

“First Watch” Touch Points for Evangel’s Prayer Vigil team
For the week of December 18, 2016

Lasting Peace

Continuing with the theme from last week, I thought some of the selections from the Advent devotional “From Heaven Above” by Michael Hoy (available in the Fireside Room) were especially appropriate to Evangel as we wait on the Lord to reveal his plan during our Succession Planning. We’ll return to reflections from “Time Out in Tough Times” on January 1. — Stu Johnson, editor. This reflection came from Tuesday of this past week, the third week of Advent—Peace.

READ: I do not give to you as the world gives. *John 14:27*

REFLECT: One of the mottos in our consumer-minded world is that “everything has a price.’ Yet, no matter how much the world has tried, it cannot buy peace.

God knows that leaders of nations, at great economic and military cost, have sought to earn their own version of victory over others, thereby achieving their own sense of peace. They have called upon the great sacrifices of troops bloodied in combat for this cause. Yet, for all their best efforts, peace as they envisioned it has always remained elusive. War and violence have not been stopped. Troubles have not gone away. Burdens will remain.

Maybe we are going about peace the wrong way. Yes, there are struggles in life. There are burdens. There are troubles. But in the very midst of them, not in spite of them, not even at the expense of them or others, Jesus gives us peace. He does not seek to escape his hour of trial, but has the power to face it head on because of the peace he gives that the world cannot give—a lasting peace with God, a peace that finally triumphs over all sin, death and evil, a peace that embraces the whole world, even our enemies.

The cross is never a way out. But it is a way through.

PRAY: *Lord, help us to see beyond the illusions of this world that you are the priceless treasure of peace that we need. Amen.*

ADDITIONAL PRAYER PROMPTS

- Use the Pause to Pray as a guide to focus on other concerns through the week. Copies can be found in the lobby and in the Archive section on the website (evbapt.org/archive). The full Pause to Pray is used in our Wednesday prayer time. An abbreviated version appears in the Sunday bulletin.
- Reflect on this week’s worship service—the music, Scripture, Pastor Dave’s message* “Putting Jesus in His Place—Part 1” (Matthew 16:13-17)—that all will help as you go through this week; for your own walk with Christ, and that you may be a blessing and witness to people you have contact with during the week.
- Continue to pray for opportunities to invite people to our services and to become engaged in spiritual discovery with the people of Evangel in other ways as well. Ask the Lord to open doors of conversation, connection and compassion with others to enable that engagement this week.
- Pray that God will bless our succession planning efforts. Pray for the Lord’s blessing on the Negotiating Team as it works with a church in Wheaton that made an offer to purchase our property (we plan to use the proceeds to establish an Evangel Missions Legacy Fund to continue our commitment to missions for 8-10 years or more). The Negotiating Team is awaiting a follow-up meeting to a counter-offer, aiming to bring the overall Terms of sale for membership approval before moving on to a detailed sale Contract. Pray for wisdom and continued evidence of God’s providence in this process.

* A podcast of the sermon and PDF files of other material will be posted on the website by Monday.