



Second Sunday in Advent December 9th, 2018

Actively Waiting, Waiting Peaceably



Welcome to the Second Sunday of Advent. Advent is the inaugural season of the new Christian year. In it, we adopt a posture of *waiting for* the Christmas event – the birth of Jesus and behind that, the kingdom of God: a new order of things marked by *shalom* - peace and *tzedakah* – justice.

Necessarily then, Advent is a bitter-sweet season. On the one hand, we acknowledge the brokenness of the world, which people bear, which we bear. On the other, we wait for something beyond this, to which we commit ourselves in the here and now. In a sense, Christians and fellow travellers, are like an outpost, an anticipation of the kingdom, of a better world, with restored human beings and restored communities.

Today, the emphasis is that of peaceable-ness: living in peace. The idea of peace or shalom, is not one of peace in a bubble, is not one of personal peace *apart* from others. Rather shalom is about engaged peace, peace in community *with* others, *for* others. It is a relational thing, it has to do in essence with social harmony. That does not suggest however, that the inner-life is not included. Clearly, to be an agent, a means of peace between people, there must be an inner maturity, an inner awareness, a capacity for critical self-analysis and connection with God.

GATHERING

Announcements

Invitation and Greeting

In the name of God
 In the name of the Son
 In the name of the Spirit

The Lord be with you
And also with you

We are here
in the name of Jesus Christ

Hymn: Praise my soul (TiS 134, Praise My Soul, Henry Francis Lyte)

The Foundation of Discord and Violence: from the film “Amadeus” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9NG_NPLktA

Amadeus is perhaps one of the most compelling movies of the last 30 years. Based upon Peter Schaffer’s play *Amadeus*, it creatively reflects upon the genius of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791), but does much more: thinking about the compromised and broken nature of the human condition. The film imagines a conflict between Antonio Salieri (1750-1825), the court composer of the Hapsburg, Austrian royal family, and a pivotal figure in the development of late 18th century opera, and Mozart. Salieri feels himself outshone by Mozart’s sheer genius, a conflict that in Salieri’s mind, assumes a theological and metaphysical dimension, as he, Salieri, protests with God, asking why such an uncouth, ordinary little man like Mozart should be so outrageously gifted. In the clip – years later – as Salieri languishes in a lunatic asylum, consumed by his own ‘mediocrity’ and Mozart’s brilliance, we see his confession of sorts to the local priest. Inspired but also angry, he says “He (Mozart) was my idol”

Lighting the Advent Candle of Peace

Because we are enslaved by the drive to copy, to be ‘better than’.
 Because we cannot accept
 that others may surpass us in natural ability.
 Because in frustration we resent those more gifted
 and scapegoat those we identify as inferior
 we light a candle of peace.

***Because hatred is still so strong.
 Because so many swords have not yet been beaten***

***into plough-shares
neither in our souls nor in our communities
we light a candle of peace.***

(we light the second candle)

May the light from this candle overwhelm the world.

***May the light from this candle tell us that peace is possible
within us and between us***

Let us pray:

O God
we are a people on a journey,
afraid of the unknown;
conflicted in the wilderness of our lives.
Accompany us through those experiences where we are left
suspended, numb, perplexed.

Help us to discover you again in familiar and new ways.

Amen.

In our worry and despair, for you O God, we wait...

We wait...

When tears threaten to overwhelm us, we wait...

We wait...

When we long for a fresh start and newness of heart, we wait...

We wait...

When we consider the state of our world, we wait...

We wait...

When we have done all that we can, for you,

O God, we wait...

Amen

The Peace

SMG (Sunday Morning Group)

BREAKING OPEN THE WORD

First Thoughts about Living Peaceably

Peace is the only battle worth waging."

Albert Camus

"Peace may sound simple - one beautiful word - but it requires everything we have, every quality, every strength, every dream, every high ideal."

Yehudi Menuhin

Let us not accept violence as the way of peace. Let us instead begin by respecting true freedom: the resulting peace will be able to satisfy the world's expectations, for it will be a peace built on justice, a peace founded on the incomparable dignity of the free human being."

Pope John Paul II

The pursuit of peace cannot end in a few years in either victory or defeat. The pursuit of peace and progress, with its trials and its errors, its successes and its setbacks, can never be relaxed and never abandoned."

Dag Hammarskjold

The Hebrew Bible - Malachi 3: 1-4 (Good News Translation)

Malachi is a book suitable for reading during Advent, in that it describes a time of restless waiting in the history of the people of Judah. The exile was over, the second temple had been built and worship there restored, but all was not as it had been envisioned. There was as yet no sign of the glory of God returning to fill the temple. People noted the inequities of life around them and asked, 'Where is the God of justice?' (Mal 2:17). The passage for this Sunday from chapter 3 comes in answer to that question, with the promise of a day when all will be set right. God promises a messenger of the covenant to prepare the Lord's way, and to herald the coming of justice. In his Messiah, Handel sets this passage from Malachi to music, emphasizing the refiner's fire that will purify the sons of Levi, the professional priestly caste, known for their corruption.

3 The LORD Almighty answers, "I will send my messenger to prepare the way for me. Then the Lord you are looking for will suddenly come to his Temple. The messenger you long to see will come and proclaim my covenant."

² But who will be able to endure the day when he comes? Who will be able to survive when he appears? He will be like strong soap, like a fire that refines metal. ³ He will come to judge like one who refines and purifies silver. As a metalworker refines silver and gold, so the LORD's messenger will purify the priests, so that they will bring to the LORD the right kind of offerings. ⁴ Then the offerings which the people of Judah and Jerusalem bring to the LORD will be pleasing to him, as they used to be in the past.

The New Testament

Luke 1:68-79 – The Benedictus (Good News Translation)

It might seem strange to some that for a psalm this week we have a passage from a Gospel. In fact, in Luke's Gospel we have three such 'psalms'/songs inserted in the first couple of chapters: Luke 1:46-55, called The *Magnificat* and related to 1 Sam 2:1-10; Luke 2:29-32, called Simeon's song or The *Nunc Dimittis*; and today's 'psalm', Luke 1:68-79 known as the song of Zachariah or The *Benedictus*. The selection of Luke 1:68-79 this week is appropriate alongside the passage from Malachi. Verse 76 of Zechariah's song, picks up themes from Mal 3:1 and 4:5 especially, the idea of the prophet who will come as a forerunner to the Lord, preparing the way for the latter. It is also appropriate as it is attributed to Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist.

⁶⁸ "Let us praise the Lord, the God of Israel!
He has come to the help of his people and has set them free.
⁶⁹ He has provided for us a mighty Saviour,
a descendant of his servant David.
⁷⁰ He promised through his holy prophets long ago
⁷¹ that he would save us from our enemies,
from the power of all those who hate us.
⁷² He said he would show mercy to our ancestors
and remember his sacred covenant.
⁷³⁻⁷⁴ With a solemn oath to our ancestor Abraham
he promised to rescue us from our enemies
and allow us to serve him without fear,
⁷⁵ so that we might be holy and righteous before him
all the days of our life.
⁷⁶ "You, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High God.
You will go ahead of the Lord
to prepare his road for him,
⁷⁷ to tell his people that they will be saved
by having their sins forgiven.
⁷⁸ Our God is merciful and tender.

He will cause the bright dawn of salvation to rise on us
⁷⁹ and to shine from heaven on all those who live in the dark
 shadow of death,
 to guide our steps into the path of peace.”

Luke 3:1-6: John the Baptist anticipates Jesus (Good News Translation)

The word of God came to John, son of Zechariah, in the outback regions' (3:2). The outback region, the desert, the wilderness, was never a mere spiritual wasteland. Rather, it was the place of miracle and divine revelation, of pain and complaint, of hope and visions. Modern day city dwellers can connect at some level to such insights: the outback is often dangerous, stark, beautiful, expanding the awareness, summoning up different values from those twinkling from neon lights and advertising hoardings. To those steeped in the tradition, wilderness evokes stories of Exodus, of Sinai, of preparing to cross the Jordan (just about where John is). John the baptizer or “dipper”, is the one who represents God’s new initiative, and baptism is submission to this new initiative. It is not simply change of the individual, but change of the individual in readiness for change of the world. Change of the world means transformation, liberation, freedom, salvation.

3 It was the fifteenth year of the rule of Emperor Tiberius; Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip was ruler of the territory of Iturea and Trachonitis; Lysanias was ruler of Abilene, ² and Annas and Caiaphas were High Priests. At that time the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the desert. ³ So John went throughout the whole territory of the Jordan River, preaching, “Turn away from your sins and be baptized, and God will forgive your sins.” ⁴ As it is written in the book of the prophet Isaiah:

“Someone is shouting in the desert:

‘Get the road ready for the Lord;
 make a straight path for him to travel!

⁵ Every valley must be filled up,
 every hill and mountain levelled off.

The winding roads must be made straight,
 and the rough paths made smooth.

⁶ The whole human race will see God's salvation!”

The Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you Lord Christ

Hymn: O come, O come, Emmanuel (TiS 265, Veni Emmanuel, Anon, Latin)

“Actively Waiting: Supporting Education of Girls and Boys in Pakistan – Christmas Bowl

https://www.actforpeace.org.au/www_AFP/media/Christmas-Bowl/CB18%20Resources/CB18-03-Second-Sunday-of-Advent-Peace-Pakistan.m4v

Some Thoughts: Jeremy and Geoff

Offering

Doxology

***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
praise him, all creatures here below,
praise him above, ye heavenly host,
praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.***

Prayer of Dedication

Prayers of the People

The one who prays ends each petition with the words, ***may we be people of peace***, and the congregational response, is ***through how we live and what we do***

Lord's Prayer

Let us say the Lord's Prayer

***Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.***

***Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.***

***Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.***

***For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.***

하늘에 계신 우리 아버지여
이름이 거룩히 여김을 받으시오며
나라이 임하옵시며
뜻이 하늘에서 이룬 것 같이
땅에서도 이루어지이다.
오늘날 우리에게 일용할 양식을 주옵시고
우리가 우리에게
죄 지은 자를 사하여 준 것 같이
우리 죄를 사하여 주옵시고
우리를 시험에 들게 하지 마옵시고
다만 악에서 구하옵소서
대개 나라와 권세와 영광이
아버지께 영원히 있사옵나이다. 아멘

Closing Hymn: Let earth and heaven combine (TiS 305, St John, Charles Wesley)

Blessing and Sending Out

Christ is life!

Let us live peaceably, disciplined, in love for others.
Actively waiting for the incarnation of God among us,
actively waiting for the kingdom

Our service has ended

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord

In the name of Christ

**Going Out: Shalom (TiS 778, Somos del Señor, Elise Shoemaker
Eslinger)**

We sing twice

Musical Postlude

Organist: