

Devotion, Week of December 8, 2024

Rev. Jeanne Simpson

They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks.

Isaiah 2:4

The light of hope is joined by the light of peace in the second Sunday of Advent. Peace means *shalom* in Hebrew – not just absence of war or violence, but the state of wholeness for a person and a community. These two lights, hope and peace, shine together upon all who are caught in the darkness.

The darkness can be seen in the abundance of hostility and violence in the world, as nations engage with one another in warfare. Hostile divisions are also abundant within nations. Homes and families are hurt by cold and critical words and deeds. Sadly, even the seeds of discord disrupt the community of faith.

Yet we remember that even through all the darkness, there is the light of Christ's peace and wholeness that shines upon the world. We can see one another not as enemies but as sisters and brothers. We can embrace Christ's mercy and grace, which brings about forgiveness and healing. Christ emerged into our world as a little child, shining his light of peace over all the darkness of our ugly hostility, and brought peace to us eternally through his death on the cross.

Through faith, we can already now grasp the amazing grace where instruments of warfare and conflict give way to instruments of a new humanity and a new creation. Swords become plowshares for preparing the land for crops, and spears become pruning hooks so that the grape vines and olive trees can be prepared for a new season of fruit. And through Christ's amazing grace we become his plowshares and pruning hooks of peace for the world.

May the light of peace we have received from Christ illumine our hearts and minds with hope and peace this season.

Yours in Christ,

from *The Light of Grace*

Jeanne