

## Advent 2 2025

By God's Grace may I speak in the name of the God who was and is and is to come. Amen.

**The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.**

What an idyllic image. The predators and the prey lying next to each other and a little child is in charge of them all, without being in any danger. Such a peaceful image.

And so far from the reality we experience and witness in our world. If only the world we lived in was that peaceful. But I don't think any of us have to think very hard to find examples of how the world we live in differs so much from this prophetic image in Isaiah. Yet wouldn't it be wonderful, beautiful, if we could witness even just a little of this becoming reality?

Peace is one of the things a lot of people long and pray for across the world, different cultures, countries and faiths. So many of us human beings long and pray for peace. Because war, conflict and violence are the cause of so much death, destruction and suffering. Through time so many people have lost homes and loved ones in wars. Wars cause famine and life-altering injuries to both civilians and people who serve in wars. Wars cause trauma and displacement that can mark families and people for generations. War, conflict and violence spread fear and they can bring out the worst in people.

War, conflict and violence are destructive and the vast majority of human beings genuinely hopes and prays for peace. Yet war is a lived reality, a memory too painful to visit, for far too many people.

**The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.**

Today we have lit the second candle on the Advent Wreath, the candle of peace. And as we reflected last week, when we lit the candle of hope, Advent is a time of waiting, a time to remind us that we are still preparing and hoping for God's promises to be fulfilled.

**The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.**

We are hoping and waiting for God's promise of peace to be fulfilled. A peace that means no one has to be afraid anymore. All can live in safety, in life-giving relationships with one another, all having a safe home and enough food. We are hoping and waiting for the Prince of Peace, born without a home, laid in a manger, who broke the cycle of violence by dying on a cross, not lashing out to get revenge, but instead overcoming death itself in the resurrection. We are hoping and waiting for the Prince of Peace to come and teach us how to break cycles of violence and find a way forward with repentance, reparation and reconciliation.

Violence, conflict and war are a painful reality in our world. But the Prince of Peace shows us a different way. The way of peace is not an easy path. Violence, hatred and prejudice too easily find their ways into our own hearts, minds and actions. We likely all have been marked and hurt by thoughts, words and actions of violence, hatred and prejudice that we have been guilty of, or others have committed against us. Violence, hatred and prejudice can be like a maze, in which we get lost, unable to find our way out.

Yet the good news is, the Prince of Peace is able to guide us out of that maze, step by step, if we are willing to make that difficult journey, day after day. As John the Baptist preaches in our gospel reading today, Jesus is the one who baptises us with the Holy Spirit. As we are baptised in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit, the power of God, lives within us. And if we are willing to give the Holy Spirit more and more room in our lives, She will teach us acts of care instead of violence, love instead of hate and listening instead of judging.

And where violence, hatred and prejudice have wounded us, the resurrected Christ with hands scarred by nails will bind up our wounds, hold us in our pain and walk by our side with scarred feet as we try to find our way to safety.

We live in a world where violence, hatred and prejudice are a painful reality. But the Prince of Peace, that vulnerable infant that was laid in a manger, is willing to teach us the ways of care, love and listening instead. As we watch and wait this Advent, are we willing to learn? Are we willing to walk the difficult path of repentance, reparation and reconciliation in our daily lives, in the relationships we

live in? Are we willing to look at the moments when we have let violence, hatred and prejudice dictate our words and actions, so we can repent, repair as much of the damage as possible and work towards the fragile possibility of reconciliation?

And where we carry the wounds and scars of violence, hatred and prejudice directed at us, are we willing to stand up to violence, hatred and prejudice? Not by revenge, by giving like for like, but by binding up the wounds of others, as Christ binds up our wounds with scarred hands. Are we willing to hold others in their pain and to walk with them to safety, as Christ walks to safety on scarred feet with us?

As we watch and wait for the coming of the Prince of Peace, are we willing to learn to walk the path of care, love and listening?  
Amen.