s Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Invitation to Generosity: Peace makes us generous. God’s abundance pours through us to our neighbors, just as God’s love showers us with blessing. As each of us gives what we can, we know that our community is only as resilient as our most vulnerable neighbor.

Offertory: Archer - Winchester New

*Offering Response: NCH #420 “We Praise You, O God” vs. 1

*Prayer of Dedication and Thanksgiving: **Emmanuel, hear our prayer! We bring these gifts before you to spread peace throughout our homes, our communities, and our world. On every street corner, beside rivers, lakes, oceans, at the top of your tallest mountains, and dwelling below the cliffs, your people are in need. Take these gifts to strengthen our church and bring relief to your beloved children. Amen.**

*Holy Communion Hymn: NCH# 349 “I Come with Joy”

Prayer of Communion: **Gracious and Eternal God, we share this meal as a symbol of Peace. In each of us, we find the beloved, the follower, the doubter, and the betrayer, and yet we know that we are welcome at this table. This meal is open to all, that it may offer sustenance as well as refuge. May we leave this table**

refreshed, ready to take your radical ministry of extravagant hope, everlasting peace, exuberant joy, and abundant love into the world. Amen.

Sacrament of Holy Communion: Bach - Wachet Auf

Invitation to Communion

In the Advent season, we are waiting for God's time to be ripe:

The time when swords are turned into plowshares,

The time when peace will reign on earth,

The time when God's kingdom is fully upon us.

While we wait for that time, we need bread for the journey.

Peace, in our hearts. Love, in our relationships. Hope, as we go out to a broken world. Joy, in our community faith.

As we prepare to our minds and hearts to celebrate Christ's feast, join me in prayer

Communion Prayer

God be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to God.

Let us give thanks to God most high.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Eternal God, you created us, and gave us your son, Jesus Christ. We remember him, and celebrate that Emanuel is coming soon. You created the world, gave us creation to love and care for, and blessed our ancestors with your spirit. **Best of all, you give us the gift of yourself.**

We say yes to your call. For your help along the way, **we say thank you.**

Full of gratitude, we pray, in the company of saints and angels,

All: Holy, Holy Holy, Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

During Jesus' life, he sat at the table with friends, in their homes. At this communion table, however, he is the host. There is no table like the one God prepares for us. So we remember it now.

On the night in which Jesus was betrayed, he gathered his disciples. He took bread, and giving thanks to God, he broke it, saying, this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way he also took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."