

shalom with others, to bless others with that which you are blessed. What elements of Shalom can you claim as your life experiences? Have you experienced an overwhelming and overflowing of blessings? Contemplate these questions and write your responses here.

Thursday, December 14

For Thursday and Friday of this week we will explore two Spiritual Practices from Whitney Simpson's book *Fully Human, Fully Divine*. Today we will explore *Lectio Divina*. *Lectio Divina* is Latin for "holy reading." It is a means of communicating with God, allowing you to listen for God speaking to you. The scripture you will work with is Luke 2:10-14. Settle in and read this scripture slowly. You may want to read it aloud so that you are not only reading but listening to the words. Read it a second time or have someone else read it for you or listen to a recording of the scripture if possible. Meditate on words that "capture your attention" or give you pause for more exploration. Consider what God might be saying to you in this experience of Holy Reading and listening. Write your reflections here.

Friday, December 15

For today we will consider Creative Contemplation with the word "peace." Write the word peace vertically on a piece of paper with "p" at the top and the second "e" on the bottom. Take a few deep breathes to boost your creativity then ponder the ways you have experienced peace this week. Consider if you have already chosen to simplify for peace during the Season of Advent. After writing your poem with words that begin with each letter of the word "peace," consider what God wants you to notice about your poem. Meditate on other ways you can be creative in cultivating more peace in our life. Write your reflections here.

Message Notes – December 10, 2023

Fully Human, Fully Divine - *The Power of Peace* *

- I. _____ is what a lot of us desire and has been a desire of humanity for thousands of years.
 - A. We read in Psalm 29, "May the LORD give _____ to his people! May the LORD bless his people with _____!" (Verse 11)
 1. Are we not _____ for peace?
 2. We pray for peace in _____.
 3. We pray for peace in our _____.
 - B. The people of Jesus' day wanted peace proclaimed to the shepherd near Bethlehem: "_____ to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom God _____!" (Luke 2:14)
 1. Caesar Augustus considered himself a "_____ of god" and a "_____ of peace."
 2. His _____, however, was self-proclaimed, and his idea of peace involved eliminating all of Rome's _____.
 - C. For Israel, the _____ good news would only come when God's _____ king, the Messiah, would come on the scene and pave the way for God to save them from these tyrants.
 1. This is a very _____ kind of peace than that of the likes of Augustus.
 2. God's rescue mission for all humanity was becoming a reality in a _____ in Bethlehem.
- II. The Hebrew word translated as "peace" is "_____."
 - A. Shalom involves personal _____, safety, completeness, _____ - _____ and health.

*Psalm 29 and Luke 2:1-14

1. To be clear shalom is _____ that is spoken of in our scriptures.
 2. Jesus also spoke of _____ in his famous Sermon on the Mount.
- B. Whitney Simpson writes, “You are the Lord’s people! The Lord _____ to _____ you with peace!”
1. Whitney writes that “Psalm 29:11 invites us to both _____ and _____.”
 2. We will never have shalom in the world, in the Middle East, in our communities... in our homes unless we have shalom in our _____.
 3. When Jesus spoke of the peacemakers in his Sermon on the Mount, I believe it is _____ that those peacemakers possessed a certain measure of peace in their individual lives.
- III. The gift of peace seems so fragile, but in fact it requires a great deal of strength to _____ toward peace.
- A. It takes both the _____ strength to seek peace within ourselves and strength to _____ to God’s peace in the world.
 - B. Allow yourselves to receive the gifts of both _____ and _____ as we continue our Advent journey.

Daily Devotional Guide

The following is a daily devotional and study guide meant to enhance your understanding of the message and grow as a Christian.

It is offered for your personal reflection or to share with others.

Monday, December 11

Read Psalm 29. The message began with some thoughts about peace what we pray for when considering the phrase “Peace on earth.” Pastor Jack asked, “Are we not praying for peace?” With all that is going on in our world from wars raging in Ukraine and in the Middle East, gun violence continuing to plague our nation, renewed concerns about Covid-19 and of course the political landscape of the United States being so fractured, it’s a wonder

that we aren’t moved to be on our knees praying 24/7! What concerns come to your mind when you hear the question “Are we not praying for peace?” What does your heart long for when you hear the words “Peace on earth?” Contemplate these ideas and write your reflections here.

Tuesday, December 12

Read Luke 2:1-14. You may have been surprised to learn that Caesar Augustus considered himself to be a god and referred to himself as “the prince of peace.” That fact is that he was a murderous dictator that sought always to eliminate his enemies before risking that they may become more popular and revered than he. Of course this is the difference between earthy kingdoms and Jesus’ Kingdom that is not of this earth (John 18:36) Jesus’ kingdom is one of servant leadership in which there is an abundance of grace and love for all humanity. The Kingdom of God seeks justice for all and we are instructed to see each other through the eyes of our loving Creator. What does it mean for our Creator to be a loving King and Lord over our lives? What does it mean to celebrate Jesus as the true Prince of Peace? Write your ideas here as you pray for God direction to be a fruitful partner in God’s Kingdom on earth!

Wednesday, December 13

Read Psalm 29 and Luke 2:1-14. Shalom is the Hebrew word that we translate as peace but Shalom means so much more as explained in the message. Shalom embodies the wholeness and well-being of a person. Shalom involves personal wholeness, safety, completeness, well-being and health. To experience Shalom is to experience a fullness of blessing that spills over in to the lives of others. It is such an incredible experience of wholeness and fullness of being bless that one is move to share