



PEACE

The first week of advent. Take out and light the first candle.

Scripture:

Isaiah 32:17-18

“And the work of righteousness will be peace, and the service of righteousness, quietness and confidence forever. Then my people will live in a peaceful habitation, and in secure dwellings and in undisturbed resting places.”

John 14:27

“Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.”

Community of Peace

Work us together as contrasting colours.
Join us together across the divides of differences.
Bind us together with loving connections.
United us together combining our strengths.
Knit us together in patterns of worship.
Pull us together demolishing our barriers.
Mould us together retaining our personhood.
Cement us together softening our bitterness.
Design us together to be communities of peace.

By Rev. Frances Ballantyre, United Kingdom

Jehovah Shalom the God of peace sent His son into the world as our Prince of Peace knowing we need this gift as we cannot experience Shalom on our own. His peace is not the absence of conflict or trials, but a calm assurance that He is in control.

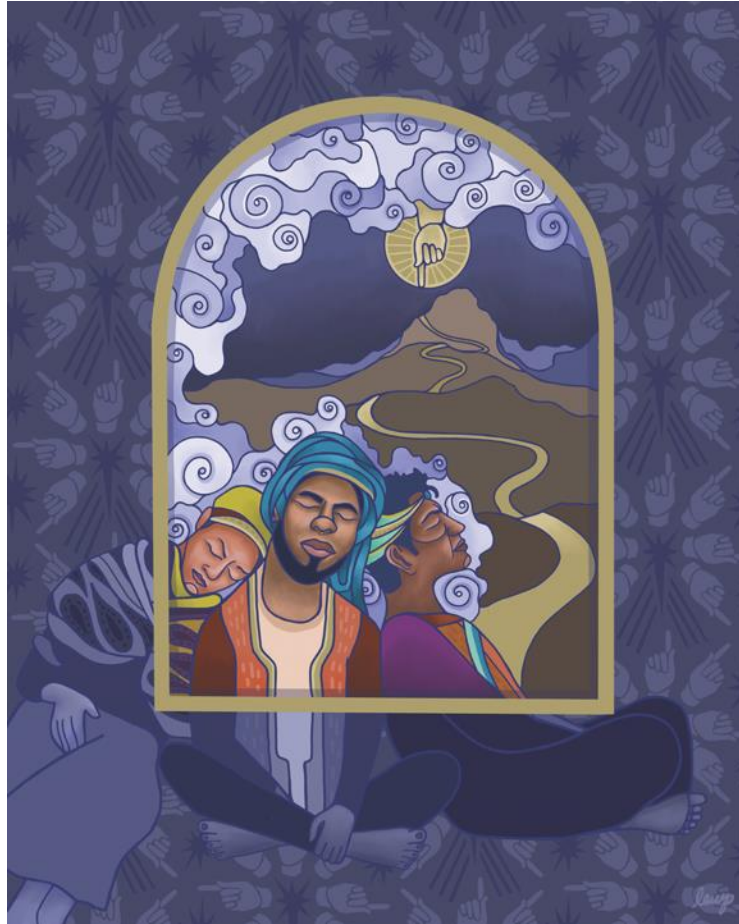
Reflect:

As the season gets busy take time to rest in God's gift of peace. Ask yourself what stresses and anxieties, relationships and situations do I need to invite God to take control of. He is Jehovah Shalom who sent His son, the Prince of peace for us. Take a moment and ask the Holy Spirit to point out those areas that could use His peace this season.

Action:

On a clear evening this week, grab a blanket and go outside and sit beneath the stars. Think about the God of this universe that came to bring you peace as you gaze into the night sky. Another option would be to light a candle and sit in the silence and darkness, resting and

reflecting on the truth that God is with us. Invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you.



The Wise Men from Sanctified Art

HOPE

The second week of Advent. Take out and light the second candle.

Advent is a time to remember how much the whole world needs the Hope of Christ. So many seek to fill the emptiness within, searching to the end of the earth to find what will bring them hope, not knowing it is found fully in Christ. The wisemen journeyed with anticipation and hope of the King they would find.

Scripture:

Psalm 130:5-7

“I wait for the Lord, my soul does wait, and in His word do I hope. My soul waits for the Lord more than the watchmen for the morning; Indeed, more than the watchmen for the morning. O, Israel, hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is lovingkindness, and with Him is abundant redemption.

Prayer:

The Advent story
of hope and mystery,
anticipation,
preparation,
a kingdom
of this world and the next,
and a king
appearing when we least expect.
Heaven touching earth,
the footsteps of the divine
walking dusty roads
as once they did in Eden,
and a people,
searching for a Saviour,
and walking past
the stable.
Open eyes and hearts,
that this might be
an Advent of hope to the world.
Author Unknown

Right now we are living in the final chapters of the story, but we have not come to the end when God will fully restore. Hope complete.

Reflect:

Take time to think about and/or discuss what it will be like when God fulfills His plan and there is a new heaven and a new earth.

Apply:

Take the bag of Skittles and use the color chart to pray for hope for those around you.

Yellow: Pray for Hope for those in your family who do not know Christ.

Green: Pray for BC and all those impacted by the fires and floods this past year.

Red: Pray for the Church and its leaders
Orange: Pray for Reconciliation
Purple: Pray for the leaders in our Country.



Harvest of Righteousness by Sanctified Art

JOY

The third week of Advent. Take out and light the third candle.

Scripture:

1Thessalonians 5:16-18

“Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

In the darkness, joy is the light that bursts in and give us the energy to press on, the allowance to dream and hope, the space to breathe. Joy is the gift that Christ brings in the middle of all the chaos and noise of the world. May we long to celebrate and rejoice in the truth that God is with us, Emmanuel.

Researcher and author Brene Brown says that in her 12 years of research and 11,000 pieces of data she has discovered this,

“I did not interview a single person who described their life as joyful or joyous who did not actively practice gratitude.”

John Piper’s definition of joy:

Joy is a good feeling in the soul produced by the Holy Spirit as He causes us to see the beauty of Jesus in the Word and in His works.

J.R.R. Tolkien talks of joy in, *“The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien,”*

The Resurrection was the greatest ‘eucatastrophe’ possible in the greatest Fairy Story — and produces that essential emotion: Christian joy which produces tears because it is qualitatively so like sorrow, because it comes from those places where Joy and Sorrow are at one, reconciled, as selfishness and altruism are lost in Love.

Reflect: Take time to consider and reflect on the different definitions and insights on Joy.

Apply:

On the little ornament provided write all the things that you are thankful for this past year. Then take some time to pray and thank

God for His blessings and invite Him to bring you a deeper understanding of the joy that comes in trusting Him.



Center Christ by Sanctified Art

LOVE

The fourth week of Advent. Take out the fourth candle and light it along with the others.

God is love and His love is unimaginable, uncontainable, unconventional and endless. It is a love that refuses to be confined by our human boundaries and expectations. It is a baby in a stable, Christ on the cross, and the power of the resurrection.

Scripture: 1 John 4:16

“We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.”

“We must be careful lest we romanticize the birth of Christ beyond reality. Nativity scenes have a way of making Jesus’s birth unreasonably fairy-tale-like. What Jesus really endured in becoming a human being was to enter this world of harsh reality. Here in the midst of an inhuman humanity, he navigated existence to show us all the way.

She looks into the face of a baby. Her son. Her Lord. His Majesty. At this point in history, the human being who best understands who God is and what he is doing is a teenage girl in a smelly stable. She can’t take her eyes off him. Somehow Mary knows she is holding God. *So this is He*. She remembers the words of the angel. “His kingdom will never end.”

He looks like anything but a king. His face is prunish and red. His cry, though strong and healthy, is absolutely dependent upon Mary for his well-being.

Majesty in the midst of the mundane. Holiness in the filth of sheep manure and sweat. Divinity entering the world on the floor of a stable, through the womb of a teenager and in the presence of a carpenter.” ~Max Lucado *God Came Near* (pg.23).

Reflect:

How do we begin to rest in this love? How do we allow it to transform us to love others unconditionally?

Apply:

As a family brainstorm a few practical random acts of kindness you can do to bless someone this week. It does not have to be big, even the smallest of gestures can go a long way.