



APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN
LifePoints

In 1863, the United States was in a brutal war with itself. The poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow had lost his wife, and then his son went off to war without telling him. He wrote a poem to express the anguish he felt. These are two of the verses.

*I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old, familiar carols play,
and wild and sweet
The words repeat
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!*

*And in despair I bowed my head;
"There is no peace on earth," I said;
"For hate is strong,
And mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"*

Like many of us, Longfellow longed for peace on earth and felt that this peace was the promise of Christmas. As we look around today, we could echo his words "There is no peace on earth" because we see just the opposite. In many countries today, there is civil war and the murdering of certain people groups. It feels like many of our government officials in all political parties in the US have resorted to an unprecedented level of name calling and accusations. This is not entirely new. If we look at history, there are other times when people treated each other with disrespect and hatred.

Sometimes I despair and say there is not "peace on earth," but I don't think that is right. I think we all have opportunity to foster peace wherever we have opportunity. And the fact is, it matters.

This is an encouragement to look around and see what you can do. Sometimes, I see individuals at work in conflict with each other and not making an effort to find common ground or trying to show respect for each other, even if they disagree. However, many more times I see people bringing peace to the situation and finding ways to agree or to work together. This happens when we focus on serving others, instead of getting our own way.

Many of us have family issues that are difficult to manage. Some of us give up and withdraw from our family members. We become lonely and so do they. There are opportunities to apologize or to let go. In these moments, we need to answer this question for ourselves: do we care more about our pride, getting our way or punishing someone, or do we care more about the joy we can experience through relationships with the people we call family.

This is more difficult on the scale of our country or the world. People have always been in conflict, but if we address the conflict in our own heart and try to resolve it with the people we know, we can influence others one at a time. Only good can come from that.

Most importantly, we need to understand what God meant when He promised peace on earth and what was the message when the angels sang "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." God didn't send a message that he would change the hearts of all men. He sent a message that he wanted peace with those who love Him and desire to serve Him.

God's gift of peace was Jesus, His son. In a world plagued with sin and anger, we can find forgiveness for our sins and be at peace with God in this life and in the next. It is a gift He offers to you. It is His love for you that makes him offer the gift. Now is a good time to talk it over with Him.

I want to extend a Merry Christmas to each of you and to those you love. I also wish you the joy of Jesus' birth and the peace that comes with making it personal. Rejoice over the baby Jesus. Embrace the Savior Jesus. Find peace with God through the Risen Jesus.

Ron Messner

Administrative Office
2125 Veterans Road
Morton, IL 61550
P 309.266.9781
aclifepoints.org

**Apostolic Christian
Timber Ridge**
2125 Veterans Road
Morton, IL 61550
P 309.266.9781

**Apostolic Christian
Oakwood Estate**
2213 Veterans Road
Morton, IL 61550
P 309.263.8484

**Apostolic Christian
Linden Estate**
1000 Linden Street
Morton, IL 61550
P 309.263.8992

**Apostolic Christian
CILA Services**
107 East Jefferson
Morton, IL 61550
P 309.263.2901