

In the beginning was the Word...

An Advent & Christmas Course from the Diocese of Aberdeen & Orkney



Peace

Wednesday 6th December 2023



Photo: Machir Bay beach, Islay (taken by Ruth Green)

Scripture: Isaiah 25.6-9

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-matured wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-matured wines strained clear. And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death for ever. Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken. It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the Lord for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil;
for you are with me; your rod and your staff— they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

To reflect:

We are moving to the end of a difficult year that has seemed to be dominated by war and chaos. As we prepare to celebrate Jesus' arrival on earth, we remember that with him came peace - because he is peace.

But the Prince of Peace is more than just a mere comforting calm in the chaos of the world and our lives. His is a powerful, world-changing kind of peace, which is proactive and revolutionary.

Peace is not just the absence of war, but something better in its place. Peace enters our lives in a miraculous bundle of baby, born into a world of political unrest, military dictatorships, and death threats. And here we are 2000 years later, in a world that has sadly changed little. We must continue to pray for peace and reconciliation. Stillness and quiet helps us to invite peace into our souls.

Peace restores us back to wellness and wholeness. We read in Isaiah that 'the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces...Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us...let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation'.

As we receive this gift of peace through Jesus, we are called to be proactive peacemakers, speaking out for justice and reconciliation. This is a peace that is available to everyone. The Lord 'makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul'.

As we look forward to an uncertain Christmas, and look back on a year full of injustice, hatred and fear, we need to focus on how we can proclaim that peace is here. 2000 years ago a baby was born in a world hurting just like ours. Can we find ways to break down barriers and connect with others - those like us and those very different. As the Psalm says, everyone has a seat at this table, prepared before us.

Praying for peace among the nations

Almighty God our heavenly Father, guide the nations of the world into the way of justice and truth, and establish among them that peace which is the fruit of righteousness, that they may become the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

(<https://www.bcponline.org/Misc/Prayers.html>)

To Listen:

Adagietto Symphony 5 by Gustav Mahlar <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Les39aIKbzE>

Adagio for Strings by Samuel Barber

<https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-bd&q=adagio+for+strings+by+samuel+barber+youtube#vhid=HJJWwCqBq5TKRM&vsid=videos-3a5bc994>

The word for each day (3-25 December is taken from Advent Word 2023 #adventword).

...and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.