



# ADVENT IN THE VALLEY

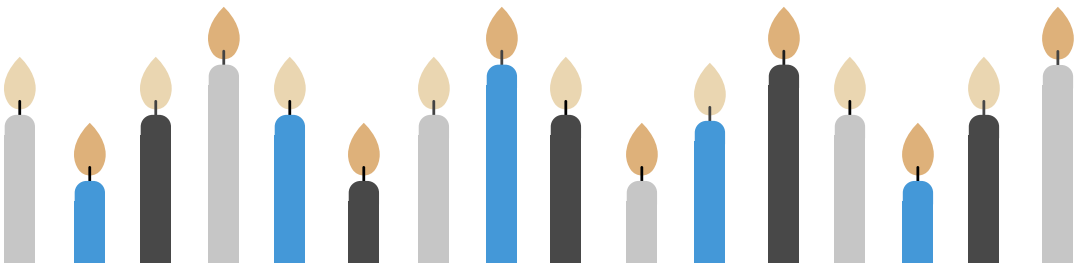
## WEEK 2: PEACE

Today is the second Sunday of Advent. Along with the prophets and people through the ages, we dream of a world of peace and justice. We share John the Baptist's dream of making crooked paths straight, of making a smooth highway broad enough for all God's people to move on together in peace and harmony. Our actions can help build that highway. God's dream can become our dream.

Last week we lit the first Advent candle, reminding us to hope while we wait. The flame of this second candle reminds us that God's dreams can become real and burn brightly in our world.

Let us pray.

Loving God, give us the desire, the willingness, and the courage to be part of your dream for a world of peace and justice. We pray in the name of Jesus, your dream come true. Amen.



"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'" Luke 3:4-16

Week Two Reflections from Rev Gillian Hoyer

I am a bicyclist – I love getting on my bicycle and sailing down the road either for leisure or to get from place to place. In fact, before moving to Petawawa, we were a one-car family and I managed travelling by bicycle to and from church, to pastoral visits and hospital calls – even grocery shopping for our family! But one of things that makes cycling a challenge is hills and valleys in the road. The downhill can be fun, but the uphill is a slog that can absolutely exhaust a cyclist, especially on a hot and humid summer day.

Our gospel reading for the second Sunday of Advent suggests that a clear pathway be created for God's coming: the curves in the roads straightened out, the valleys filled, the hills lowered, the rough smoothed over. Though these words remind us of road construction – of mega highways going through and transforming the terrain – there is more to the Lord's coming than literal construction projects.

Preparing the way of the Lord involves a complete overturning of the world as we know it. It is a complete transformation both of our world and of ourselves. It suggests that there is work for us to do get ready; that this time of Advent, of watching and waiting, is also a time of preparation. It is a time of preparing ourselves to come face-to-face with God incarnate, born and raised and living amongst us.

This transformation involves filling the valleys and lowering the hills in both our lives and in society. In our lives, may mean looking for the things in our lives that need to be lowered, letting God humble the parts of us that are proud of self-satisfied or opening up the things in our lives that need to be filled, letting God heal and lift up that which is broken or beaten down. And in the world around us, God's work of transformation calls us to rethink the systems and structures in our society that we may see as normal but that are completely at odds with God's call to lift up the lowly and bring the tyrant ruler down to earth, with God's call to feed the hungry and clothe the naked.

It is hard work. But it is good work: God's glory will be revealed in Jesus and the good news that is proclaimed in the wilderness is not just for us but for the whole world. All flesh shall see the salvation of God.

### Questions for further reflection:

1. What areas of my life am I called to invite God into to lower or what areas do I need to open up to God to allow healing and lifting up?
2. Where do I see God calling me to fill the valleys or lower the mountains and hills in the world around me?