

DECEMBER 10, 2023
SECOND SUNDAY
OF ADVENT



God brings peace and forgiveness.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Mark 1:1-8	The beginning of the good news
Monday	Isaiah 40:1-11	Comfort my people
Tuesday	2 Peter 3:8-15a	Promise of the Lord's coming
Wednesday	Matthew 5:9	Blessed are the peacemakers
Thursday	Psalms 29	The voice of God in a storm
Friday	Isaiah 52:7-10	Let Zion rejoice
Saturday	Psalms 85:1-2, 8-13	A prayer for God's peace
Sunday	John 1:6-8, 19-28	John's witness to the light

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

Isaiah 40:1-2 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Almighty God, help us to rely on you above all things that our lives may find rest and peace through Christ Jesus, the Son of God. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, we thank you for this food; we pray for a fair distribution of the fruit of the earth that all may have enough to eat. In Jesus' name, amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the steadfast love and faithfulness of God give you peace. (Psalm 85:10)



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HYMN OF THE WEEK

He Came Down



WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- Think or talk about a time when you experienced peace.
- When have you felt God's peace in your life?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Mark 1:1-8.

The first line in Mark, "*The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God,*" serves as a title for the entire gospel writing. That title and that announcement of good news is the source of all the peace we can want. Mark's Gospel does not present a peace that is simply life without struggles. The peace of God that comes with the good news of Jesus involves struggle, cleansing, and letting go of one's own innocence or purity. The peace that Jesus brings, and John the Baptist introduces, involves a "*repentance for the forgiveness of sins*" (v. 4). The peace that Jesus brings—and continues to bring throughout our lives—is the freeing power to let go of an understanding of being able to make it on one's own or of being better than others. Worship services often begin with statements of confession and forgiveness. This offers a peace where we need not hide from the hurts and brokenness of our lives and world. It is the peace that rests on the goodness of God in Christ for us and for all.

Discuss: How does confession and forgiveness give you peace?

Pray: **God of steadfast love and faithfulness, we thank you for coming to us again and again that we may know your forgiving power and have peace through Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Amen.**

SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings and theme for this week, how can you extend the peace of God to someone?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

The scripture readings during Advent point to Jesus. This week we light two candles on the Advent wreath. The second candle is the candle of peace. Think or talk about how the words of Psalm 85, a prayer for restoration, bring us peace: "*Let me hear what God the LORD will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts.*" Light the first candle of hope and the second candle of peace and say: "**The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.**" (John 1:5)



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org