

St. Mark's Presbyterian Church
Second Sunday of Advent – December 10, 2023

Responsive Call to Worship

The prophets call and an apostle writes that peace comes from God.

**“For a child has been born for us...and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince
of Peace. ...and there shall be endless peace.”**

**“The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will
guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”**

The world, our relationships and our lives are all too often torn by conflict and injustice. Advent calls us to pray and work for peace—shalom—in the world God loves and to which Christ came. But God's shalom is not simply the absence of conflict. Shalom is the peace that comes when we live life in the balance, loving God and one another.

**Holy are you, Source of all new life among us. All: Jesus
Christ comes as the Prince of Peace. We join with all creation
and lift our hearts in joyful praise.**

**We light this candle to shine for peace.
(while lighting the candle of peace)**

Hymn 126 On Jordan's bank

- 1. On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
announces that the Lord is nigh;
awake and hearken, for he brings
glad tidings of the King of kings.**
- 2. Then cleansed be every breast from sin;
make straight the way for God within;
prepare we in our hearts a home
where such a mighty guest may come.**
- 3. For thou art our salvation, Lord,
our refuge and our great reward:
without thy grace, we waste away,
like flowers that wither and decay.**
- 4. To heal the sick, stretch out thine hand,
and bid the fallen sinner stand;
shine forth and let thy light restore**

earth's own true loveliness once more.

5. All praise, eternal Son, to thee,
whose advent sets thy people free,
whom, with the Father, we adore,
and Holy Spirit, evermore.

Prayer of Praise *(minister)*

Hymn 115 Hail to the Lord's Anointed

1. Hail to the Lord's Anointed, great David's greater Son;
hail, in the time appointed, his reign on earth begun!
He comes to break oppression, to set the captive free,
to take away transgression, and rule in equity.

2. He brings salvation speedy to those who suffer wrong;
he saves the poor and needy, and helps the weak be strong;
they sing who once were sighing, their darkness turned to light,
for they, who once were dying, are precious in his sight.

3. He shall come down like showers upon the fruitful earth,
and love, joy, hope, like flowers, spring in his path to birth.
Before him on the mountains shall peace, the herald, go,
and righteousness, in fountains, from hill to valley flow.

4. All powers shall bow before him, and gold and incense
bring;
all nations shall adore him, his praise all people sing,
for he shall have dominion o'er river, sea and shore,
far as the eagle's pinion or dove's light wing can soar.

5. O'er every foe victorious, Christ on his throne shall rest,
from age to age more glorious, all blessing and all blest:
the tide of time shall never his covenant remove;
his name shall stand for ever: that name to us is Love.

Prayer of Confession (congregation)

O God, we confess that we resist changing our hearts and
minds, even when your Word compels us to reconsider
cherished opinions. We are more comfortable remaining as
we are than taking up your challenge.

Forgive us for being set in our ways and seeing others only
in light of inherited ideas and past experience. Forgive us

our reluctance to forgive each other as we have been forgiven. By the power of your Holy Spirit, transform us by your great love and mercy.

Give us new eyes for seeing, new ears for hearing.

- silent confession -

The Lord's Prayer (Debts/Debtors)

**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, the power, and the glory. For ever
and ever. Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon *(minister)*

Hymn 116 Hark! A thrilling voice is sounding

1. Hark! a thrilling voice is sounding:

'Christ is nigh,' it seems to say;

'Cast away the dreams of darkness,

O ye children of the day!'

2. Wakened by the solemn warning,

let us all from sleep arise;

Christ, our sun, all ill dispelling,

shines upon the morning skies.

3. Lo! the Lamb, so long expected,

comes with pardon down from heaven

let us haste, with tears of sorrow,

one and all to be forgiven.

4. When our Saviour comes in glory,

though the world be wrapped in fear,

with his mercy he will shield us,

and with words of love draw near.

5. Honour, glory, might and blessing

to the Father and the Son,

with the everlasting Spirit

while eternal ages run.

Responsive Reading Psalm 85:1–2, 8–13 p. 534 NT & Psalms

¹Lord, you poured out blessings on your land!

You restored the fortunes of Israel.

**²You forgave the guilt of your people—
yes, you covered all their sins.**

⁸I listen carefully to what God the Lord is saying,
for he speaks peace to his faithful people.

But let them not return to their foolish ways.

**⁹Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him,
so our land will be filled with his glory.**

¹⁰Unfailing love and truth have met together.

Righteousness and peace have kissed!

**¹¹Truth springs up from the earth,
and righteousness smiles down from heaven.**

¹²Yes, the Lord pours down his blessings.

Our land will yield its bountiful harvest.

**¹²Righteousness goes as a herald before him,
preparing the way for his steps.**

New Living Translation (NLT)

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Scripture Lessons

Isaiah 40:1–11 p. 586 pew Bible

2 Peter 3:8–15a p. 412 NT & Psalms

Mark 1:1–8 p. 61 NT & Psalms

Reader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

Sermon **Should we be frightened?**

Prayers of the People *(minister)*

Hymn 118 Hark the glad sound

**1. Hark the glad sound! The Saviour comes,
the Saviour promised long;
let every heart prepare a throne,
and every voice a song!**

**2. You come the prisoners to release
in Satan's bondage held;
the gates of brass before you burst,
the iron fetters yield.**

3. You come the broken heart to bind,

the wounded soul to cure,
to bring the treasures of God's grace,
good tidings for the poor.

4. Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
your welcome shall proclaim,
and heaven's eternal arches ring
with your most honoured name.

Offering & Offertory

***Doxology 830 Praise God from whom all blessings flow**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
praise him all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Prayer of Dedication (congregation)

God of promise, we offer our gifts in Jesus' name, for we know peace through his forgiveness and faithfulness. Bless our gifts and our lives. Help us share the peace you offer with lives that touch ours throughout the world you love. Amen.

Hymn 145 In the bleak mid-winter

1. In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan;
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
in the bleak midwinter, long ago.

2. Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;
heaven and earth shall welcome him when he comes to reign:
in the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed the
Lord God incarnate, Jesus Christ.

3. Angels and archangels may have gathered there,
cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;
but his mother only, in her maiden bliss,
worshipped the Beloved with a kiss.

4. What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
if I were a Wise Man, I would do my part; yet

what I can I give him: give my heart.

Choral Blessing

Go now in peace. Never be afraid.

God will be with you each hour of every day.

God will be there, watching from above.

Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.

Benediction

Three-fold Amen

Piano Postlude