



The 2nd Sunday of Advent – Being Present with Peace

Prelude

The Child

Gathering— In our Advent series, we are celebrating the gift of being truly present — to each other and to the call of God to make this world a better place. We can be the gift of presence with those who are experiencing life as less-than-peaceful. But this might also be true of how we are personally feeling in this moment. Our lives can feel a bit chaotic or in need of a makeover. The Good News is that God is continually making a way for do-overs. In this we can find peace, even when life doesn't feel so peaceful. This week we focus on what it means to be a gift of non-anxious presence for those who need it most.

Advent Wreath

Ted Schory

Chorus:

*What can I give Him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a Wise [One], I would do my part;
Yet what can I give Him: I will give my heart.*

Reader 1: We unwrap a present on this second Sunday of Advent with great anticipation for the gift that God will reveal.

Let us open our hearts as we open the gift!

Reader 2: The promise of Peace is the Divine Gift we receive.

So, what will we do with it?

Reader 1: The gift of Christ's peace reminds us that we can have serenity even in the midst of non-peaceful situations.

Peace is not simply the absence of conflict.

Peace is an ever-present gift that we can open at any time when we stop, breathe, and trust that we are never alone.

And the gift of peace we can give is to be present for those who feel alone.

We light this Candle of Peace as a sign that we will be
Present with Peace in the world.

Reader 1: As we welcome the light, join us in singing our Advent chorus:

Chorus:

*What can I give Him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a Wise [One], I would do my part;
Yet what can I give Him: I will give my heart.*

Prayer of Presence

Reader 2: Holy Living Light of God,
you are our Peaceful Presence.
Let this peace grow in our lives each day,
so we can be a Present of Peace to others.
Unwrap and open our hearts.
May it be so.
Amen.

Gathering Song

Prepare the Way of the Lord (3x), 174

A Time of Prayer—We too often find ourselves multitasking or obsessing about something that isn't quite right or settled or the particular way we like it. We are very accustomed to a preoccupied mind that often has little peace. In this season, we will give ourselves a respite from this pace as we slow down in this prayer time, taking on a more peaceful rhythm. Let us pray... In this prayerful, present moment, we train our attention on those who are in distress. We pray this week for...*[continue with the prayer concerns of your community and the world]*. In this prayerful, present moment, we train our attention on thanksgiving and joy. We give thanks this week for...*[continue with the prayers of gratitude of your community and the world]*. In this prayerful, present moment we ask you, Christ Jesus, the Greatest Gift of All, to help us savor our journey toward the celebration of Christmas. Help us recognize and create moments of sweet presence rather than filling the voids with the things that do not last. Help us to stop, notice what we are

experiencing, and accept it with open hearts and minds. In doing this, we allow you to meet us in the right here, right now, right where we are...

The Lord's Prayer (unison)—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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Choir

Carol for Advent (What Child is This?)

We Hear God's Word—Mark 1:1-8 (NRSV)

Collin Bennington

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

² As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;

³ the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

“Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight” ’,

⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, ‘The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.’

Meditation

Being Present with Peace

Hymn

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear, 191

We Respond to God's Word with Our Giving

Invitation—Let us bring forth our gifts this day—gifts of our resources, our time, our talent, our very lives—that through this ministry to which Christ has called us God's presence in this world might be made known.

December Benevolence—The Christmas Fund

Doxology

We Give Thanks—God of peace, bless these gifts that we bring before you this day. Use these gifts that your peace might be made known in this world through this ministry to which you have called us. Help us to be present in our community as we live out the mission you have given us. With gratitude we lift up these gifts to you. Amen.

Hymn

Hark! The Herald, Angels Sing, 185

Benediction

“As we strip away the cluttered surface of our lives
and become more present in the moment,
we may be disturbed by what we can now see in the open vista,
especially the suffering of “the least of these.”

We are no longer numb to the cries of those hurting.
We ache for the violence humans do to one another and to the earth.
We see all people and all creation held within God’s love and life.
Our comfortable lives are disrupted as we ask new, hard questions.
But being more mindfully present will also bring greater awareness
of God’s presence, peace, and clarity in the midst of it all.”

[adapted from Amy Oden, Right Here, Right Now]

So now go and be truly present
so you may be a gift of presence for others.
That’s all that is expected —
that the gift that is YOU
is the best gift you can give.
In the name of the Holy Presence,
the Divine Gift,
and the Spirit of Peace that is just waiting for us
to unwrap abundant life.
Amen.

Postlude

Mary’s Little Boy Child