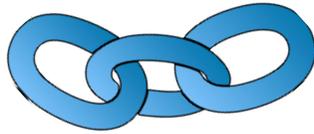


Wolds and Trent Methodist Circuit



The Link



THE PRINCE OF PEACE

DECEMBER 2021

Pastoral Letter

Dear Peacemakers,

One of the verses used at Christmas and attributed to the prophet, Isaiah, is:

For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and **Prince of Peace**" (Isaiah 9:6).

To me, one of the important phrases here, is **Prince of Peace**. Perhaps you know the following song which isn't one we sing very often but the lyrics go like this,

Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.

Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be.

With God as our Father, brothers (sisters) all are we.

Let me walk with my brother (sister) in perfect harmony.

Jesus said, "Happy are the people who make peace, because they will be called God's children" (Matt 5:9, CEB). The author of the book of Hebrews writes, "**Pursue** the goal of peace with everyone" (12:14, CEB), or "**Make every effort** to live in peace with everyone" (12:14, NIV), or "**Work at** living in peace with everyone" (12:14, NLT). So, whether we are striving, pursuing, making every effort, or working at living in peace, there appears to be some struggle involved. I recently completed a course at Conrad Grebel, Waterloo, Ontario in 'Peace and Conflict Studies.' This doesn't mean that I will always have a peaceful coexistence with my brothers and sisters. I still need to work at it and be constantly striving toward the presence of peace.

How can one achieve the 'presence of peace,' 'make peace,' or 'live at peace' when others are not as eager for harmonious living? In a pilgrimage song, the psalmist says, "I've lived far too long with people who hate peace. I'm for peace, but when I speak, they are for war" (Psalm 120:6-7). One child educator says, "In war, we draw lines and barricade ourselves against the enemy. Educating for peace means

building bridges between people—across every divide...”¹ Some years ago, our district offered a *Bridge Builders* course which taught practical peace-making skills. No doubt some of these included building bridges between one another. Jesus goes by many names as we already read in Isaiah 9:6, but He is the ultimate **bridge builder**. Jesus Christ is our Mediator (I Timothy 2:5), the connection, the bridge, between God and us. We are called to be bridge builders and peace makers too. Thus, back to Jesus’ words again, “Blessed are the Peacemakers for they will be called the children of God.”

In Luke 2:13-14, the angel appears to the shepherds announcing the birth of the Messiah, the Lord. After the announcement, “Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth **peace** to those on whom his favour rests.” There’s that word ‘peace’ again and it’s not just an ethereal peace but a robust peace that is generated on the earth and inaugurated with the appearance of the Prince of Peace. Jesus came to build a bridge between humanity and God. He came to reconcile all things to himself and has led the way in making peace. Most importantly of all, we now have peace with God because of Jesus’ finished work on the cross. Jesus encountered hostile people, those who hated others and intended evil against Him as the hymnist wrote: “Then ‘crucify’ is all their breath, and for His death, they thirst and cry” (My Song is Love Unknown). The peace that Jesus fought for came at a great cost!

Let’s live as people of peace. We finish where we started with the second verse of ‘let there be peace on earth,’

“Let peace begin with me, let this be the moment now. With every step I take, let this be my solemn vow. To take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally.

Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.”

Peace be with you, Rev. Heather



EDITOR'S LETTER

After reading Rev. Heather's article, I put my thinking cap on and wrote this acrostic poem. I hope you enjoy it and maybe come up with one of your own in a quiet moment!

P rince	of	P eace
R eign in our hearts.		E ncourage and grow.
I nclude all Nations.		A lpha and Omega.
N ew Life for All.		C onnect and build bridges.
C ome into our World.		E ncounter Jesus
E ternal Harmony		and live as people of peace.

Hoping you all have a safe, healthy and happy Christmas.

Julie Barrow (Upton)



Peace at Christmas

On hearing the suggestion that the theme for this edition of the Link could be The Prince of Peace at Christmas it reminded me of what we did at Middle Rasen on one Christmas past.

It centred around the Carol, Silent Night. Silent Night was written by Joseph Mohr whose profession was repairing and restoring organs. He was working on an organ in a village church but was unable to repair it in time for Christmas. To help the congregation he wrote Silent Night to be accompanied by guitar.

Fast forward many years to Christmas 1914, and early in a war set to ravage Europe. On that Christmas Day, the Tommies in the trenches heard the strains of Silent Night being sung in the German trenches, and soon the Tommies joined in. Tentatively, heads appeared over the trenches and the two opposing armies advanced towards each other in friendship. Soon impromptu football matches broke out and cigarettes exchanged. Unfortunately, the commanders were not happy with what they saw and the next day, the soldiers were exchanging bullets not cigarettes.

It was a truly remarkable experience which we remembered in our Carol Service in 1918 using the booklet prepared by the Methodist Church. It was the power of a Carol written by an organ repairer that halted two great armies. What else but the power of God through the words of a hymn could achieve such a remarkable event.

Have a happy and peaceful Christmas.

Brian Cook (Middle Rasen)



The Christmas Gift

Put behind you all your worries, your sadness and your pain,
The Christmas season full of joy
Is with us once again.
Dust off the tree, the decorations and the twinkling lights
Take a trip down Lincoln High Street,
to see the festive sights.
Buy your presents secretly,
wrap them well,
so no-one knows the gifts you have in mind for them,
tied up with pretty bows.
For 'tis the time of year for giving, for love and peace on earth.
'Tis the time the world remembers,
a little baby's birth.
So long ago in Bethlehem, the angels came to say
To shepherds and to wise men,
Christ is born today
The Son of God, the Saviour of men and women everywhere
If they just accept Him at His word
and talk to Him through Prayer.
For that child grew up to be a man and die upon a tree,
Where He took upon Himself,
Our guilt,
The sins of you and me.
Now He walks beside us down life's way,
He listens for our call.
Will you not make this Christmas the most beautiful of all?
As you pass around those presents,
chosen with great care

Give one to Him whose birthday we celebrate and share.
But if you're not sure which he'd like
and you wonder what to bring
Then just give your heart
to Jesus
Your Saviour and Your King

Peter R Atkinson...Thoughts of home - Written in Hong Kong September 1989

Peter and I were made aware of a phone app 'Lectio 365' which we have begun to follow each morning and evening. It has proved to be a great source of encouragement and inspiration – it follows the acrostic PRAY – Praise, Reflect, Ask & Yield. I have found it particularly helpful each evening to unwind from the day and refocus on God – as each evening it begins with a beautiful prayer. We are invited to open our hands and share in the prayer 'Come Holy Spirit to my mind – I receive your comfort. Come Holy Spirit to my heart – I receive your peace. Come Holy spirit to my soul – I receive the Father's love for me'

We pray that you too will find a new way to refocus on God and receive all He has for you this Christmas time.

Wishing you all a very blessed Christmas.

Jenny & Peter Atkinson (Glenthams)

Sugar and Spice

Ladies, please join us at 'Rowany', 2 Greenfields, Glenthams for coffee, tea, cakes, friendship & informal discussion about some of the big questions in life.

Saturday 15th January 9.30am

Saturday 19 February 9.30am

Saturday 19th March 9.30am

By kind invitation of

Margaret Fielder 01673 878004

Organised by members of Glenthams Methodist Church



Men's Breakfast

Please come and join us at

'The Bottle and Glass

Normanby-by-Spital

Saturday 11th December at 9am

(2nd Saturday each month)

An opportunity for men to meet and chat over a delicious full English breakfast.

Please Phone Trevor Faulkner 01673 878806 to reserve a Place. Organised by members of Glentham Methodist Church.

A Christmas Remembered - Rev. Louise

As a minister, I have seen a number of Nativity plays over the years, some in church, some when given a spare family ticket and sitting among rows of parents all praising their child, some as the invited guest in school - all have a real poignancy but there is one I will particularly remember. The Sunday School children had "done" the nativity and wanted to do something different. Then a family arrived - well exploded on us! Time keeping wasn't regular in their house so they could arrive anywhere between 9.30 and 12 on a Sunday morning- but as Christmas approached, they knew what we did. 'That play with the baby'. The other children accepted it, a couple of them helped script the Sunday Carol Service. We practised, they practised (& didn't turn up to the last practice). I remember the sleepless night working out how to make the service work, but this blended family arrived, parents in slightly shocked tow as they realised their children were being allowed to take centre stage. As the service began, they were ready, up front and taking their place. They remembered their places ... their grins ... we relaxed. The other children did their parts, the adults theirs and the baby Jesus was placed in the stable by an angel. That was when it all took a new meaning. I'm not sure why we hadn't talked about what they did once the baby was in a manger- but one thing they knew in their large, blended family was babies!! This baby Jesus did not sleep peacefully in the hay. He clearly cried and was picked up for a cuddle. The parents demanded turns in cuddling the baby. His nappy was changed - it must have slept by Joseph's face! The shepherds and wise men got a cup of tea - at least I think it was tea - and the Baby Jesus was passed around- until he cried or needed a change when he was passed swiftly back.

It was so real, I had tears in my eyes and had to get up to finish the service. They had made me see a new reality in the story. These strangers visiting the baby became family and shared in the joy and the cuddles. The parents kept the responsibility and the hard work and they let us see it. It was a remarkable service as these children, not normally allowed up front, took over and were allowed to. They showed us what God did and continues to do.

