



## Wednesday Prayer

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent – Forging and shaping changes

**He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.**

**O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!**

**Isaiah 2:4-5**

We come to another new church year, the First Sunday of Advent. Like New Year's Day, it's a time to reflect, to acknowledge the darkness in our world, and to again commit to lifting up the beacon of hope in the coming of the Christ child, the light no darkness can overcome. We see the war and the threat of war around the world, the injustice of racism, sexism and exploitation in many forms, including sexual exploitation. My generation has experienced the fight for justice in many forms – the civil rights movements, the women's movement, anti-war protests – and we often think "Haven't we fought and won this battle already?" But there is no winning in any complete sense. The darkness waxes and wanes, sometimes retreating to the corners until the opportunity arises for it to come out again in a new way, so the fight for justice must also continue.

The process of beating swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks that Isaiah speaks of would most likely be called forming metal in modern terms. Forging and bending, heating to an intense heat, and then applying pressure with a hammer or other tool to form metal into something new. It's hot, dirty work that takes patience and repeated attempts with heat and pressure to keep working the metal into the desired shape.

Like the light of the forge that is the source of energy for changing the metal, the light of Jesus is the source of our energy for pushing back the darkness and changing the world. Therefore, we need to pray and continue to educate so that together we can harness that energy to apply heat and pressure to change the shape of laws, business practices and social norms that have allowed sexual exploitation to thrive. It's an ongoing process, often hot, dirty work, but it brings the glimmer of hope to those who need it most.

**God of justice and peace, open our hearts to the coming of the Savior. Give us the hope that inspires us to move toward justice. Live and burn in our hearts and give us the energy to forge and shape changes in our world and provide hope to those experiencing injustice. Amen.**

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