

Sabbath Moments
A Service of Healing and Wholeness
Sunday, December 23, 2007, 6pm
Southport Presbyterian Church
The Toney Chapel

The Peace of Christ

When he comes..., people all over the earth will acknowledge his greatness, and he will bring peace.

(Micah 5:4-5)

His name shall be called... Prince of Peace.

(Isaiah 9:6)

Peace I bequeath to you, my own peace I give you, a peace this world cannot give, this is my gift to you.

(John 14:27)

Keep your eyes on the Prince of Peace. He is the one who does not cling to his divine power; the one who refuses to turn stones into bread, jump from great heights and rule with great power; the one who says "Blessed are the poor, the gentle, those who mourn, and those who hunger and thirst for righteousness; blessed are the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers and those who are persecuted in the cause of uprightness;" the one who touches the lame, the crippled and the blind; the one who speaks words of forgiveness and encouragement; the one who dies alone, rejected and despised. Keep your eyes on him who becomes poor with the poor, weak with the weak, and who is rejected with the rejected. He is the source of all peace.

Where is this peace to be found? The answer is clear. In weakness.... Right where we are weakest, the peace which is not of this world is hidden.

(Henri Nouwen, Weavings)

The Work of Christmas

**When the song of the angels is stilled
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins.
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among brothers,
To make music in the heart.**

(Howard Thurman)

A Living Sign

I know not always how God comes,
but that God comes—this I know:
in an obscure stable,
in splashing waters,
in the breaking of bread
and often, my friend,
incarnate in you,
for God, I believe, still comes in the flesh, in people.
Now and always
may the Christ in you
keep you
a sign of living love
and love living among us.
(Bonnie B. Belasic)

For the ancient Hebrews who schooled our Lord the word was shalom, a word so rich that it embraced all the realms of human life. For the individual, shalom meant wholeness, integrity, and self-possession as evidenced by bodily health, longevity, and prosperity. To have shalom meant to enjoy the free, uninhibited growth of the soul in community with others and in right relationship with God.

God's peace was not passivity nor peace on the surface nor cheap peace of mind but a deep peace—reached perhaps by equally deep turmoil...

The peace of God is real but fleeting, a gift we already possess but one that we have not fully realized. To claim it we may have to surrender our notions of what it is, for peace is offered us not in the absence of struggle but in the presence of almighty God—a peace that comes with a sword, a peace such as the world cannot give, but a peace that promises even now to banish our fears and set our troubled hearts at rest. In that way God's peace is very much a part of God's kingdom. It is a land that is as near to us as it is far off, a land in which we are both citizens and sojourners. While we would like to live in it now, the best we may be able to do for the time being is to live into it, rowing a little closer with each choice we make and believing that when we arrive at last it will be by God's grace and in God's own good time.

(Barbara Brown Taylor, Weavings)

God's peace, which is far beyond human understanding, will keep your heart and mind safe in union with Jesus Christ.

(Philippians 4:7)

God be with you this Advent.