

12-08-24 FOR THE JOURNEY THIS WEEK

“God’s peace is not achieved by the strong dominating the weak; such domination may bring a temporary end to conflict and war, but it will not bring about true peace. The kingdom of God is a peaceable kingdom, a transformed society in which each member is valued and treated with dignity. The weak and the strong live together in harmony, each caring for the other. There is no true peace without justice.”

David Vryhof



Isaiah 11:1-10 + Luke 3:7-18

Questions for Reflection —

- How do you define repentance for yourself? In what ways are you being called to repentance—to a change in attitudes, actions, or lifestyle—so that you can prepare space for Jesus? What would be some manifestations of that repentance? What fruit might be produced? What acts of repentance might be required of us as a society so that each person is valued? What message do you think John the Baptist would proclaim in our world?

- What does inner peace feel like for you? Are you able to maintain inner peace regardless of external circumstances? Why or why not? What tends to disrupt your sense of inner peace? What spiritual practices help you to cultivate a sense of inner peace? What does it mean to be called into peaceful stillness at this busy time of year? How might you be a peaceful presence for others in stressful, challenging, or chaotic situations?

- How is peace presently disrupted or lacking in your family and relationships, in your school or workplace, in your neighborhood, in your local community, in our country? In what situations and places is God leading you to be a peacemaker? What role can you play in promoting harmony across dividing walls of hostility? What would it mean for us as a congregation to be a people of peace? What is the peace we can bring to the community around us? How can we bring God’s vision for a peaceful and transformed society closer to reality?

Daily Household Prayer

Merciful God, you sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation. Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.