

Sermon Notes Advent 1 [Isaiah 2:1-5](#) [Romans 13:11-14](#) [Matthew 24:36-44](#)

“They shall study war no more...” The longing for all people to beat swords into plowshares—physically pounding the metal that cuts into the lives of families, children, mothers, fathers, daughters and sons, into a new tool to till the earth, helping the earth to bring forth the abundant harvest is God’s longing for us and in us. This prophetic vision in Isaiah is a vision for us for us now—and the prophet is reminding us, we cannot go there alone, we need to respond to God’s call to us to walk in the way of God.

We are being called to awaken our hearts to the love of God for us. Is there unkindness or meanness there, convert your heart and love another. The practice of peace begins in our own hearts and in our own families. The image of pounding the metal of the sword into something new reminds us that there is effort in this transformation--fire and hard work not done alone. Can you forgive another? Can God help you to you to be generous toward someone you find that thinks differently than you think? These are hard things—which is why we do not do them alone and do not do them without turning to God.

Advent is a time of preparing, but also anticipating. A child’s excitement may be what we remember nostalgically, but this hoping is an expectation like standing outside in the predawn darkness knowing that God is doing a new thing, that Christ, God’s own self, God with us is entering into our very cells in a new way. The sun will rise—wait for it--- it is rising.

The hard piece is that we do not know when that full transformation will happen. In the meantime, we are to know the Christ is here already, peace that surpasses all understanding happens as we turn our faces to the light.

Isaiah was speaking to Israel who was in the midst of conflict, Jesus spoke to his disciples and the people in a time of violence and slavery, Paul spoke in a time of persecution. We speak to one another in a time of divisiveness. Let us speak Peace.