



Call to worship Psalm 72:18-19

Praise be to the Lord God, the God of Israel, who alone does marvelous deeds. Praise be to his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen.

Hymn STF719 We pray for peace

Watch on YouTube : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cTuz8KsZuUO>

We pray for peace,
but not the easy peace
built on complacency
and not the truth of God.
We pray for real peace,
the peace God's love alone
can seal.

We pray for peace,
and not the evil peace,
defending unjust laws
and nursing prejudice,
but for the real peace
of justice, mercy, truth and
love.

We pray for peace,
and for the sake of peace,
look to the risen Christ
who gives the grace we need,
to serve the cause of peace
and make our own self-
sacrifice.

We pray for peace,
but not the cruel peace,
leaving God's poor bereft
and dying in distress,
we pray for real peace,
enriching all the human race.

We pray for peace:
holy communion
with Christ our risen Lord
and every living thing;
God's will fulfilled on earth
and all his creatures
reconciled.

God, give us peace:
if you withdraw your love,
there is no peace for us
nor any hope of it.
With you to lead us on,
through death or tumult,
peace will come.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, For ever and ever. Amen.

Bible Reading;

Matthew 3:1-12 : In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: "A voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'" John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Hymn STF707 Make me a channel of your peace

Watch on YouTube : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8eorCEMIK4>

Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there is hatred let me bring your love.
Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord
And where there's doubt, true faith in you.

Oh, Master grant that I may never seek
So much to be consoled as to console
To be understood as to understand
To be loved as to love with all my soul.

Make me a channel of your peace
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope
Where there is darkness, only light
And where there's sadness, ever joy.

Make me a channel of your peace
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned
In giving to all men that we receive
And in dying that we're born to eternal life.

Introduction: As we enter the season of Advent, a time for preparation and anticipation, we reflect on John the Baptist's message in Matthew 3:1-12. His proclamation that "God's Kingdom is near" calls us to prepare our hearts and lives for the coming of the Messiah. There is no a Kingdom without a king. No king without a Kingdom. No Kingdom without subordinates.

1. The Role of John the Baptist: John the Baptist, a voice in the wilderness, invites the people to repent and prepare for Jesus' coming. His message is a call for us to ready ourselves for the arrival of a just and peaceful Kingdom.

2. Illustration: The Peaceful Kingdom: Imagine a village divided by a great river. On one side lies a kingdom of discord filled with strife and injustice. Across the river is a harmonious kingdom, where peace and justice flow like a gentle stream. This picture captures the essence of God's Kingdom—a realm of peace and righteousness.

3. The Call to Repentance: Repentance is our bridge to God's Kingdom, where we are invited to leave behind discord and embrace peace and justice.

4. The Urgency of the Message: Advent reminds us of the urgency to embrace God's Kingdom now, allowing its transformative power to change us.

5. Example of Church Preparation: One practical way the church can prepare for God's Kingdom is by engaging in community outreach. By serving those in need—feeding the hungry, clothing the poor, and providing shelter for the homeless—the church mirrors God's justice and compassion. We can start now !!! This reflects the church's role as a beacon of God's peace and love. Such actions not only prepare our communities for God's Kingdom but also demonstrate its values of justice, peace, and mercy.

6. The Fruits of Repentance: Our actions should generate fruit worthy of repentance—acts of kindness and justice that reflect God's Kingdom.

7. The Promise of Greater Things: John points to the coming of Jesus, who brings the Holy Spirit to empower our efforts in building His Kingdom. He comes at Christmas; At his death on the cross; At the Lord's table and finally as judge as his second coming. Let us be ready.

Conclusion:

As we journey through Advent, let us as a church commit to living out the values of God's Kingdom. Through acts of service and compassion, we prepare our hearts and communities to welcome the fullness of Christ's rule, embodying the justice and peace that He brings.

I wish you all a merry Christmas and Happy New Year.