

# advent

360

## Week 14: Hope and Peace

*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.*

*I do not give to you as the world gives.*

*Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*

**John 14:27**

A few years ago, I faced a challenging time of life that had me feeling overwhelmed. I reached out to a close friend, whom I have known since college, and we met for coffee. As I shared my struggles, he listened without judgment and shared his own experiences of uncertainty. His understanding and encouragement reignited hope in me. Walking away from that cup of coffee, I'll never forget the sense of peace I experienced. Part of it was simply realizing I wasn't alone. Over the years, our friendship has been a source of security and strength, reminding me of the power of having someone who is truly with you. This hope and peace is but a whisper of the power of Immanuel—God with us.

As we enter the Advent season, may the Spirit of God remind us of the hope that the coming of Christ brings into our lives. This hope is a guiding light in times of uncertainty, illuminating our paths with the promise of God's presence, renewal, and grace. The peace that accompanies this hope creates space for us to rest in the knowledge that "God with us" makes all the difference in the world. Christ's arrival ushers in a peace that can calm our fears and anxieties. As we prepare our hearts for the celebration of Christ's birth in the next few weeks, let us embrace the peace that comes from trusting in His plans. And may the hope we hold and the peace we embrace foster an environment in our families, neighborhoods, churches, and this community (Bethel) wherein others experience the life changing good news of Christ's coming!

### **REFLECTION QUESTIONS:**

#### **For you**

1. In what areas of your life do you need to cultivate more hope?
2. How can you find peace amidst the chaos of daily life?
3. What are some practical ways you can share the hope and peace of Christ with others this Advent season?
4. What does following Jesus look like in my daily life?
  - a. Sit quietly and comfortably. Start by praying for God to lead you and guide you.
  - b. Close your eyes and breathe deeply and slowly.
  - c. With each inhale breath, pray "Spirit of the Christ."
  - d. With each exhale breath, pray "I receive your peace..."
  - e. Rest in the presence of the all-loving God. Stay open to the Holy Spirit's guidance.
  - f. After a while, simply end by telling God "thank you" for his ability to revive.

continued below...

**For your work**

1. How does the advent theme of hope resonate with your current life experiences?
2. In what ways can our team support one another in finding peace this Advent?
3. What scriptures or stories inspire hope and peace for our group, and how can we share them with each other?

**For students** (questions to have in your ‘back pocket’)

1. How are you thinking about Christmas in this “college era” of your life?
2. Are you feeling hopeful? Does the thought of Jesus’ coming (celebrated at Christmas) give you hope?
3. How do you think “peace” relates to Christmas? In what way does Jesus’ incarnation offer peace to you?

**Next week:** Week 2 of our two week Advent Series in which we’ll focus on the advent themes of Joy and Love.

How is this resource working for you? How is God using it to form you? Are there ways we can improve it? How can we pray for you? If you’ve got questions or thoughts, we invite you to be in touch with us. Send us an email at [campus-ministries@bethel.edu](mailto:campus-ministries@bethel.edu)