



*“... and the life was the light of all people”*  
John 1:4b

## *Facing the Climate Challenge with Peace*

**Today is the second Sunday of Advent, as we walk the path towards the light of Christmas. As we walk, let us watch out for each other, sharing our love with our neighbours near and far.**

The story of John the Baptist takes us into the wilderness a place of repentance. As we follow John into the wilderness of today, we are called to repentance, to turn away from the greed and violence that is causing much harm to the planet.

Through our prayers, actions and gifts, we can stand with people on the frontline of climate change and let hope flow this Christmas.

### **Call to Worship**

E te whanau a te Karaiti,

We gather with hope in the presence of God. We seek justice and long for new life.

Let us worship God.

### **Lighting the Advent Candle of Peace**



On this second Sunday of Advent we remember the peace we find in God, and the gifts of peace we offer to others.

### **Read the Partner Story**

Il Omar worries about having enough water for her family and animals. The Israeli authorities only allow her community to take limited water from their wells on the West Bank, in the Occupied Palestine Territories. Like other Palestinian communities they have to purchase water because these authorities will not let them dig new wells, install rainwater tanks, repair leaky pipes or extend water infrastructure to other homes.

The Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees has had some success in negotiating water improvements with funds donated from overseas partners including CWS. In Gaza the water poverty is much worse. In this climate crisis, we stand with people in need of water justice. Together we join with others to make peace.

### Light the candle

#### Together:

God of peace and gentleness;  
May we be peacemakers so that all  
people have opportunities for fullness of  
life.  
Give us strength to offer peace to our  
world,  
in word and in action.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen

## Lectionary Thoughts

"Peace" is the theme for this Sunday, and today's readings give us a good sense of what this word means in the Bible. Peace is not brought about by submission or by being silenced or by conformity. Peace is brought about by justice: by setting things right, by getting the relationships between God, people and creation in harmony.

### Isaiah 11:1-10

The Prophet here is looking towards a new leader who will see behind outward appearances and the world's loudest voices to the truth of how things are, and will set it right. When justice fills the earth, then peace will come of a quality and beauty beyond our imaginings.

### Psalm 72

The Psalmist prays for the sort of leader the Prophet spoke of: one who will bring justice, and therefore peace, and therefore prosperity, to the land. Here in the psalm we see clearly how justice and the land and faith are interconnected. The earthly king judging people with righteousness is linked with the mountains yielding prosperity, and the whole is conceived as a gift from God.

### Romans 15: 4-13

Paul knew the deep practical difficulties of establishing peace. His ministry constantly involved reconciling two radically different cultures: that of Jews and Gentiles. But his conception of peace was of *harmony*, not of a single melody. It is in weaving the different strands of music together that we can achieve the richness and glory of a symphony.

### Matthew 3:1-12

If peace comes when things are 'set right,' this also involves repentance: setting things right within ourselves. Since John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus, it appears that repentance is the first step towards true peace, a part of our preparation.

## Intercessions

- For those working on the land
- For indigenous people whose land has been confiscated or violated
- For the people who live in the Holy Land
- For places of conflict

- For the upholding of human rights
- For places where floods are prevalent
- For places where water is depleted
- For peace in our world
- For the safety of all people
- For the churches to live in peace and witness to the source of peace, Jesus Christ

## Blessing

May the peace of God grant us wisdom.  
 May the peace of God guide our way.  
 May the peace of God bring us together.  
 May the peace of God bless all creation.  
 Amen.

## Music

AA Alleluia Aotearoa  
 CAHON Complete Anglican Hymns  
 Old and New  
 CH4 Church Hymnary 4<sup>th</sup> edition  
 CoC Carol our Christmas

- Come now O Prince of peace (Geonyong Lee) CH4 275
- Hark a herald voice (Wm Monk) CAHON 263
- On Jordan's bank CAHON 527/CH4 334
- Wait for the Lord (Taize) CAHON 949/CH4 276

## Activity

- Read the [partner story](#) or talk about recent tensions and conflict in Israel Palestine, acknowledging the Holy Land of today.

- Paint more banners with messages of peace for our world to take home or add to the decorations at church.

## For Discussion

- Isaiah paints a picture of a world where wild animals live alongside others that might be dinner. Map some of the places of conflict in the world – and share stories of peacemakers.
- The climate crisis is destroying homes and livelihoods. The lack of safe water is denying people a basic human right and sometimes their lives. What more can we do as a family or church to “Prepare the Way of the Lord”?
- Can you identify people or communities in the ‘wilderness’ of conflict and the climate crisis who need peace? You could end by inviting people to each light a candle for peace at the front of the church.

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