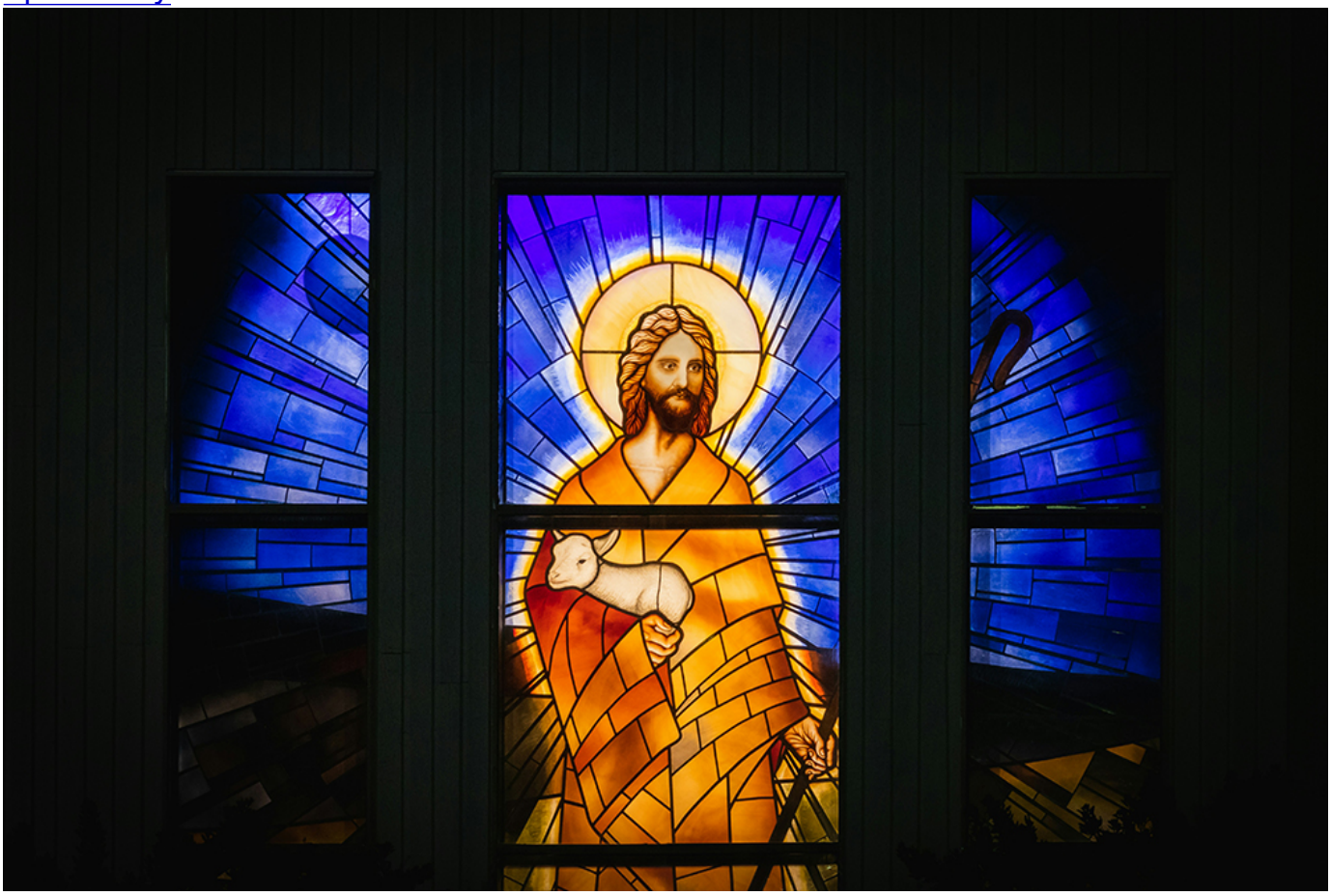
Columns
Spirituality



Jesus was able to embrace what seemed like contradictions and realized that all who inhabit this planet are more alike than different. (Unsplash/Greg Rosenke)



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December 25, 2024

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There is always that first morning, as winter approaches here in the midwest, when the snow has lightly blanketed the earth, creating a silence that is palpable.

When it came this year, I felt such a sense of peace and expectation. I recalled a section from the Book of Wisdom which I always loved.

"When peaceful silence lay overall, and night had run the half of her swift course, down from the heavens, from the royal throne, leapt your all-powerful Word" (18:14-15). Then an image conveyed in Psalm 85 came to mind: "Kindness and truth shall meet; justice and peace shall kiss."

Kindness and truth shall meet. Justice and peace shall kiss. It seems a fitting image to guide us during this Christmas season.

Christmas celebrates the Incarnation — that moment in time when the Word, God-consciousness, broke through in the person of Jesus. Jesus embodied the fullness of divinity and humanity. He saw the wholeness of reality. He understood and experienced the joys and sufferings of life. He was able to embrace what seemed like contradictions and realized that all who inhabit this planet are more alike than different. The Incarnation reveals to us that, as children of God, we, too, have the potential to access our God-self and continue to live the Incarnation in our world today.

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What might it look like if kindness and truth met, and justice and peace kissed in our lives and in our world?

I love the image that conjures up for me: two values that can be understood differently, which could be seen in opposition, engage with each other in a new way. They meet. They kiss. They now influence each other, creating something new.

Kindness and truth shall meet. Kindness is described as the quality of being friendly, generous and considerate. Truth is the actual state of a matter; conformity with fact or reality; a verified or indisputable fact.

In our world today, truth is difficult to ascertain. Each person sees reality through their own lens of values, assumptions and worldviews, and believes it is true. What is not my position is seen as fake news. Different narratives swirl around each other — whether the 2020 election was legitimate or not. No amount of evidence showing that the election was not tampered with can persuade those who believe it was. And to show how hard it is to see the truth on the other side, I'm having trouble trying to name the narrative that those who believe differently than me would call fake news.

> Can we hold our truth and still be generous in our willingness to listen to another person's truth?
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What might it look like if kindness and truth met?

Might they be in a dance, leading and following at different times? No longer opposites but necessary parts of a whole. Can we hold our truth and still be generous in our willingness to listen to another person's truth? Can we soften our desire to prove we're right? Can we open up the space within us to be generous in trying to understand the perspective of the other? Can we offer our truth in ways that don't judge but invite questioning and searching? Can we change our mind?

Justice and peace shall kiss. Justice has many interpretations, but basically describes a concept that individuals are to be treated in a manner that is equitable and fair. Peace is similar in so far as it, too, is understood in a variety of ways, referring to individuals feeling secure and harmonious as well as to communities and countries being free from civil disturbance or hostilities.

What might it look like if justice and peace kissed?



Let us commit to creating a future in which kindness and truth meet and justice and peace kiss. (Unsplash/Ditto Bowo)

Might they become partners in addressing conflicts that arise, inviting the two perspectives to come closer in negotiations? Can the violence in Gaza be resolved with Israel feeling secure and the Palestinians treated fairly and equitably? Can conflicts with police and various groups in our cities be viewed differently if both values were embodied in the final decisions? Can we be open to see whether our desire for peace or justice advocates for one of these values but not the other? How, through love, will they come close enough together to kiss?

Kindness and truth shall meet. Justice and peace shall kiss. It seems a fitting image to guide us during this Christmas season as family and friends gather, some for the first time since the election. The reality of our times is asking us to consciously choose who we want to be and how we want to interact with each other. How we live will create the future we are moving toward in this critical time.

Let us celebrate Christmas this year by taking time to sit in the silence, opening our hearts in contemplative prayer "to take a long, loving look at the real" and awaken to our innermost being. Let us become aware of how our speech and our actions can better reflect how we are connected and that we are more alike than different. Let us commit to creating a future in which kindness and truth meet and justice and peace kiss.

Let that be our gift to each other and our world this Christmas Day!

This story appears in the **Advent** feature series. View the full series.