

## **Responsive Reading** from Matthew 5 and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Leader: When Jesus saw the crowd, he went up to the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

People: A child of no more than eight walked with her mother one day in a demonstration. An amused policeman leaned down to her and said with mock gruffness, “What do you want?” The child looked into his eyes, unafraid, and gave her answer: “Freedom,” she said. She could not even pronounce the word, but no Gabriel trumpet could sound a truer note.

Leader: “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.”

People: True peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice.... It is not enough to say, “We must not wage war.” It is necessary to love peace and sacrifice for it. We must concentrate not merely on the eradication of war but on the affirmation of peace.

Leader: “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

People: Commit yourself to the noble struggle for equal rights. You will make a greater person of yourself, a greater nation of your country, and a finer world to live in.... We shall overcome because the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.

## **Lighting of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Advent Candle – Peace**

### **Unison Prayer**

Gracious and merciful God, be with us today as we light our candle of peace. In all of our lives, let us hunger and thirst for righteousness, offer mercy to all in need, and work for peace among individuals and nations. In times of despair and loss, remind us of Martin Luther King’s words: “The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.” Help us be justice seekers and peace-makers all of our lives. In the name of the one whose birth we prepare to celebrate, Jesus Christ. Amen.

## **Responsive Reading** from Martin Luther King, Jr., and Matthew 5

Leader: When evil burns and bombs, good must build and bind. When evil shouts ugly words of hatred, good must commit to the glories of love. Where evil would perpetuate an unjust status quo, good must seek to bring a real order of justice.

People: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Leader: A child of no more than eight walked with her mother one day in a demonstration. An amused policeman leaned down to her and said with mock gruffness, "What do you want?" The child looked into his eyes, unafraid, and gave her answer: "Freedom," she said. She could not even pronounce the word, but no Gabriel trumpet could sound a truer note.

People: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

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