



Worship Service Theme: Peace

Helpful Elements:

Green table covering (Ordinary Time)

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 within 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 your Holy Spirit to 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, "The Lord is my shepherd," 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:
Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us
Amazing Grace

First reading: Ephesians 2:14-18, written by the apostle Paul:

¹⁴ For [Christ] himself is our peace, who has ... destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility [between people.] ... 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 people]. 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.

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

Suggested Hymns:
Holy, Holy, Holy
Jesus Loves Me

Second reading: Philippians 4:8-9. This is the apostle Paul speaking to the new church at Philippi:

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:
Leaning on the Everlasting Arms

It Is Well With My Soul

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

- As we read in the Ephesians passage, "Christ himself is our peace," breaking down "the dividing wall of hostility" (Eph. 2:14). 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, compassion, slow to anger, quick to admit wrong and to forgive
- In the scripture reading from the book of Philippians, Paul encourages the new 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 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 something that comes to mind with these words]:*
 - True: What is true? (God loves us, family is important, the sun comes up every day, 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, your helpers and care staff!)
 - 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 the Father/Jesus/Holy Spirit, the church, a wonderful wife or husband or friend, loving kids, etc.)

- So, that’s a good and deep 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 things that God had made or done – everything *good*.
 - That means that we see and appreciate what God loves: God’s own heart! And in that way, we draw near to the Spirit of God, the God of peace.
- 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 paying attention to peaceful, beautiful things?
 - We need to practice! We need to act according to principles of peace. It takes practice!
 - Steep our hearts and minds in the heart and mind of God.
- What does it mean to be at peace with yourself? What does it mean to be at peace with others?
 - Remember, daily, God’s goodness.
 - Praise the good you see, as often as possible.
 - To be a peacemaker, admit when you’ve lost sight of peace and ask forgiveness. Practice saying, “I’m sorry, I’m listening, I’m learning.”¹

... Let’s take a moment to silently pray and reflect on God’s gift of peace and how we can be peacemakers in our world.

(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

¹ From [Osheta Moore](#), pastor and peacemaker

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

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

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.

Suggested Hymns:

What a Friend We Have in Jesus

I Need Thee Every Hour

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:

Swing Low, Sweet Chariot

Glory Glory, Hallelujah

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. In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Closing Hymn: Doxology (Reprise)

Extra material:

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.