

LAIRG CHURCH OF SCOTLAND & ROGART (ST CALLANS) CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
SCO20871 and SCO10035

6th December Advent 2 PEACE

Call to worship

Advent God, come amongst us.
God of hope, shine your light upon us,
Flickering, like a candle flame,
Advent God, we put our hope in you.
Amen.

Lighting our Advent Candles

In the beauty of a burnt-orange sunrise, in the lilting laughter of friends around a table, in the flash of clarity that turns on the light of insight and leads us towards wisdom, we find the peace that passes all understanding. But there are still things that we need to understand. Help us to hear you in the stories of those who struggle. Peace is what the prophets foretold. Peace is what is sacrificed when profit takes precedence.

Light Candles 1 & 2 **We light a candle for peace and pray for the courage to stand up for it.**

In this second week of Advent, as the waiting and expectation heighten, deepen our desire for peace. Like the wise called to journey in those early dawning days, may we seek, strive and search for peace. Like the prophets old and new, may we cry out for its coming.

HYMN Peace is flowing like a river

1 Peace is flowing like a river,
Flowing out of you and me;
Flowing out into the desert,
Setting all the captives free.

4 Alleluia, alleluia,
Alleluia, alleluia,
Alleluia, alleluia,
Allelu, alleluia.

2 His love is flowing like a river,
Flowing out of you and me;
Flowing out into the desert,
Setting all the captives free.

5. His peace is flowing like a river,
Flowing out of you and me;
Flowing out into the desert,
Setting all the captives free.

3 His healing's flowing like a river,
Flowing out of you and me;
Flowing out into the desert,
Setting all the captives free.

Andrew Moore
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Prayers

Holy God,
Quieten our minds from their ceaseless chatter, Still us now as you calmed the storm...

[Pause]

We come before you today in awe and wonder knowing our words can never be enough, but aware that they will be acceptable in your sight.

[Pause]

We approach you with thankful hearts for reminding us that you are coming, that we are not forgotten... that despite the worst we can throw at you, you still come.

[Pause]

Our penalty is paid. Straighten our highways, raise up our valleys, and make our rough places smooth.

[Pause]

Help us to prepare a place for you... in our hearts, in our street, in our school, in our workplace, in our nation, in our world. Amen.

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Readings

Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13

¹ Lord, you were favourable to your land; you restored the fortunes of Jacob. ² You forgave the iniquity of your people; you pardoned all their sin.

⁸ Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts. ⁹ Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him, that his glory may dwell in our land. ¹⁰ Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other. ¹¹ Faithfulness will spring up from the ground, and righteousness will look down from the sky. ¹² The Lord will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase. ¹³ Righteousness will go before him, and will make a path for his steps.

Isaiah 9 : 6 - 7

⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷ Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end.

He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.

The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

Reflection

As I mentioned last week, during these Sundays in Advent I am going to be looking at just a few of the many different names given to Jesus. As we are reflection on the theme of peace on the second Sunday in Advent it is perhaps not surprising that the name I've chosen for today is 'Prince of Peace'.

During his time on earth, Jesus restored peace everywhere he went. He calmed tumultuous storms; he brought healing to the sick; he raised the dead to life; he forgave sinners their sins.

Isaiah prophetically calls the coming Messiah the Prince of Peace and the angels announcing the birth of Jesus declare 'on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.' Jesus came to restore not just peace as we understand a cessation of hostilities, but a rich, abiding harmony of life. His first coming began this process of restoring peace between us and God; his second coming will bring wholeness as he intended his creation to be when he first set the universe in motion.

In contrast to human history filled with war, gloom and despair, the reign of Jesus will be marked by flourishing peace, wholeness and delight. Isaiah 9 describes the shift from gloom and darkness to the Messianic Age, and Malachi describes a time when the 'sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. Jesus' rule will restore well-being to individuals and to society as a whole when he brings worldwide peace in his future kingdom on the new earth.

But Jesus reign of peace is not reserved for his future kingdom; it begins here and now for all those who follow him. The Prince of Peace brings us peace with God, the end of spiritual enmity and striving to secure God's favour through our good works, as well as peace of mind and heart, a state of being at rest despite difficult circumstances because we know that God is in control. In fact the very night Jesus was betrayed, in his last teaching moments with his disciples, Jesus promised them peace, not as the world offers it, but as only he can give. No matter what would happen, they could rest and enjoy sweet fellowship with God, which would then create ripple effects in their relationships with the world around them.

We live the present reality of God's kingdom, pushing back the kingdom of darkness and bringing to fruition the peace of Jesus. Just as he is the Prince of Peace, so he calls us to be makers of peace all around us. Though the world may be caught up in anxiety and worry we

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can rest securely in the knowledge that Jesus is making all things right, and we can participate with him in bringing peace to a broken world as we look forward to the future kingdom of peace.

Prayer

What a beautiful picture you paint for us Jesus. I can't wait for your reign to begin and for all the ugliness of sin to disappear. But in the here and now fill me with your peace and help me to bring peace in all my interactions. Where there is worry, bring reassurance of your provision. Where there is strife, bring to mind your humility. Where there is bickering, bring to your hearts your love. Be our peace. Amen

Prayers of intercession

Leader: Gracious God,

Response: **Speak peace to us today.**

God, You have been favourable to your people
In your grace pardoning us for the times we have neglected you,
Ourselves and one another.
In your endless love for us you have promised to speak peace over us,
That we might turn to you in our hearts and seek to be faithful.
Gracious God,
All: **Speak peace to us today.**

In your Kingdom, steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
Righteousness and peace will kiss each other.
As you seek to set all things right,
Might we seek to fix our eyes on this vision of your Kingdom,
Trusting in your promise that you will give all people what is good.
Gracious God,
All: **Speak peace to us today.**

God, Sometimes we struggle to see your vision for the world.
In the midst of change and challenge,
It can be hard to see where you are working for our good.
During this advent season,
Might we come together as a community
To support one another to catch glimpses of your kingdom,
That our faithfulness might spring up from the ground in abundance.
Gracious God,
All: **Speak peace to us today.**

God, We pray for those for whom the waiting is too hard.
For so many, poverty, debt and hardship has made this year unbearable.
For those families unsupported by our social care system.
For those whose mental health makes it hard for to see your goodness.
For those who need a reminder of your steadfast love and faithfulness.
May your righteousness go before them,
Making a path for their steps so they will not stumble.
Gracious God,
All: **Speak peace to us today.**

God, May we hear your voice of peace,
And know that in your kingdom is abundance of life for all. Amen.

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Hymn: Come thou long expected Jesus

Christ is coming! let creation
From her groans and travail cease,
Let the glorious proclamation
Hope restore, and faith increase.
Christ is coming! Christ is coming!
Come, Thou blessed Prince of Peace.

Long Thy people have been pining
For Thy peace and rest, and Thee,
Soon, in heav'nly glory shining,
Their Restorer shall they see.
Christ is coming! Christ is coming!
Haste the joyous jubilee.

Earth can now but tell the story
Of Thy bitter cross and pain;
She shall yet behold Thy glory
When Thou comest back to reign.
Christ is coming! Christ is coming!
Let each heart repeat the strain.

With that blessed hope before us,
Let no harp remain unstrung;
Let the mighty advent chorus
Onward roll on every tongue.
Christ is coming! Christ is coming!
Come, Lord Jesus, quickly come.

John Ross Macduff
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Blessing

We go from this moment, into a week of many moments, hoping for an encounter with your grace, with your Spirit. Come amongst us, Advent God, Amen