

Did you know . . .

Fourth Sunday of Advent/Christmas

In this final week of Advent, we focus on PEACE.

Today we light the fourth and last purple candle, often called the Angels Candle. “And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom His favor rests.’” [Luke 2:13-14]

Peace is mentioned about 429 times in the Bible, the first being in Genesis 15:15 (talking to Abram), “You, however, shall join your forefathers in peace; you shall be buried at a contented old age.”

Peace can be defined as tranquility, harmony or security. Or it can mean prosperity or well-being. There are different types of peace, including false peace, inner peace, peace with God and peace with man.

In the Old Testament, the primary word for peace is *shalom*, referring to relationships between people, nations and God with men. Peace was the standard greeting, still in use in many cultures today.

In the New Testament, the primary Greek word for peace is *eirene*, referring to rest and tranquility (Peace on earth, Prince of Peace, Lord of Peace).

Jesus made His peace and the world’s vacillating peace: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.” [John 14:27]

We have a wonderful promise in Philippians 4:7: “Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” God’s peace is promised to guard those who pray, with thanksgiving, about everything. This peace will transcend our ability to understand it.

And, finally, on Christmas Eve, the white center candle is lit. This candle is called the Christ Candle and represents the life of Christ that has come into the world. White represents purity, for Christ is the sinless, spotless, pure Savior. Those who receive Christ as Savior are washed of their sins and made whiter than snow: “Though your sins be like scarlet, they may become white as snow; though they be crimson red, they may become white as wool.” [Isaiah 1:18]

May hope, faith, joy and peace be yours this Christmas and always

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