

Today we like the candle of Peace. For me, personally, this is one of the hardest parts of Advent to remember. It's easy to remember the joy that we see with the kids running around each day. It's easy to remember the love that we have for each other, for God, for Christ, for the children. It's very easy to remember hope. We can always find hope. We remember, even in the darkness, the light will come and we'll have hope again.

The hardest part is to remember peace. We see war everywhere we go. We see hate. We see anger. We see torment everywhere we go. It's hard to keep peace in mind.

I was talking this week with our Conference Minister elect, and he asked me what goals I have for next year and I stopped. I'm like, what do you mean? It's next year. We have the same goals, we have every year. We want to grow. We want to share; we want to help. We want to remember how to live a righteous life. And I started thinking about that this week, more so because I have trouble with peace. That's what I need to work on next year. How do I find that peace? Where do I find peace within myself that I can share with others?

It was no secret. I haven't been a minister for a very long time. My background's a little different than most to get us here. And during that time, there was a lot of anger. There's a lot of hate. There's a lot of distrust and sometimes I fall back into that; we all do. We all fall back into our past, no matter how hard we try to get away from it on a daily basis. I'm reminded of something that I don't like somewhere. We all are. It's hard not to. And how do we handle that? How do we handle dealing with that every day? Finding that inner peace within us that we can overlook, that we can overlook our own flaws. That we can overlook our own issues.

One of the things that got brought up in our Bible study a couple weeks ago, we like to think of ourselves as being tolerant. We like to think of ourselves as being inclusive. We like to think of ourselves as being forgiving, especially here in this church. And I asked somebody because it was brought to my attention that by doing so, I have less tolerance for those who aren't tolerant. And that seems kind of oxymoronic there. I want all of us to be tolerant. I want us to all love each other. I want us to

remember that God gave us his only son. But at the same time, I want you to do it my way. That's the exact opposite of what we're trying to teach. That's the opposite of what we want to believe. That's the opposite of what we want to share. I need to find the peace within myself to accept people that have absolutely 100 percent opposite views and values and opinions of myself and to accept that. You recognize that they're waiting. We're waiting, and we need to find that peace within ourselves and that's hard. It's very hard.

Today's reading was from Isaiah. This was 800 years before Jesus was born, But Isaiah still made the point that this was going to happen. He proclaimed Jesus will come. That a gift will be given to us from God that he will be named The Prince of Peace. It's hard to believe now that it's 2,000 years later. We're still fighting in that same part of the world. We're fighting in our part of the world. He came, and he showed us the way. He showed us the light. He showed us how to love one another, to treat one another like we want to be treated.

We forget that we are not better than the rest of the world. We are not better than the people next to us. We are not better than the people that have different views and ideas than we do. We are all the same.

We want to share God's love everywhere. We do. We want to be a part of his life. You want everyone to be a part of his life so when the time comes, we can all share that love and rejoice together.