

Christmas Message 2023

This year, thoughts of peace have been in our hearts and minds with even greater intention than in some years past. The news of these times is filled with images and stories as wars rage in places like Ukraine and Gaza, and the world seems overcome with the darkness of violence. In quiet moments of reflection, I wonder what it could look like for our world to turn away from violence in any form, and to turn toward peace.

Our Christmas story tells us that at the time when Jesus was born, the world was also in turmoil of war, and people spoke of many things that we speak of now. Even before then, people yearned for the Prince of Peace to come into the world, as we know from the Isaiah, who prophesied 8 centuries before Jesus' birth. He tells us this: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given....he shall be called Prince of Peace."

God heard the cries of humanity, and God responded lovingly and unexpectedly, coming into the world as a fragile being, in a nowhere place, to unknown people. The images that are replayed in our nativity scenes on display in our homes serve to remind us that there was no earthly power in evidence that quiet night in Bethlehem--just Mary and Joseph, a couple of shepherds, some animals, and at the center of it all, a tiny baby.

The humility present in that scene allowed for the glow of peace, barely perceptible, to grow in the hearts of those gathered and overcome the darkness of the world.

As followers of this child Jesus that became the Savior, we yearn for peace, we pray for peace and at times we even proclaim peace. And this calls for each of us to be agents of that very thing that we long for.

Let us, then, promise ourselves and each other, that we will be agents of peace in all that we say and do. In our families, may we devote ourselves to repair breaches of trust and model kindness toward. In our congregations, may we practice mutual love and respect in our meetings and conversations. In our communities, may we speak in tones that are compassionate and caring. Let peace be both a promise of our hearts and a guide to our actions.

The Diocesan Staff and my family and I hope that you will join us this Christmas Season as we pause at the manger and pray with our whole hearts for God's peace in our world.