

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

All people: Receive this offering, great and giving God, as one way of acting out the peace and hope which comes from you. Accept what we're offering and inspire us to regularly share a portion of what you've given to us, so our witness as peaceful followers of Christ will go beyond the limits of our physical presence and reach far into the world. Amen.

HYMN

Let There Be Peace on Earth **Blue Hymnal, #677**

BENEDICTION

Pastor: Be people of peace.
Let peace live in your heart.
Share the peace of Christ with all you meet.
Share peace by acting out of compassion and not fear.
Share peace by listening to all sides of the story.
Share peace by praying for our world.
In this Advent season, we need to see, feel, and share peace.

Liturgist: As you go out into the wonder of God's creation,
commit yourself to BEING the peace you long for in the world.

All people: Amen.

POSTLUDE

December 10, 2023
Second Sunday of Advent

GREETINGS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

Mr. Kevin Crone

ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING (Based on Isaiah 40:1)

Pastor: This morning, we continue lighting candles on the Advent wreath. Lighting candles help us find our way through the darkness. The glow provides warmth, comfort and peace.

Liturgist: In this season, we look for moments when we might proclaim peace as did the prophet Isaiah.

Congregation: We gather today, unsatisfied with ideas of peace that tell us to keep quiet and go with the flow. We long for real peace, true peace, just peace. O God, we re-light the candle of hope, and add to its intensity, that of the PEACE candle.

The HOPE and PEACE Candles are lit.

Pastor: We light the PEACE candle to illuminate those moments where we've already known God's comforting peace within ourselves, our relationships, and in the world.

Liturgist: Turn to a church neighbor, sitting in front, behind, or beside you and tell them about a moment of PEACE you've recently experienced or seen in your daily life or in the news.

Sharing Visions of Peace

Pastor: May you find encouragement in the sharing of your stories about peace with one another. Let us now call ourselves into worship, using the words of Isaiah, chapter 40. Please stand, as you are comfortable.

(Please stand in body and/or spirit)

CALL TO WORSHIP (Based on the Isaiah 40:1-11)

Pastor: "Comfort my people," says our God. "Comfort them!"

**Congregation: Hear the voice crying out in the wilderness:
Clear a path for the Lord!
Make a level highway in the wilderness for our God.
Every valley will be raised up,
and every mountain and hill will be flattened.
Uneven ground will become level, and rough terrain made smooth.**

All people: *The Lord's glory will appear, and all humanity will see it together!*

For the Lord's mouth has commanded it!

Pastor: "Go up – on a high mountain and tell the good news!"

Congregation: **Call out with a LOUD VOICE!**

Tell the Good News and raise your voice without fear."

Pastor: The Almighty Lord is coming with power to rule with authority.

Congregation: **Like a shepherd the Lord takes care of his flock.**

They are gathered like the lambs in his arms.

They are carried close to his heart.

Gently, the Lord helps the sheep and their lambs.

Pastor: While we are like grass and flowers that wither and fade,

All people: *The Word of the Lord lasts forever.*

HYMN *Comfort, Comfort You My People* **Blue Hymnal, #122**

CALL TO CONFESSION

Pastor: The prophet, John the Baptist calls us to repent of our sins in order to prepare the way of the Lord. In the gracious presence of God, let us repent and confess the sin that separates and divides.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

All people: *Loving God, you inspire us with love for all persons and concern for the well-being of all creation. Give us today the strength and courage to transform the compassion of our hearts into acts of peace, mercy, and justice.*

Forgive us for the arrogance that leads to moral blindness, our desires for vengeance and retaliation, and for a willingness to sacrifice others for our own security and greed. Help us to renounce all forms of violence: prejudice, unfair allegations, intolerance, and injury.

Give us the courage to resist threatening postures and all actions that threaten the lives and livelihoods of innocent people. Empower us to live out the caring presence of the merciful and generous people we claim to be.

Make us channels of your peace, bearers of healing, women and men who hear and respond with swiftness to pleas for justice in our world. We ask all this in the name of Jesus who came among us to show us the way. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS (Based on Isaiah 40:2)

Pastor: Hear the Good News from God, spoken through the Prophet Isaiah:
"Encourage the people... Tell them they have suffered long enough. Their sins are forgiven. The penalty has been paid."

All people: *Thanks be to God for grace and peace, through Jesus Christ. Amen.*

PRAISE HYMN *Gloria Patri* **Red Hymnal, #493**

PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

(The congregation may be seated, as the children & youth come forward)

JESUS SAID, "LET THE CHILDREN COME"

HYMN *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* **Chalice, #119**

GOSPEL READING – Mark 1:1-8

SERMON *Comfort & Peace* **Rev. Laura Baker**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER

All people: *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; forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.*

SPECIAL MUSIC *Every Valley (Beck)*

(An Offering Collection Box is located on the table in the back of sanctuary, by the exit door)

OFFERING INVITATION

(Please stand in body and/or spirit)

DOXOLOGY *We Give Thee But Thine Own* (Verse 1, only) **Red Hymnal, #258**