

PEACE CAME TO EARTH

MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 3
December 18, 2024
“OUR PEACE RESTS ON HIM ALONE”

AS WE GATHER

During one of the busiest and most stressful times of the year, we pause this third week of Advent and consider the source of real and abiding peace. This harmony with both God and others comes to us neither through our exertions of control nor through our best-laid plans, but through the reign of our Mighty God come near to us in Jesus, His one and only Son. The fulfillment of our everlasting Father’s perfectly executed plan to save the world is revealed to us in the straw of the Bethlehem manger and then, some thirty-three years later, in the wood and nails of Calvary’s cross. Amid the disorder of our chaotic lives, our Prince of Peace gives us what the world can never give. Let us center our hearts and minds on our Wonderful Counselor, who freely gives His everything so that our peace may rest on Him alone.

A TIME TO PRAISE

P: In this season of Advent, we look to the past, to the present, and to the future.

C: **We look to the past, for we celebrate the birth of a child born 2000 years ago.**

P: We look to the present, for Christ is here today, dwelling within the hearts of those who love Him.

C: **We look to the future, for He will come again in the clouds of heaven, to bring this age to an end and to take His own to Himself.**

P: Lord Jesus, as we come to our worship during this season of Advent, we pray that this time will be more than just a nostalgic remembrance of a tiny baby in a manger.

C: **May we be moved and touched by that Infant-King and may we truly accept His gracious rule in our lives.**

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

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 *Psalm 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.

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.

SECOND 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)

SERMON “Joash: A child with a Destiny,”

Readings: 2 Kings 11:1-3;
 2 Kings 12:1-9,
 2 Kings 13-21

OFFERING

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

P: Lord God, Your Word bears witness to the lives of saints who exemplify Christ. Empower us to show Christ to others by the way we live our lives, by the words that come from our mouths, and by the unconditional love we share with others.

C: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus, come!

P: Gracious God, we often do not see the results of expressing our faith. Give us boldness and courage to follow Your guidance as we serve You and others. Increase our confidence and contentment, knowing that whatever we do in Your name is not in vain.

C: Amen. Come Lord Jesus, come!

P: As we approach the Nativity of Christ, prepare our hearts through the proclamation of Your Word to joyfully and humbly receive this infant Jesus.

C: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus, come!

P: Send Your divine peace to those who are grieving. Give them the comfort that comes from knowing Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. While many among us find these days filled with tension and anxiety, console them with Your presence and our words and actions of comfort and support.

C: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus, come!

P: Shine Your light on our nation and all nations, that people of every language may see You as the loving God who fulfills His promise of salvation. Bless us now and keep us in Your eternal care. In Jesus' Name,

C: Amen.

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.

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 T Son, and the Holy Spirit—be with you and remain with you always.

C: Amen.

HYMN No. 334 St. 1,2,3,4 "O Lord, How Shall I Meet You"
(TUNE: "Angels Story" – LSB 527)