



Worship Service Theme: Peace

Helpful elements: White board and markers, easel

Welcome: Welcome! It's so good to be together to celebrate faith and community today. My name is ____ and I'll be leading our worship time today. Our theme today is **peace**. What do you think of when you think about peace?

As I see it there are two sides to peace: peace with other people; and inner peace, or contentment with oneself. We'll talk more today about peace and how it relates to a life of faith. Please pray with me as we open our time together.

Opening Prayer: Great and loving God, we ask that your Holy Spirit bless our time together and to refresh us with your presence. In the midst of a world full of trouble and strife, we thank you for watching over us, guiding us, and as we confess our sins, for forgiving us. Enable us to enter your presence joyfully and reverently, and let us depart today with the assurance that our sins are forgiven. Fill us, O God, with the peace which passes understanding. Amen.

Opening Hymn: Doxology

Statement of Faith: Let us affirm our statement of faith by reciting Psalm 23 together:

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

²He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

³He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

⁴Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

⁵Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Suggested Hymns:

For the Beauty of the Earth

Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us

Amazing Grace

First reading: Isaiah 52:7-10

How beautiful upon the mountains

are the feet of the one who brings good news,

who announces **peace**, who brings good news of happiness,

who proclaims salvation,

who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."

⁸The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice;

together they sing for joy ...

⁹Break forth together into singing,

you waste places of Jerusalem,

for the Lord has comforted his people;

the Lord has redeemed Jerusalem.

¹⁰The Lord has bared his holy arm

before the eyes of all the nations,

and all the ends of the earth shall see

the salvation of our God.

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

Suggested Hymns:

Holy, Holy, Holy

Jesus Loves Me

Second reading: Philippians 4:4-9. This is the apostle Paul speaking to the new church at Philippi:

⁴"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. ⁵Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And **the peace of God**, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

⁹ Practice all you have learned and seen in me, and **the God of peace** will be with you.”

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

Suggested Hymns:

Softy and Tenderly

Leaning on the Everlasting Arms

Interactive Homily: Let’s talk a bit more about peace.

- What does it *mean* to be at peace with other people? What do we need *to do* to be at peace with others?
 - Respect, listening, care, love, tolerance, compassion, slow to anger
- In the scripture reading earlier, Paul encourages the Philippian believers to think about a few things. ***[If you have a white board on an easel, write each of these words in large letters, one at a time, and then talk about each one. Or you can choose just a few of these words and focus on those.]*** What is one thing in the world that you consider... *[ask people to name one thing for each (or just a few) of these words]:*
 - True: What is true? (the sun comes up every day; God loves us; family is important; etc.)
 - Honorable or Noble: What are some things you would consider noble, or worthy of honor? (a soldier’s sacrifice; a mother’s work raising kids; anyone who works hard at their job; etc.)
 - Just or Right: What kinds of things do you think are just, fair, or right? (laws that protect people; taking care of the poor; etc.)
 - Pure: Tell me some things that are pure. (snow; clear water; a baby; a mountain stream; love; etc.)
 - Lovely: Easy! What are some lovely things? (flowers; meadows; animals; babies; etc.)
 - Commendable or admirable: What sorts of things do we admire in life? (a job well done; a beautiful piece of art or music; caregivers here!)

- Excellent: Ooh, excellence is a fun one: What do you think is excellent in this world? (ice cream; chocolate; nature; our children; the Bible; Shakespeare; etc.)
- Worthy of praise: What sorts of things do you love to praise? (God/Jesus/Holy Spirit; the church; a wonderful wife or husband; loving kids; etc.)
- So, that's a good list! Paul says just thinking about these things is good for us. How does thinking about these things lead to peace?
 - Your mind and heart become practiced in seeing, appreciating, and encouraging the way of peace
 - You see and appreciate what God loves: God's own heart!
- Paul then says: "Practice all you have learned and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you."
 - What do we need to do in addition to training ourselves to see and appreciate peaceful, beautiful things?
 - We need to practice, to act according to principles of peace. It takes practice!
- What does it mean to be at peace with yourself? What does it mean to be at peace with others?
 - See the good in yourself and others, and praise the good you see, as often as possible.

... Let's take a moment to silently pray and reflect on God's gift of peace.

(Silent Prayer) ... Lord, hear our prayers. Now let us pray the Lord's prayer together:

Lord's Prayer: 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, 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 forever, Amen.

Suggested Hymns:

This is My Father's World

It is Well with My Soul

Standing on the Promises

Third Reading: Quotes on Peace

The day the power of love overrules the love of power, the world will know peace. –Mahatma Gandhi

World peace must develop from inner peace. Peace is not just mere absence of violence. Peace is, I think, the manifestation of human compassion. –Dalai Lama XIV

I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality... I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word. –Martin Luther King, Jr.

Those who are free of resentful thoughts surely find peace. –Buddha

Never be in a hurry; do everything quietly and in a calm spirit. Do not lose your inner peace for anything whatsoever, even if your whole world seems upset. – Saint Francis de Sales, Swiss clergyman, 1567-1622

Suggested Hymns:

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing
Shall We Gather at the River

Fourth Reading: “The Peace of Wild Things,” by Wendell Barry

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children’s lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

Suggested Hymns:

Blest Be the Tie that Binds

I Need Thee Every Hour

Closing Blessing: (Strike bell as you say the word “Lord”)

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and grant you peace. Amen.

Closing Hymn: Doxology (Reprise)

Extra material:

Ephesians 2:14-18

¹⁴ For [Christ] himself is our peace, who has ... destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility [between Jews and Gentiles.] ... Christ’s purpose was to create in himself one new humanity ..., thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in one body to reconcile [everyone] to God through the cross, by which Christ put to death hostility [between Jews and Gentiles]. ¹⁷ Christ came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through Christ we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.