

PEACE

Last week, we began the season of Advent by lighting the first candle – the candle of HOPE—remembering the hope born to us in Bethlehem. This week, we light the second candle – the candle of PEACE. God brings us peace as we personally and collectively open our lives to the Prince of Peace – Jesus the Christ.

(The candles are lit.)

Luke 1:78-79

“Because of our God’s deep compassion, the dawn from heaven will break upon us, to give light to those who are sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide us on the path of peace.”

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
Our spirits by thy justice here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death’s dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

Devotional:

“Peace has come to mean the time when there aren’t any wars or even when there aren’t any major wars. Beggars can’t be choosers; we’d most of us settle for that. But in Hebrew peace, shalom, means fullness, means having everything you need to be wholly and happily yourself.

One of the titles by which Jesus is known is Prince of Peace, and he used the word himself in what seem at first glance to be two radically contradictory utterances. On one occasion he said to the disciples, ‘Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.’ (Matthew 10:34) And later on, the last time they ate together, he said to them, ‘Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you’ (John 14:27).

The contradiction is resolved when you realize that for Jesus peace seems to have meant not the absence of struggle but the presence of love.” (From Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking: A Seeker’s ABC*. HarperSanFrancisco, 1993, p. 63.)

Reflect:

1. Recall a time when you felt deeply at peace. What factors gave you that peace?
2. What are the things that most rob you of peace?
3. In what ways can the hope we focused on with the first candle of Advent be a force God uses to give you greater peace now?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, when you grew up, you modeled a life of peace and trust. Help me to keep reordering my life, finding my peace in your purposes rather than losing it in my fears. Amen.

“Here Comes Santa Claus”

Verses 3 & 4

Here comes Santa Claus
Here comes Santa Claus
Right down Santa Claus Lane
He doesn't care if you're rich or poor
For he loves you just the same

Santa knows that we're all God's children
That makes everything right
Fill your hearts with a Christmas cheer
Cause Santa Claus comes tonight

Here comes Santa Claus
Here comes Santa Claus
Right down Santa Claus Lane
He'll come around when the chimes ring out
Then it's Christmas morn again

Peace on earth will come to all
If we just follow the light
Let's give thanks to the Lord above
Cause Santa Claus comes tonight

“Let There Be Peace on Earth”

Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me
Let there be peace on earth
The peace that was meant to be

With God our Creator,
Children all are we
Let us walk with each other
In perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me
Let this be the moment now.
With ev'ry step I take
Let this be my solemn vow

To take each moment and live
Each moment in peace eternally
Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me