



'Worship at home' December 4th 2022

This Sunday marks the
second Sunday in Advent,
and we anticipate the coming Christmas
celebration, and await the fulfillment of
God's kingdom in our world.



Lighting a candle reminds us of the presence of Christ
in our world, and in our lives.

Opening

On this second Sunday of Advent,
we anticipate the celebration of Christmas:

Christ has come.

Signs of peace and new life surround us,
sometimes unexpectedly:

Christ is with us.

We are called to live as a people of peace
to bring peace to others:

Christ will come again.

Come, and fill us with peace.

Amen

In the 8th century BCE, there was some conflict as the Assyrian empire sought to expand and take over smaller nations such as Israel and Judah. The people longed for peace, for a time when there would be no more conflict and suffering. Many nations in our world currently know conflict and suffering. You may have been following news of the war in Ukraine, or the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, or Myanmar. However, peace is more than the absence of war. Peace is also about wellbeing, of individuals and of communities. Peace can be an attitude, a choice we make in how we respond to what is going on around and even within us.

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Peace is not the
absence of conflict,
it is the ability to
handle conflict by
peaceful means.

Ronald Reagan

The prophet Isaiah brings a vision of God's peaceable kingdom, where those in conflict will find peace, reconciliation and renewal.

Isaiah 11:1-10

The royal line of David is like a tree that has been cut down; but just as new branches sprout from a stump, so a new king will arise from among David's descendants. The spirit of the Lord will give him wisdom and the knowledge and skill to rule his people. He will know the Lord's will and honour him, and find pleasure in obeying him. He will not judge by appearance or hearsay; he will judge the poor fairly and defend the rights of the helpless. At his command the people will be punished, and evil persons will die. He will rule his people with justice and integrity. Wolves and sheep will live together in peace, and

leopards will lie down with young goats. Calves and lion cubs will feed together, and little children will take care of them. Cows and bears will eat together, and their calves and cubs will lie down in peace. Lions will eat straw as cattle do. Even a baby will not be harmed if it plays near a poisonous snake. On Zion, God's sacred hill, there will be nothing harmful or evil. The land will be as full of knowledge of the Lord as the seas are full of water. A day is coming when the new king from the royal line of David will be a symbol to the nations. They will gather in his royal city and give him honour.

Good News Bible



*Peaceable Kingdom Edward Hicks
c1834 Public Domain*

The images used here are unexpected: wolves, leopards and lions are predators of sheep, goats and calves. It would not be anticipated that they would get along. These dreams of peace seem far from us, whose lives are filled with competing expectations, stresses, complex relationships, and whose world is full of ambition, power struggles and conflict. We too are waiting and longing for such peace. 2

**Reflect on your own experience of
different groups or people
who do not always get along well.**



You might think of political parties, work colleagues, or family members. There are many examples in our society where people are divided, and seek to overpower or discredit each other instead of to understand or build up. It can be so easy for us to be drawn into taking sides and exacerbating conflict. You may know for yourself the pain this can bring.

Isaiah's vision is one where we will all get along; where traditional predators will not attack; where we won't have to live defensively, always looking out for our own safety, but can build relationships of trust and love. This vision goes beyond humankind to include reconciliation for all of God's creation.



Individually, we may not be able to bring peace between countries, or even reconciliation within our families, but we can choose to live as we can at peace with others, at peace with God, at peace with ourselves. We can seek to listen, forgive, and love generously, rather than react defensively or shut ourselves off from others. We can seek to respect and value our differences rather than turning them into conflict.

Prayer

God of hope, we come to you in the midst of a world fraught with troubles. Although the darkness is powerful, open our eyes, Lord, to the light of your presence. Give us faith to stand against the voices of division and violence. Through your Spirit remake us into hope-filled disciples, discovering lives attune to your wonder, and sparking in others a desire to know you more. In the name of the One who comes to us, we pray, Amen.

- Rev. Nancy J [wonderings through life and other such nonsense](https://ruminari.wordpress.com/2010/12/03/advent-2a-call-to-worship/)

<https://ruminari.wordpress.com/2010/12/03/advent-2a-call-to-worship/> 3

When despair for the world grows in me
 and I wake in the night at the least sound
 in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
 I go and lie down where the wood drake
 rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
 I come into the peace of wild things
 who do not tax their lives with forethought
 of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
 And I feel above me the day-blind stars
 waiting with their light. For a time
 I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

- Wendell Berry from *Collected Poems* (North Point Press), © 1985.
<https://grateful.org/resource/the-peace-of-wild-things/>

This Advent, make time to be attentive to God in the things and the people around you. Open your eyes to God's presence in your life. Seek God's ways before you respond. Trust in the promise and assurance of the Holy Spirit at work in all things, at all times.

**Unexpected joy bursting in
 birthing new beginnings
 creating love
 renewing life
 All will be well
 God is here**

- Rev Sue Ellis

Prayer

Pray for peace for

our world

our country

our church

our family

ourselves



Closing

from Romans 15:3

May God, the source of hope, fill you with all joy and peace by means of your faith in him, so that your hope will continue to grow by the power of the Holy Spirit. Go in peace. Amen.