

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth  
Sunday, November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
Rev. Gerry Gallant

Hope in the Lord  
Advent Week 1  
Isaiah 2:1-5

**Welcome**

Brothers and Sisters in Christ  
as we enter this season of Advent,  
may the love of God the Father,  
and the grace of Jesus the Son,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be and abide with us all.

**Announcements**

**Call to Worship**

Show us your unfailing love, O God, our Savior,  
**and grant us your salvation.**

Listen to what the Lord our God says:  
**He promises peace to his people,  
who are his beloved saints.**

The Lord will indeed give what is good.  
**Righteousness goes before him  
and prepares the way for his steps.**

May the Lord make his holy face to shine upon us  
in this time of Advent worship.  
May we see God's face and so know peace.  
**Amen.**

**Prayer of Adoration and Invocation**

Blessed are you, Lord our God, ruler of the universe,  
for you have kept us in life, sustained us,  
and brought us to this holy season.  
our hearts desire the warmth of your love,  
and our minds are searching for the light of your Word.  
Increase our longing for Christ, our Savior,

and give us the strength to grow in love,  
 that the dawn of his coming  
 may find us rejoicing in his presence  
 and welcoming the light of his truth.  
 We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen

### **Advent Candle Lighting**

A series of readings from Isaiah  
 Jesus said, "I am the light of the world;  
 the one who follows me will not walk in darkness but have the light of life."  
**We light this candle as a sign of the coming light of Christ.**

*[Candle Lighter]*

The people who walked in darkness  
 have seen a great light;  
 those who lived in a land of deep darkness—  
 on them light has shined.  
 —Isaiah 9:2, NRSV

Come, Lord Jesus, our light, and our salvation.  
**Let us walk in the light of the Lord.**

### **Opening Hymn #110: "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus"**

Come, thou long expected Jesus,  
 born to set thy people free;  
 from our fears and sins release us;  
 let us find our rest in thee.  
 Israel's strength and consolation,  
 hope of all the earth thou art,  
 dear desire of every nation,  
 joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver;  
 born a child and yet a king,  
 born to reign in us forever;  
 now thy gracious kingdom bring.  
 By thine own eternal Spirit  
 rule in all our hearts alone;  
 by thine all sufficient merit  
 raise us to thy glorious throne.

### **Call to Confession**

Prepare the way of the Lord!

Let us make our confession to God

### **Prayer of Confession**

Merciful God,  
 always with us, always coming:  
 We confess that we do not know  
 how to prepare for your Advent.  
 We have forgotten how to hope in miracles;  
 we have ignored the promise of your kingdom;  
 we get distracted by all the busyness of this season.  
 Forgive us, God.  
 Grant us the simple wonder of the shepherds,  
 the intelligent courage of the Magi,  
 and the patient faith of Mary and Joseph,  
 that we may journey with them to Bethlehem  
 and find the good news of a child born for us.  
 Now, in the quiet of our hearts,  
 we ask you to make us ready for his coming. Amen.

### **Assurance of Pardon**

As we hear the ancient prophecies of the coming of the Messiah,  
 we long for the day when death will be swallowed up  
 and every tear will be wiped away.  
 As we wait expectantly  
 for Christ's promised return,  
 we live in the assurance of God's gracious forgiveness

### **The Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.  
 Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
 Give us this day our daily bread.  
 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.  
 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One.  
 For Thine is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory,  
 Forever and ever. Amen.**

### **Music Ministry: "God Is the Strength of My Heart" by Choir**

### **Responsive Reading**

**Question 96. Does this hope make us indifferent to the sufferings of the world?**

No. God teaches us to take the world seriously. When we experience the contradiction between our hope of the heavenly kingdom and the suffering that exists in this world, we are spurred to action. Our Christian hope encourages us to work and pray for the coming of God's kingdom on earth.

Deut 30:19-20, Rom 5:3-5

**Question 97. What do we believe concerning “the life everlasting”?**

To believe in Christ is to have eternal life here and now, a life that continues and is not ended by death. Jesus is the resurrection and the life; those who believe in him, even though they die, will live.

Rom 6:23, 1 Jn 2:25, Jn 11:25-26

**Children’s Hymn #114: “Emmanuel, Emmanuel”**

Emmanuel, Emmanuel,  
his name is called Emmanuel.  
God with us, revealed in us,  
his name is called Emmanuel.

**Children’s Lesson**

**Prayer for illumination**

**(Congregant Prepared)**

**Scripture**

**Isaiah 2:1-5**

**2 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.**

**<sup>2</sup> It shall come to pass in the latter days  
that the mountain of the house of the LORD  
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,  
and shall be lifted up above the hills;  
and all the nations shall flow to it,**

**<sup>3</sup> and many peoples shall come, and say:  
“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,  
to the house of the God of Jacob,  
that he may teach us his ways  
and that we may walk in his paths.”**

**For out of Zion shall go forth the law,  
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.**

**<sup>4</sup> He shall judge between the nations,  
and shall decide disputes for many peoples;  
and 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 anymore.**

**<sup>5</sup> O house of Jacob,**

**come, let us walk  
in the light of the LORD.**

### **Sermon**

Today we begin our lessons in the season of Advent. This year we are going to look at the scriptural readings of the Old Testament from Isaiah and how they relate to the coming of Christ.

To understand this well we need to remember that God made use of Abram in many ways in the Old Testament. He took this man Abram, renamed him Abraham, and called him into the promised land. He used Abraham as a way to call his people to him, to give them the blessing of being the children of God. However, the people of Israel were not faithful, many times they would wander away from God's call and need to be brought back over and over. However, God's plan will always succeed, and in order that all of his people might one day receive the knowledge and blessing of knowing God, God would send a descendant of Abraham, from the house of David, who would be Immanuel.

Through the prophet Isaiah, God denounced the idolatry, hypocrisy, greed and other offenses that were commonplace among his people, however, he also foretold of the coming of a Saviour for all sinners, The Lord Jesus Christ, God who would walk among us, the one who is destined to be King and rule over us forever, The one who is the hope of the Davidic promise, the eternal priest and preacher of God's word and much more.

In the scripture we are looking at today, Isaiah begins by picturing the Mountain of the Lord, which is a reference to the presence of God. His message is that God's people have hope regarding God's plan for his people, that someday all people will be under the rulership of God and be worthy of His salvation.

This was an important message for the people of Isaiah's time. In the time of Isaiah, the nation of Israel had already been divided into the nation of Israel in the north and the nation of Judah in the south. This division took place around the year 931. B.C., and in the year 722 B.C. the nation of Israel would be defeated and taken into captivity by the Assyrian empire. Isaiah began his ministry of prophecy in the year that king Uzziah died, 740 B.C. and he ministered until the death of Sennacherib in the year 681 B.C. The people of the nation of Judah no longer trusted in the promises of God. Over time the descendants of Abraham had begun to align themselves more and more with the world around them and the beliefs of others. Biblical faith was declining as more and more of God's people began to embrace the non-biblical viewpoints of the other nations around them. The worship of the One True Living God was becoming more and more influenced by the false god and idol worship of the nearby nations with some of the nation of Judah actually beginning to worship and praise those false gods and false idols. The nation of Judah was rebelling against God, its people placing their own selfish desire above their God in their lives. This was reflected in the people of the nation being more and more

focused on their own personal wellbeing and wealth and a lack of concern or care for their neighbors and the needy that surrounded them. On top of all of this, there loomed the threat of war with the Assyrians which could begin at any time.

The nation of Judah was very much like our modern-day world. We all need to acknowledge that there is a decline of biblical faith in this world, and more and more Christians are beginning to incorporate beliefs from other religions and other philosophies into their faith. The worship and praise of the One True Living God has been modified and changed, his world reinterpreted or at times ignored so that the people can do the things they wish for in this world. Idolatry is a plague in our world, people worship movie stars, pop idols, Tik Tok and Instagram influencers, political leaders, and even themselves above God. Still others have simply taken an anti-God stance in this world and will do anything to just show their disagreement and rebellion against the idea of God. In our world there are many people who will make a token effort to show support for the needy, they will post a picture, change a title, wear a pin, or fly a flag, however, they make no personal effort to support those in need or to love their neighbor as themselves. And no one can deny that the threat of war, violence and terrorism is constantly looming over many in this world.

What we need to know is that God is giving his people a reason to stand true in their faith and have hope in their futures in the prophecies of Isaiah.

To understand this, we need to understand a little more about the prophet Isaiah. His name is in fact a good indicator of his message, Isaiah means 'Yahweh is salvation' and that is the primary message of the book of Isaiah. Verse one, tells us that he was the son of Amoz, who was believed to be a brother of Amaziah, the King of Judah, making him part of the Royal family that ruled over the nation of Judah and that his prophecy, his vision, was concerning the nation of Judah and the city of Jerusalem which he recorded for all to read. Isaiah chapter six records some of the details of his call to ministry and shares some of his thoughts about his call. We also learn that he was a married man, a father and it seems that he did live in the city of Jerusalem. We learn in the New Testament that he was known for his prophetic foresight and his boldness. Many believe that Isaiah died under the persecution of Manasseh, the King of Judah, he was executed by being sawn in two.

His prophecy as recorded begins with a presentation of Judah's sinful condition in Chapter one. In chapters 2-22 Isaiah's prophecy is all about the impending judgment that will be coming against the nation of Judah for its transgressions. However, between the proclamation of their sinful condition and the coming judgement, Isaiah notes a vision of a glorious future promised by God.

#### **Isaiah 2:2-4**

**<sup>2</sup> It shall come to pass in the latter days  
that the mountain of the house of the LORD  
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,  
and shall be lifted up above the hills;**

and all the nations shall flow to it,  
<sup>3</sup> and many peoples shall come, and say:  
 “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,  
 to the house of the God of Jacob,  
 that he may teach us his ways  
 and that we may walk in his paths.”  
 For out of Zion shall go forth the law,  
 and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.  
<sup>4</sup> He shall judge between the nations,  
 and shall decide disputes for many peoples;  
 and 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 anymore.

If you were here for the Remembrance Day service you might recall some of the language used by Micah in chapter 4, who happened to be one of Isaiah’s contemporaries in Jerusalem. Many commentators have debated whether it was Micah who copied Isaiah or Isaiah who copied Micah; however, it is most likely that neither copied the other and instead the scripture is a quotation from a psalm or song that was popular at the time.

The vision presented in this prophecy paints for us three pictures of God.

The first picture painted in his vision is that God rules.

When he speaks of mountains Isaiah is speaking in images that the people of the land of Judah understood. In those days people worshiped and praise their gods on the highest mountains that they could find. This is because they believed that the higher, they got, the closer they would get to their false god. What Isaiah is telling the people is that the One True Living God, sits atop a mountain that is higher than any mountain in this world. Isaiah is telling the people through his vision that ‘in latter days’, as the second coming of Christ approaches, the One True Living God will be recognized as greater than any of the other false ‘gods’ or idols that are worshiped in this world. The God of Israel is not some simple deity or idol he is the One True Living God of the whole of creation. We see this represented in the book of Revelation and its visions and imagery.

There is one other indicator of the power of God that is presented in this part of the vision. The image of the nations flowing to the mountain of the Lord, presents an image of a river flowing towards and then up the mountains. The opposite of what we know in this world. Indicating the power of God in pulling the people to him and ruling over the ways of this world.

The next picture painted by Isaiah in his description of his vision is that God Saves.

There are many people who believe that the Old Testament is about the salvation of the Jews and the New Testament is about the salvation of the gentiles. However, this is wrong, if we go back into the book of Genesis, we can see that God told Abram.

**Genesis 12:3**

**<sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."**

God intention has always been to reconcile with all of his people. The description for the book of Revelation best describes what it is that God seeks.

**Revelation 7:9-10**

**<sup>9</sup> After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands,<sup>10</sup> and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"**

So, when Isaiah speaks of a day when many people will come, he is speaking of God's call on all peoples of all nations. It is true that not many people came to genuine saving faith in the Old Testament. God's people were not zealous in sharing the good news of salvation with other nations, they kept it for themselves. Yet in the New Testament on the day of Pentecost, just 50 days after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, Luke records that people of all nations came to the mountain of the One True Living God and received their salvation.

**Acts 2:9-11**

**<sup>9</sup> Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,<sup>10</sup> Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome,<sup>11</sup> both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God."**

Isaiah foretold of this wondrous event, a time when people of all nations would receive the good news of the gospel that Jesus Christ was born, lived, and died so that the One True Living God could be reconciled with His people.

Which brings us to the portrait that is painted by Isaiah in this vision, God's reconciles.

The message that God will judge between nations, shall decide disputes; that nations shall beat their swords into plowshares, their spears into pruning hooks; and there will be a time when nation shall lift up arms against nations and they will not learn war any longer.

**Isaiah 2:4**



**<sup>4</sup> He shall judge between the nations,  
and shall decide disputes for many peoples;  
and 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 anymore.**

This verse is actually posted in part on a wall that sits opposite the United Nations Head quarters in New York. However, they leave out the first two lines, because they do not recognize the spiritual message included in Isaiah's prophecy only the call for peace. It is true that in every human being there is a deep desire for peace, yet people of this world believe that every human is basically a good person, and if people can just learn to recognize that goodness and live accordingly, we would be able to have world peace. Yet Christians recognize that this is not possible, humans do have a desire for peace in the depths of their hearts, but it is our own selfish desires and false idols that prevent that desire for peace from coming forth in our nature. Christians know that there will never be peace in this world without God.

God calls for peace, for loving our enemies as ourselves. However, this peace will only come when people are first reconciled to God. God was so concerned with bring peace to this world that he sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to bring about peace during the first advent. We all know that Jesus is known as the 'Prince of Peace'. Peace has been God's focus since the Fall in the garden of Eden. Restoring sinful humans into a relationship of peace with God is what the good news of the Gospel is all about. Paul teaches us in the book of Romans:

**Romans 5:1**

**Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

When we have been reconciled with God we will find peace in our hearts, and it is then that we will be in a position to be reconciled and find peace with one another, our neighbors, and our enemies in our lives. This is the message of Isaiah's vision.

Isaiah's vision shows us the truth that God rules, saves, and reconciles his people to him.

**Isaiah 2:5**

**<sup>5</sup> O house of Jacob,  
come, let us walk  
in the light of the LORD.**

This was both a rebuke and a call to proper worship to the people of the nation of Judah. Many of the people were focused on the beauty and majesty of the temple in Jerusalem and not in the teachings of the Lord. Isaiah is reminding them that they are indeed called to do more than just attend temple, they are called to live according to the word of God, to walk in the light of the Lord and share the good news of God's saving grace with members of all nations.

There is a story told by Paul Tripp, a well known pastor, which highlights what it means to walk in the light and the hope of the Lord.

Paul tells of a weekend when his teenaged son asked for permission to spend the weekend at a friend's house. Paul allowed him to go only to be surprised by a phone call from the friend's mother, informing him that Paul's son was not at her home. The woman's son had confessed to her that he felt guilty for lying about Paul's son staying with them. Paul told his wife about their son's deception, he said his wife could feel his anger and told him, 'I think you should pray' to which he responded, 'I do not think I can pray for him right now'. His wife looked at him and said, 'I did not mean for you to pray for him; I think you need to pray for you.'

Paul said that he went to his bedroom to pray for God's help and that is when it came to him. That God because of his love was starting a process of rescue and reconciliation in his son's life. It was not a coincidence that his son's friend had come forth and confessed the lies, it was God's will, it was God that gave the friend's mother the courage to make that difficult phone call and expose the falsehoods. It was God who had given him time to spend in prayer and reflection, a time to get ahold of his emotions before his son came home. He said that now instead of wanting to rip into his son in anger, he wanted to be part of what God's grace was doing in his son's act of rebellion, deception, hurt and disappointment.

When his son returned home, he did not confront him immediately, he gave him a few hours to relax and then knocked on his door and asked if they could talk.

He asked his son, 'Do you ever think about how much God loves you?'

To which his son replied, 'Sometimes.'

Next, he asked, 'Do you ever think how much God's grace operates in your life every day?'

This time his son looked up but did not reply.

Finally, he asked him, 'Do you know how much God's grace was working in your life this weekend?'

'Who told you?', his son asked.

Paul responded, 'You have lived your life in the light. You have made good choices. You have been an easy son to parent, but this weekend you took a step into the darkness. You can live in that darkness if you want. You can learn to lie and to deceive. You can use your friends as cover. You can step over God's boundaries. Or you can live in the God's light. I am pleading with you; do not live in the darkness, live in the light.'

Paul shared that as he turned to walk away, he heard a voice from behind him say 'Dad, don't go.' And as he turned to face his son, he saw him with tears in his eyes. His son looked to him and said, 'Dad, I want to live in the light, but it is so hard. Will you help me?'

This is Isaiah's message. It is hard to live in the light, but we can do it with God's help. So let us live in the light each and every day in this world. Walking as living testimonies of our One True Living God.

Let us Pray,  
 Almighty God,  
 you strengthen us  
 that we may cast away the works of darkness  
 and put on the armor of light.  
 With Word and Sacrament,  
 make ready our hearts.  
 Make us ready to receive your Word and live by it daily.  
 Make us ready to live our faith through love and service.  
 And finally, make us ready to meet you  
 face to face on the day your Son comes to judge the living and the dead;  
 through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
 Amen.

**Music Ministry: "Power of Your Love" by Susan Parsons**

### **Invitation to Offering**

#### **Offering**

Presenting our tithes and offerings is an act of worship. I want to encourage you to write a cheque and drop it in the mail to the church using your envelope, if you have one. (St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, PO Box 161, 1 Drummond St W, Perth, ON K7H 3E3). We also have another option for you for giving and that is you can make an e-Transfer. This note from our treasurer:

**E-transfers are now accepted. Please note the new email address for this purpose only. [standrewspertthoffering@gmail.com](mailto:standrewspertthoffering@gmail.com) If you have an Offering Envelope #, please include it in the message section of the INTERAC transfer page you fill in. If you wish any part of your donation to go to a specific fund (e.g., Presbyterian Sharing) please mention this in your message.**

#### **Offertory Prayer** **(Congregant Prepared)**

#### **Closing Hymn #172: "As With Gladness Men of Old"**

As with gladness men of old  
 did the guiding star behold,

as with joy they hailed its light,  
 leading onward, beaming bright,  
 so, most gracious Lord, may we  
 evermore be led by thee.

2 As with joyful steps they sped,  
 Savior, to thy lowly bed,  
 there to bend the knee before  
 thee, whom heav'n and earth adore,  
 so may we with willing feet  
 ever seek thy mercy seat.

Holy Jesus, ev'ry day  
 keep us in the narrow way;  
 and, when earthly things are past,  
 bring our ransomed souls at last  
 where they need no star to guide,  
 where no clouds thy glory hide.

### **Pastoral Prayer**

O King of nations,  
 your reign spreads through all the lands,  
 you defend the cause of the poor  
 and plead for the wretched of the earth.  
 Fashion us into an obedient people,  
 that we may spread the good news  
 of your reign of perfect peace and justice,  
 until all creation will finally rejoice in your perfect will,  
 until all bend the knee to the King of kings and Lord of lords,  
 in whose name we pray, even Jesus Christ, your Son and our Savior. Amen.

### **Benediction**

O King of nations,  
 your reign spreads through all the lands,  
 you defend the cause of the poor  
 and plead for the wretched of the earth.  
 Fashion us into an obedient people,  
 that we may spread the good news  
 of your reign of perfect peace and justice,  
 until all creation will finally rejoice in your perfect will,  
 until all bend the knee to the King of kings and Lord of lords,  
 in whose name we pray, even Jesus Christ, your Son and our Savior. Amen.