

We live in a world that only seems to grow more chaotic, criminal, and dysfunctional. While we may be tempted to mourn the earth's condition, on this third week of Advent, we remember a Savior who is the Prince of Peace. God longs to bring the world back to a place of rightness; with the coming of Jesus, the world welcomes the peace that reigns in the truth of the universe. The angels appeared to the shepherds and announced, "Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth." And everywhere Jesus went he brought peace: He calmed the storm; he brought peace to sick bodies; he spoke truth; and his blood brought peace to our relationship with a wrathful God. This week of Advent we anticipate Jesus who came in and to bring peace. But in this world, peace seems elusive, intangible... impossible. Presently all of creation longs to be made right. Our souls long for perfect relationships with our fellow man, with God, with the earth, and even with ourselves. As we wait for Jesus to come again, we crave and yearn for peace. So this week of Advent we also look forward to a time when peace will reign eternally—a peace we may not see currently on the earth, but feel in our souls and expect for the future of the world, a peace that makes relationships right, makes wars to cease, makes calm the waters of this life and the next. Come, Lord Jesus, our Prince of Peace.

Sunday:

Prayer: Pray this prayer throughout the day. Every time you sit down at a meal or sit at a red light, breathe this prayer and allow God to use you as an instrument of his peace on earth. For this week, pray this before you read the Scripture for the day. Let the peace of Christ rule in your heart as you focus your attention toward the Coming One. "Father, bring me peace and help me to be an instrument of peace."

Readings: • Malachi 3:1-4 • Luke 1:68-79 • Philippians 1:3-11 • Luke 3:1-6

Discussion Question: What is something you're looking forward to most about heaven?

Monday:

Prayer: "Father, bring me peace and help me to be an instrument of peace."

Scripture Readings: • Psalms 9, 15, 95 • Amos 7:1-9 • Matthew 22:23-33 • Revelation 1:1-8

Discussion Question: What are some idols that pretend to offer peace on earth?

Tuesday:

Prayer: "Father, bring me peace and help me to be an instrument of peace."

Scripture Readings: • Psalms 26, 28, 36, and 39 • Amos 7:10-17 • Matthew 22:34-46 • Revelation 1:9-16

Discussion Question: How can you live at peace with everyone?

Wednesday

Prayer: "Father, bring me peace and help me to be an instrument of peace."

Scripture Readings: • Psalms 38, 119:25-48 • Amos 8:1-14 • Matthew 23:1-12 • Revelation 1:17-2:7

Discussion Questions: Who is someone or a group of people in your life who you can advocate for? How can you bring peace to your community, neighborhood, or family?

Thursday

Prayer: "Father, bring me peace and help me to be an instrument of peace."

Scripture Readings: • Psalm 37 • Amos 9:1-10 • Matthew 23:13-26 • Revelation 2:18-29

Discussion Question: What's an area of your life where you need more peace?

Friday

Prayer: "Father, bring me peace and help me to be an instrument of peace."

Scripture Readings: • Psalms 31, 35 • Haggai 1:1-15 • Matthew 23:27-39 • Revelation 2:18-29

Discussion Questions: How have you found God's peace in your life? Where has he been your refuge?

Saturday

Prayer: "Father, bring me peace and help me to be an instrument of peace."

Scripture Readings: • Psalms 30, 32, 42, 43 • Haggai 2:1-9 • Matthew 24:1-14 • Revelation 3:1-6

Discussion Question: What do you think the world would be like, or will be like, if there was peace everywhere?

Sermon Discussion

1. What one idea, concept or point stood out most prominently for you?
2. What questions remain about peace after hearing this sermon?
3. What one thing have you been challenged to do (to put into practice) through this sermon?

Weekly Application:

Hillside is committed to connecting people to Christ and one another. Decide as a family or an individual how you can participate in what God is doing to bring little pieces of heavenly peace.

Some ideas: • Volunteer at a local organization. • Give financially to an organization. • Pray for the global workers we support.

In Matthew 5, Jesus says, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." While Advent is a time to anticipate the coming of Christ and the embodiment of peace, he has also called us to bring his peace to the world. This week, think of a relationship in your life that needs mending. As an agent of God's peace, carefully consider what you can do to repair the relationship. Then this week, take one step toward peace.

Children's Corner

Peace = when all things get along! Draw a picture of the peace that will be on earth when Jesus comes back. How can you help bring more peace to your school or your family or your neighbors?