

Our song to sing or to read: The Peace of Christ

The peace of Christ, it holds me
The peace of Christ surrounds me
It's greater than what I can comprehend
The perfect peace of Christ



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Amen, Amen *Music and Lyrics by David Gentiles and Tommy Walker*
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A Prayer

Go now! Wait and work for the coming of the day of God
In the wild places prepare a straight path for the Lord
Lead lives of holiness and godliness
strive to be found at peace
and speak freely of the Lord's comfort and promise.

And may God our shepherd gather you in loving arms
May Christ Jesus reconcile justice and peace within you
And may the Holy Spirit baptise you into the life of God.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord
Amen

Nathan Nettleton 2002

With thanks to Anne Vail and Raelene Burn for preparing today's reflection



Dubbo Uniting Church 64-66 Church Street Dubbo NSW 2830
p: 68854200 e: dubbouca@bigpond.com w: dubbo.uca.org.au



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Gathering

As we pour the water for our Advent wreath
we remember our deep thirst for God's **peace**
(Pour water into the first and second glass)
The **peace** of a long soak in a hot tub after a hard day's work
The **peace** of steam rising around a home saved by the sweat and sacrifice
of a community of firefighters and their supporters
Peace as deep and mysterious and teeming with life as the vast oceans
We name aloud people and places
in particular need of God's **peace**
at this time
Advent God, we worship you
with **peace**
Amen



An Advent Song: In the Beginning.
Here is the link:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=UnG6YQeDbao

Preparation

As we reflect on the peace that Christ brings, let's move our bodies to
reflect these words of the song 'Prayer for Peace':

Peace before us *(hold out hands in front of you like holding a gift)*
Peace behind us *(move hands behind your back, with palms open and up)*
Peace under our feet *(reach towards the ground as much as you feel able)*
Peace within us *(place hands on tummy)*
Peace over us *(reach high above your head)*
Let all around us be peace *(circle hands around yourself)*

Reading: Mark 1: 1-8

Reflection: What can we learn from our ancestors – Peace

Today we hear from the messengers of long ago who told of Jesus' coming. "Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him" (Mark 1:3). "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end" (Isaiah 9:6-7).

But what is Peace?

"Peace is more important than all justice; and peace was not made for the sake of justice, but justice for the sake of peace" – Martin Luther.

"It isn't enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it isn't enough to believe in it. One must work at it" – Eleanor Roosevelt.

"When the power of love overcomes the love of power the world will know peace" – Jimi Hendrix.

"I find peace when I can sit at church and listen to beautiful music" – Sheila Kapo.

President Trump declared that there would be "peace in the Middle East" after he facilitated the official signing of 'The Abraham Accords', the formal agreements between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, and Israel and Bahrain to establish diplomatic relations.

Defining peace is challenging. In the context of war, it is the absence of it. For individuals, what does it mean and where can it be found? Where is peace *essentially* located? Is it in the heart or in relationships? In nations or between nations? Is it within or without? Is peace the natural state of affairs or do we, and does our world, default to its opposite, whatever that opposite may be?

Perhaps, then, there is no definitive *opposite* of peace to speak of, only its definitive *absence*. "The Spirit of truth...is with you, and he will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you...**Peace I leave**

with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid" (John 14:18-29).

Jesus gives us his peace *not as the world gives*. That means, we don't need to keep chasing empty promises and following false pursuits.



from. There simply is no replacement for Peace.

The Bible tells us that when Jesus was born, he was called the Prince of Peace. As we learn ways of peace and practice making and keeping peace in our homes, in our neighbourhoods, and in our world, we are preparing for the coming of the Prince of Peace.

In the River Jordan, John the Baptist baptised with water, telling those present that the one to come would baptise with fire (the Holy Spirit). Through God's Holy Spirit we experience this peace, and we will only find this peace through knowing and walking with Jesus.

Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.
Let there be peace on earth, the peace that is meant to be.

What does peace look like in your life?
Where do you see peace today?
Is there an area of your life where you need peace?
Where do you look to find peace?
In what way(s) are you an instrument of peace?