

# Sanctuary First

A PLACE TO BE

## November 2017: The impossibility of peace?

This November at Sanctuary First we are longing for - and praying for - peace. Remembrance, towards the start of the month, is a time when we think of all those who have died and who go on dying in tragic conflicts around the world. We cry out for peace, safety and security in an often chaotic, unsettling and dangerous world. We will be thinking about vulnerable leadership, preserving community through a proud heritage of stories, sharing our gifts and reconciling ourselves to God.

The most featured word in our *Heart and Soul* consultation, May 2017, was 'peace'. People wrote about the desire to work for peace through climate, social, and humanitarian justice. We live in fractious, unstable times and peace can seem like a remote prospect. This November we are asking, how can we offer peace to one another?

*Each week contains 7 Bible references. Several from Lectionary + additional reading(s) relating to the sub theme.*

Date	Subtheme	Readings	Notes
5 Nov	Peace is a costly investment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Joshua 3: 7-17</li> <li>2. Psalm 107: 1-9</li> <li>3. Psalm 107: 33-37</li> <li>4. Micah 3: 5-12</li> <li>5. Psalm 43</li> <li>6. 1 Thessalonians 2: 9-13</li> <li>7. Matthew 23: 1-12</li> </ol>	<p>There are no easy answers to creating a peaceful society. However at the heart of all harmonious societies are leaders who know their own frailty. Joshua is one such person. Overwhelmed by the task he has been given, it is the reassurance given by God, 'As I was with Moses so I will be with you'.</p> <p>It is this promise that allows him to move the people of Israel forward. This week as we prepare to remember the folly of war and the cost of peacemaking. What lessons can we learn from our scripture verses? You can use the following ideas for starters (the numbers correspond with the Bible readings).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Humility in a leader is a an essential quality.</li> <li>2. God is redeeming his creation.</li> <li>3. God's justice can upset the applectart of expectation.</li> <li>4. Leaders need to practice what they speak about.</li> <li>5. Hope is the source of all peace.</li> <li>6. Peacemakers can be in no one's debt. Otherwise they will be unable to objective.</li> <li>7. True greatness lies in serving all.</li> </ol>

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12 Nov	<b>Peace means telling the truth to the generations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Joshua 24: 1-3a</li> <li>2. Joshua 24: 14-25</li> <li>3. Psalm 78: 1-7</li> <li>4. Amos 5: 18-24</li> <li>5. Psalm 70</li> <li>6. 1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18</li> <li>7. Matthew 25: 1-13</li> </ol>	<p>Jesus told us a house divided against itself cannot stand. Understanding the ties that bind them together makes for a strong and lasting community. The importance of heritage, telling stories of struggle and hope, forgiveness and reconciliation - are at the heart of a community that will last for centuries.</p> <p>This week we reflect on the stories of past heroes of faith and peace.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Truth is the glue that holds society together - remembering God's activity in the past gives confidence to believe in his intervention today.</li> <li>2. Each generation has to decide what they believe to be true and act upon it.</li> <li>3. Telling the stories of faith, and parables, creates a foundation to build peace.</li> <li>4. Living peace-filled-lives rubs off onto others.</li> <li>5. Prayer works.</li> <li>6. Viewing the larger picture that speaks of swords into ploughshares - inspires us to believe.</li> <li>7. We need to be awake for the peace opportunities.</li> </ol>
19 Nov	<b>Shared leadership shared gifting</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Judges 4: 1-7</li> <li>2. Psalm 123</li> <li>3. Zephaniah 1: 7, 12-18</li> <li>4. Psalm 90: 1-8</li> <li>5. Psalm 90: 9. 11</li> <li>6. 1 Thessalonians 5: 1-11</li> <li>7. Matthew 25: 14-20</li> </ol>	<p>The story of Deborah, and her leadership role in ancient Israel, while unique, highlights the fact that gender should not be a limiting factor when it comes to leadership within the history of God's people.</p> <p>The story of how she partnered with Barak to bring about a great victory can be seen as an important lesson for leaders and societies to learn and understand.</p> <p>See also our video: <a href="#">Meet Deborah</a></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teamwork allows more people to share in success.</li> <li>2. Reaching out to God when despised and rejected by neighbours and friends.</li> <li>3. In the light of our frailty before God we should be silent.</li> <li>4. When it comes to relationships, life is short - let us ask God to teach us how to be wise.</li> <li>5. Longing for God's approval.</li> <li>6. Time is short, no need for fussing and fighting (<i>Work It Out, The Beatles</i>) - get ready for his return.</li> <li>7. Life to be lived and traded not buried.</li> </ol>

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26 Nov	<b>Peace means to be reconciled to God</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ezekiel 34: 11-16, 20-24</li> <li>2. Psalm 100</li> <li>3. Psalm 95: 1-7</li> <li>4. Ephesians 1: 15-23</li> <li>5. Matthew 25: 31-46</li> <li>6. Matthew 5: 21-23</li> <li>7. Luke 6: 37-42</li> </ol>	<p>The Christmas story is all about God taking the initiative to reach out to a lost humanity searching for meaning and purpose. The first reading this week set us up nicely to begin to consider why Jesus was called the 'Prince of Peace'. In Ezekiel, the prophet reminds us that God is like a shepherd who searches for his lost sheep. In John 10 Jesus identifies himself as the 'Good Shepherd.' In fact he is also the inclusive shepherd seeking to bring together those who are not of the house and lineage of David.</p> <p>This week we are minded of the joy that comes through forgiveness and reconciliation. We are being taught from scripture that it is our duty and calling to be peacemakers. Prayers for this week around the idea of being a peacemaker - one who searches out the hurting and the lost.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. God cares for those who have been bullied and excluded from the flock. God will judge leaders who have misused their power and influence.</li> <li>2. It is a great thing to live our whole life in praise of God. Live joyfully even in the dark times in anticipation of the good days.</li> <li>3. We have an identity that reflects God's nature of compassion and love. Be careful - guard your heart so that it does not become hard.</li> <li>4. Reflecting on the great prayer of Paul for the church.</li> <li>5. Write a prayer for the needy and that we will not fail when our time comes for our actions to be tested.</li> <li>6. The importance of allowing the teaching of Jesus to influence how we understand and interpret the whole of scripture.</li> <li>7. Write a prayer surrounding attitudes to judging others. Live life, love God and others will look and long to be drawn into the light of the Gospel.</li> </ol>