

December 30 to January 5

Bishop Harald Rückert

**...Seek peace and go after it!**  
(Psalm 34:14)

## What peace has to do with kissing

Peace is really a matter of seeking and going after it. Like when peace is found where an inheritance is contested, or when the “right” music in one of our services is not known to everyone – or in many other matters, too. In lots of places in the world striving to establish peace can be a never-ending task. Just when peace is reached in one place, somewhere else sees the start of a new conflict. Not to mention the fact that in some regions of the world peace must be bought at the price of wrongdoing and strife somewhere else.

To be a peacemaker is no easy task. We need others to work with us in the search for what really brings peace. According to Psalm 34, we need to be alert, with open eyes and ears. Also with a very measured

language, which is committed to the truth, and which abstains from using inflammatory statements. To be a peacemaker is a huge task. We must be persistent and undeterred if we want to make a contribution – so that “peace and righteousness kiss each other”, as it says in Psalm 85:10. It is neither simple nor comfortable. Nevertheless we are called upon to do it. We should be peacemakers and ambassadors for reconciliation. “Happy are the people who make peace, because they will be called God’s children” (Matthew 5:9). This is our calling at the beginning of the year. “Seek peace and go after it.” In doing so let us not forget that which is important: Christ is our peace! Let us continually seek him and follow him.

*Bishop Harald Rückert*

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## Singing, we pray

Lord we pray, come and bless us; lay your peace upon us.  
Lay hands of blessing upon us. Stir us with your power.  
You have placed us in the strife of this world, to announce your peace, which begins where one comes with a childlike trust. (Hymn by Peter Strauch)

## Prayer of thanks

God of peace we thank you...

- for those in our church who help to build bridges
- for those among us whose lives are those of blessing and reconciliation
- for those who are able and patient enough to go some distance to achieve peace

## Prayers of request

God of peace we pray...

- for alertness to recognize your creative beauty in each person
- for courage and ability to make a stand for righteousness in thy name
- for a clear sense of what peace means

Harald Rückert became Bishop of the United Methodist Church in Germany (EmK) in 2017, and has charge over its annual conferences. He takes the chair in the conferences and their commissions, represents the EmK on ecumenical committees and, after consultation, decides on the placements of pastors. The office of the Bishop should promote Christian unity, achieve effectiveness in mission and fulfil the direction and goal of the church. “To turn people into disciples of Jesus Christ and so to change the world”.

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