

PEACE CAME TO EARTH

MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 3

December 20, 2023

“OUR PEACE RESTS ON HIM ALONE”

HYMN No. 352 **“Let the Earth Now Praise the Lord” (vss. 1,2,4)**

**Let the earth now praise the Lord, Who has truly kept his word
And at last to us did send Christ, the sinner’s help and friend.**

**What the fathers most desired, What the prophets’ heart inspired,
What they longed for many a year, Stands fulfilled in glory here.**

**As your coming was in peace, Quiet, full of gentleness,
Let the same mind dwell in me Which is yours eternally.**

OPENING SENTENCES *Isaiah 9:6; Philippians 4:7*

P: For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;

C: and the government shall be upon His shoulder,

P and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor,

C: Mighty God,

P: Everlasting Father,

C: Prince of Peace.

**P: The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and
your minds in Christ Jesus.**

C: Amen.

PSALM *Psalms 126*

P: When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,

C: we were like those who dream.

P: Then our mouth was filled with laughter,

C: and our tongue with shouts of joy;

P: then they said among the nations, “The LORD has done great things for them.”

C: The LORD has done great things for us; we are glad.

P: Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like streams in the Negeb!

C: Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy!

P: He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing,

C: shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us pray.

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come, that by the light of Your Holy Word, we may be drawn to Jesus, who steps into the chaos of our world, that we may know the peace that rests on Him alone. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Prince of Peace, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 9:1–7

P A reading from Isaiah, the ninth chapter.

¹But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time He brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time He has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

**²The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shined.**

**³You have multiplied the nation;
You have increased its joy;
they rejoice before You
as with joy at the harvest,
as they are glad when they divide the spoil.**

**⁴For the yoke of his burden,
and the staff for his shoulder,
the rod of his oppressor,
You have broken as on the day of Midian.**

**⁵For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult
and every garment rolled in blood
will be burned as fuel for the fire.**

⁶For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon His shoulder,
and His name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
⁷Of the increase of His government and of peace
there will be no end,
on the throne of David and over His kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

P: O Lord, have mercy on us.
C: Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING *Romans 12:9–21*

P: A reading from Romans, the twelfth chapter.

⁹Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. ¹⁰Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹²Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. ¹³Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be conceited. ¹⁷Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. ¹⁸If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord." ²⁰To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." ²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

P: O Lord, have mercy on us.
C: Thanks be to God.

VERSE *Psalm 85:8*

P: Alleluia. Let me hear what God the LORD will speak,
C: for He will speak peace to His people. Alleluia.

THIRD READING *Matthew 10:34–39*

P: A reading from Matthew, the tenth chapter.

³⁴“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. ³⁶And a person’s enemies will be those of his own household.

³⁷Whoever loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. ³⁸And whoever does not take his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me. ³⁹Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

P: O Lord, have mercy on us.
C: Thanks be to God.

READINGS RESPONSE

P: In many and various ways, God spoke to His people of old by the prophets.
C: But now in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son.

HYMN No. 357 “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” (vss. 1, 6–7)

Oh, come, oh, come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the son of God appear. (refrain)

Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel!

Oh, come, our Dayspring from on high, And cheer us by your drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, And death’s dark shadows put to fight. (Ref)

Oh, come, Desire of nations, bind In one the hearts of all mankind;
Oh, bid our sad divisions cease, And be Thyself our King of Peace. (refrain)

SERMON “Our Peace Rests in Him Alone”

OFFERING

ZECHARIAH'S SONG Luke 1:76–79

- P:** Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist prophesied about his future son's role as the Herald proclaiming the Lord Jesus who would come to bring salvation to the world, saying:
- C:** And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
- P:** to give knowledge of salvation to his people
in the forgiveness of their sins,
- C:** because of the tender mercy of our God,
whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high
- P:** to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace."

LORD'S PRAYER

- P** Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:
- C:** 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 trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
- For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

COLLECT FOR PEACE

- P:** O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works,
C: give to us, Your servants, that peace which the world cannot give,
P: that our hearts may be set to obey Your commandments and also that we, being
defended from the fear of our enemies,
C: may live in peace and quietness;
P through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the
Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C: Amen.

BLESSING OF THE LORD *Isaiah 9:6b*

P: His name shall be called

C: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

P: Go forth then, children of God, living securely in Him and in harmony with one another, rejoicing in His presence and knowing His perfect peace. The blessing of almighty God—the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit—be with you and remain with you always.

C: Amen.

HYMN No. 334 “O Lord, How Shall I Meet You” (vss. 1 & 5) TUNE: Angels Story –527)

O Lord, how shall I meet you, How welcome you aright?
Your people long to greet you, My hope, my heart's delight!
Oh, kindle, Lord most holy, Your lamp within my breast
To do in spirit lowly All that may please you best.

Sin's debt, that fearful burden, Cannot His Love erase;
Your guilt the Lord will pardon And cover by His grace.
He comes, for you procuring The peace of sin forgiv'n,
His children thus securing Eternal life in heav'n.

SENDING

P: Go in peace to Love and Serve the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God!