

Sermon Title: **“PEACE: Bear Fruit!”**

Bible: **Isaiah 11:1-10 & Matthew 3:1-12**

When: on the 2nd Sunday of Advent, December 4th, 2022

Where: about 30 people (plus YouTube streaming viewers) at Gilroy UMC

Opening Prayer

O Lord, we are preparing your way of the Lord. Please change our hearts, and use our hands and feet. Let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts, be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock, and our Redeemer. Amen.

1. What is Peace?

Today, we lit the Advent Candles, which means joyful hope and the proclaimed peace. Today is the 2nd Sunday of Advent for Peace. What does Peace look like to you? My name is Hwapyoung, which comes from the first part of the word “Peacemaker” in Matthew 5:9. Matthew 5:9 is a part of the beatitudes, the blessings listed by Jesus in the sermon on the Mount. It says “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” As we are all children of God, the blessing and the identity of peacemakers is not only for me but also for all of us.

“Hwapyoung” means peace in Korean, but there are deeper meanings in Korean words, due in part to the way Korean words use Chinese characters.



The first word “Hwa” is the combination of the two Chinese characters. The left side looks like rice, which means food. The right side looks like a mouth.



So, this first word “Hwa” can be understood as food to people’s mouths. In other words, feeding the people. The second word “Pyeong” looks like two hands, which means equal. Then, the word “Hwapyoung,” Peace in Korean means that there is peace when we share our food equally with other people. Does this make sense to you? Easier said than done. Am I a peacemaker? Do I live like my name? Do I make a little peace today? When someone calls me, sometimes I reflect on my name and my daily life. What does Peace look like to you? And how do you live as peacemakers?

2. What is Peace in Isaiah 11?

In the Bible, there are many images or descriptions of God’s Kingdom. Isaiah 11 is one of them. “⁶ The wolf shall live with the lamb; the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf

and the lion will feed together, and a little child shall lead them. ⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. ⁸ The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. ⁹ They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." Have we imagined this peaceful kingdom? Have we imagined God's Kingdom where the strong and the weak are together? Have we imagined God's Kingdom where the rich and the poor are together? Have we imagined God's Kingdom on earth where all people are together beyond our cultures, our languages, and our colors? What does God's peaceful kingdom look like to you and me?

3. Bear Fruit!

John the Baptist shouted out "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." He also shouted out "Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight." He shouted out "Bear fruit worthy of repentance." I believe that God's Kingdom is already here and now, as our Lord Jesus Christ is among us, with us, and in us. Where our Lord is, it is God's Kingdom. But God's Kingdom has not been completed yet until our resurrected Jesus Christ will come again. So, the voices of John the Baptist are still valid, as we are preparing for the second coming of our Lord. God calls us to prepare the way of the Lord. God calls us to bear fruit!

When I came to Gilroy United Methodist Church, Mihyun and I joined our church community garden. In Korea, we used to live in an apartment. So, we could not have any experience of gardening. But we had a passion! We dug out the soil. Our hands and our

clothes got dirty. Sometimes, I needed to stretch out my back. We planted the seeds of tomatoes and squash. We also planted some Korean vegetables. We took turns to water the plants. I saw some sprouts. We still watered. For the tomatoes, we set up some stakes for them to grow on. They needed continuous care. Finally, it was time to harvest the tomatoes, squash, and some Korean vegetables. We made some salads with the tomatoes, and we enjoyed some Korean soup with squash. We ate Korean BBQ with Korean vegetables. Gardening requires our time and sweat. The food was healthy and delicious! What I learned from our church community gardening is that it needs our hands and feet as well as our heart. Our hands and feet will get dirty in order to bear fruits.

4. Heart and Feet Strangely Warmed!

What does God's peaceful Kingdom look like to you? As we are all theologians, we have our own understanding of God's peaceful Kingdom. As we are all children of God, we are peacemakers. God's Kingdom is already here and now, as God is with us. But God's Kingdom is not complete yet. God's peaceful Kingdom needs not only our hearts, but also our hands and feet. I believe that we have heard of John Wesley's heart being strangely warmed. When our Founder, John Wesley, experienced his conversion, he felt his heart strangely warmed. But have you heard of "Feet Strangely Warmed"? These socks are sold in Cokesbury. This is what our world needs.



What I mean is not the socks, but your feet, our feet strangely warmed for God's peaceful

kingdom. When our hearts are broken from the news of violence and war, racism and sexism, and hatred, I hope that our feet are strangely warmed. And our hands strangely warmed, too. That's because to bear fruit requires our hands and feet. God's Kingdom needs peacemakers' hands and feet.

Today we will have communion. When you come to the table of the Lord, please come with your hands and feet. I hope that when we take and eat, our hands and feet will be strangely warmed. Then, please follow where God leads you with your strangely warmed hands and feet. May God's peaceful Kingdom come through our hands and feet!

Closing Prayer

O Lord, with our hands and feet, we come to you. As you call us as children of God, we are peacemakers for this world. Please use our hands and feet for your peaceful kingdom.

In Jesus' name. Amen.