

Advent 2026

Welcomed in Peace

From Thanksgiving through the Christmas season, we celebrate this great gift of being welcoming. We welcome family and friends into the warmth of our homes and receive them with great joy. We begin, of course, with an invitation, but the next step is the welcome, the greeting at the door that says I am so happy you are here, even without saying the words.

But as Christian disciples, our welcome is a very specific welcome, a welcoming of Peace. This weekend, John the Baptist makes his first appearance in our Advent readings. John, of course, was the herald of Jesus, pointing the way to the Lord. Every morning, as part of morning prayer, we pray the Canticle of Zechariah. Zechariah, moved by the Holy Spirit, becomes the herald of his son John, pointing out who John will be and who he will announce. The last four verses give us a clue as to what welcomed in Peace means.

*You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way.
to give his people knowledge of salvation
by the forgiveness of their sins.*

*In the tender compassion of our God
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
to shine of those who dwell in darkness of and the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.*

The message is not addressed only to John. John was the first, but we are all called to be prophets of the Most High, sharing our knowledge of salvation and that sins ARE forgiven. This flows from God's compassion. The last verses remind us of the words of Isaiah, which we hear on Christmas Eve. *"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; Upon those lived in a land of gloom a light has shown."* And the last title given to Jesus in that passage is **Prince of Peace**.

But Zechariah doesn't say Christ will gift us peace; rather, he will *"guide our feet into the way of peace."* This is our challenge, the path we walk as christian disciples, to walk the way of peace. We turn toward others with our faces, our bodies, and our feet oriented toward them in welcome. Our faces showing Jesus to the other and seeing Jesus in them, our bodies readied for a welcoming embrace, and our feet ready to close the distance in the way of Peace. In this way of peace, we are closing the distance between them and us, between Jesus and them, from Jesus to Jesus. All in His peace.

Happy Advent, Deacon Todd