

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth  
Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
Rev. Gerry Gallant

Prince of Peace  
Advent Week 2  
Isaiah 11:1-10

**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**

The Lord whom you seek shall suddenly come to his temple;  
the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight.  
Behold, he is coming. Rejoice greatly! Shout in triumph!  
**Our King is coming; the righteous Savior,  
who shall speak peace to the nations.**

**Prayer of Adoration and Invocation**

Father in heaven,  
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**

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]*

I will lead the blind  
by a road they do not know,  
by the paths they have not known  
I will guide them.  
I will turn the darkness before them into light,  
the rough places into level ground.  
These are the things I will do  
and I will not forsake them.  
—Isaiah 42:16, NRSV

Come, Lord Jesus, our light, and our salvation.

**Let us walk in the light of the Lord.**

**Opening Hymn #124: “People in Darkness” (V 1, 3, 4)**

People in darkness are looking for light,  
Come, come, come Jesus Christ;  
People with blindness are longing for sight,  
Come, Lord Jesus Christ.  
These days of adventure when all people wait  
are days for the advent of love.

People in trouble would like to be free.  
Come, come, come Jesus Christ;  
People with arguments want to agree.  
Come, Lord Jesus Christ.  
These days of adventure when all people wait  
are days for the advent of peace.

People in sadness are trying to sing.  
Come, come, come Jesus Christ;  
Bells in the steeple are waiting to ring.  
Come, Lord Jesus Christ.  
These days of adventure when all people wait  
are days for the advent of joy.

**Call to Confession**

Prepare the way of the Lord!  
Let us make our confession to God.

**Prayer of Confession**

Lord Christ,  
we confess our willingness to be loved

but also our reluctance to love.  
 We confess our readiness to accept your forgiving love  
 but also our refusal to forgive.  
 We confess our eagerness to grasp your offer of redeeming love  
 but also our resistance to follow you without question.  
 In this Advent time, forgive us our failure  
 to respond as we should.  
 Come to us anew, and by your grace, assist us to receive you  
 with joy, as the shepherds;  
 with gratitude, as Simeon;  
 with obedience, as Mary;  
 with love, as you have loved us.  
 Even so: come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

### **Assurance of Pardon**

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.  
 Your sins are pardoned.  
 The penalty is paid.  
 Thanks be to God.

### **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: "As We Gather at the Table" by Choir**

### **Responsive Reading**

#### **Question 98. What will heaven be like?**

Heaven is pictured in the Bible in different ways: an eternal kingdom, the Father's house, a house with many rooms, a marriage feast, an unending day and the joy of God's presence. Our deepest delights here on earth are only a dim reflection of the fullness of life that awaits us.  
 Jn 14:2-3, Mt 8:11, 1 Cor 2:9

#### **Question 99. Is there a hell?**

Just as the Bible gives many images of union with God, it gives a number of images of separation from God. Among these are Hades, Sheol and Gehenna. While heaven

describes life in the presence of God, these describe the life which rejects God and therefore stands under God's fearful judgment. Hell is not primarily a place. It is a state of separation from God. Yet the Bible declares that even in Sheol we cannot escape God and that Christ proclaimed his redemptive work in the realm of the dead.  
Mk 9:43, Mt 25:41-42, Ps 139:7-8k 1 Pet 3:16-20

**Children's Hymn #164: "One Small Child" (V 1, 3, 4)**

One small child in a land of a thousand  
One small dream of a Savior tonight  
One small hand reaching out to the starlight  
One small Savior of life.

One small light from the flame of a candle  
One small light from a city of might  
One small light from the stars in the endless night  
One small light from a face.

One small child in a land of a thousand  
One small dream in a people of might  
One small hand reaching out to the starlight  
One small Savior of life.

**Children's Lesson**

**Prayer for illumination**  
**(Congregant Prepared)**

**Scripture**  
**Isaiah 11:1-10**

**The Righteous Reign of the Branch**

**11** There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,  
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

<sup>2</sup> And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him,  
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the Spirit of counsel and might,  
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

<sup>3</sup> And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see,  
or decide disputes by what his ears hear,

<sup>4</sup> but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,  
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;  
and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,

and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

<sup>5</sup> Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist,  
and faithfulness the belt of his loins.

<sup>6</sup> The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,  
and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat,  
and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together;  
and a little child shall lead them.

<sup>7</sup> The cow and the bear shall graze;  
their young shall lie down together;  
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

<sup>8</sup> The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra,  
and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.

<sup>9</sup> They shall not hurt or destroy  
in all my holy mountain;  
for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD  
as the waters cover the sea.

<sup>10</sup> In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him  
shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.

### **Sermon**

We have finally entered into the month of December and for many people this signifies the beginning of the Christmas Season. However, most Christians are already aware that we are in the season of Advent and there are some who have been in the Christmas spirit who have the Christmas decorations and preparations started from the minute that Halloween ended. Christmas is seen as one of, if not the biggest holiday of the year. Yet we should remember that Advent means celebrating the Coming of Christ, both his first coming and his future return to earth. At Christmas Christians celebrate with the entire world the first coming of Christ in the town of Bethlehem, while at the same time we anticipate his second coming which is described in the Book of Revelation, the time when he returns as the righteous judge of mankind to sit upon his white throne.

While the rest of the world is concerned with finding or getting the best gift possible for their loved ones. As Christians we should remember that we have already received the only perfect gift from our Lord God, his grace, and through it our faith and salvation. God has provided us with the only gift we ever need, our needs on this world may change, our wants will always be changing, but the gift of being reconciled with God will never change, once we have received his grace our salvation is secured, and be always able to turn to God to find peace in this world.

In the scripture today we see Isaiah describe the wonders of this gift that was given to God's faithful followers, the branch of Jesse, the birth of Christ Jesus.

The book of Isaiah is the story of God proclaiming his judgement upon the people of this world. In chapter 10, Isaiah proclaims of God's judgment upon the lands of Assyria and upon his own nation of Israel. Assyria was a great nation, which would one day destroy the nation of Israel, and for that God would punish them, his wrath would fall upon them, and they would no longer be a great nation. That was God's judgement for them, and he did carry it out, but what of the judgement that he had prophesied against Israel, they too would face God's judgement and be defeated at the hands of their enemies. However, that is not where the prophecies over the land of Israel end.

Here in the very beginning of Chapter 11 God makes a promise to his people. A promise that from the scattered remains of the once great nation of Israel that a Saviour would be born.

**Isaiah 11:1**

**11 There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,  
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.**

The picture that is painted here is one of very humble beginnings. This is not the picture of a great warrior king, or a high priest. Instead, we are meant to picture a huge forest cut down, one where just the stumps remain, stumps which are not of any real use for the people, except maybe as firewood. This is what remains of the great nation of Israel, no more might cities, or peoples, just stumps, things of not much use anymore. Yet, Isaiah states in his prophecy that it is out of these very stumps of the nation that a shoot will come. A branch that shall come forth and bear fruit for the faithful of the One True Living God, our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Isaiah 11:2**

**<sup>2</sup> And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him,  
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the Spirit of counsel and might,  
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.**

This shoot that starts off so small in the stumps of the nation, shall have the Spirit of the Lord. Isaiah then describes the Spirit of the Lord using three pairs of words which encompass its fullness. **'The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.'** The spirit of wisdom and understanding would rest upon the branch of the stump of Jesse, give him the ability to both know and understand God's people as God knew them. The spirit of counsel and power would give Jesus Christ the ability to both know when and how to help the people of God, as well as give him the power to do those things he is called to do in obedience to God. The spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord would also fall upon the shoot of Jesse, Christ would know of God's plan for his people, as well as all the details of his role within God's eternal plan of salvation.

**Isaiah 11:3****<sup>3</sup> And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.****He shall not judge by what his eyes see,  
or decide disputes by what his ears hear,****<sup>4</sup> but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,  
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;  
and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,  
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.****<sup>5</sup> Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist,  
and faithfulness the belt of his loins.**

This shoot from the stump of Jesse is going to be unlike anyone else who has walked the earth. He is not coming to the world and seeing it the same way as all others, he is not looking at justice the same way as the world looks at justice, not like you or I would look at justice. This Saviour that is coming to the people of God will not judge with the eyes and ears of man, he will not make his decisions based on the will of man. He is not going to consider what man thinks God ought to be, or what man thinks God ought to do, he is going to do what God has instructed, he is going to obey only God's will. The Saviour is not going to be swayed by the opinions of the world, or its religious leaders. Instead, this Saviour who will come from the stump of Jesse will come with the righteousness and justice of God.

We know that Jesus was often at odds with the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Scribes. The religious leaders of the time often were criticizing Jesus for not obeying the scriptures the way that they had interpreted them. They told him he could not heal on the Sabbath, he could not eat or associated with the poor, or the sick, or the outcast. The Religious leaders insisted that he needed to adhere to the scriptural law as man had interpreted it. The way they had read it so that it would fit their own lifestyles at the time. Jesus did none of this, he was often at odds with the popular religious leaders of the time, because he adhered to the scriptures. He was obedient to the scripture in all things, unlike man who had wandered away for their own profit or convenience. Jesus came with justice and righteousness, from his humble beginnings, a babe born in a manger in a town that no one cared about, the righteous branch of David would bring the mercy, love, peace, and grace of the One True Living God to the world.

That first Christmas, was foretold of in the Old Testament prophecies. The prophet Micah told us:

**Micah 5:2****<sup>2</sup> But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,  
who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,  
from you shall come forth for me  
one who is to be ruler in Israel,  
whose coming forth is from of old,**

**from ancient days.**

Jesus was born in a town of no significance, and even within that town, there was no room for his parents at the inn, so he was born in a manger. Away from the religious capital of Jerusalem where the people of God worshiped, away from the religious center of God's people. Yet this humble beginning did not make him any less, He was still the Son of God and had come to make peace between man and God, to reconcile them into a relationship of Father and son and daughter.

There is no denying that this infant who was born in the town of Bethlehem is the King and is the Son of God. Jesus is shoot of the stump of Jesse; the branch of David come to bring God's will to His people.

The remainder of the prophecy given here in Chapter 11 of Isaiah describes the peace that only the true Prince of Peace can bring into our lives. We need to remember that while the world knows a physical peace, the bible often speaks instead of a spiritual peace.

The scripture says that the wolf will lie down with the lamb, the leopard with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling, all led by a child. We all know that in the real world if a wolf and lamb were to be put in an enclosure together the minute that the wolf gets a little hungry it is all over for the lamb, and the same can be said for the goat and the calf, and perhaps even the child.

We need to ask ourselves how a child can have leadership over wild animals, we know that children have enough trouble keeping domesticated animals in line. What Isaiah is reminding us of is that though there cannot be this kind of physical peace between predator and prey here on earth, even though there can never really be perfect physical peace here on earth, God is able to provide spiritual peace for his People.

The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. This will not be physically happening; a lion is a carnivore and will not suddenly become an herbivore giving up meat for straw. God could make it occur physically if he chose to impose His divine will, but here it is a spiritual statement, God can make this happen in our hearts. People who are prone to violence, like gang members can be lead to live a peaceful life once they accept Jesus Christ and have a true faith.

One that is furthered by the idea of an infant playing near the hole of the cobra, even going so far as to place his hand inside their nest. Everyone knows that you do not play around snakes, if you get too close, put your hand too near, they will strike, and you are going to be bitten and possibly poisoned.

They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. God's holy people, his followers on



earth, who are part of his temple, his church, his mountain are going to be given peace. They will live in a place where the serpent, Satan and his evils cannot harm the children of God. This tells us that Satan may be able to cause us physical pain and suffering, much in the same manner that he did to Job in the Old Testament, however we can live with the knowledge that God reigns over him, and we can find peace in the knowledge that our eternal salvation is secured by the blood of Christ and the debt he paid to reconcile us to God on the cross.

**Isaiah 11:10**

**<sup>10</sup> In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.**

Isaiah tells us that when Jesus comes the whole world will be changed. Even though he will have a humble beginning, born in a manger in Bethlehem, an event that should have gone unnoticed, Isaiah tells us it will be recognized. God had provided his son not just for the salvation of the people of Israel, but for all of his children of every tribe, nation, language, and people. All of us who were not born of the house of David, who were not part of the covenant of Abraham, are today children of Abraham by our faith.

God sent his son to live and to die upon the cross so that you and I might live forever. We did nothing to deserve this blessing, it comes as a gift of the grace of God. You and I are saved by the work of Jesus Christ upon the cross, because of his mercy, love, and grace and that brings us peace. We are reminded of this as reassured of this every time we have the sacrament of communion. That Jesus Christ paid for our eternal salvation, regardless of what is happening here in this planet, by the sacrifice that he made of his body and his blood, redeeming us to the Father and making us heirs and priests in God's kingdom. This is what the bread and the cup represent, that our Lord gave his very body and blood as a pledge and seal of His forgiveness of our sins.

And that should change our lives. That should change the way we think, the way we speak and the way we act in this world. While everyone else is rushing around trying to make the most of their short time on this planet we can rest assured of our eternal life. Instead of getting caught up in the emotions and stress of the season we can stay focused on the miraculous birth of our Saviour and in the assurance of his return. We can see that the greatest gift the world has ever received is Jesus Christ and the light that he shone into the darkness of this planet. We can become reflections of that light in this season. We can recognize that Jesus bought us with his blood, he redeemed us with God and because of that we can give up living selfishly for our own desires and instead live for others. We can learn to give up those sins of the world we take pleasure in and instead seek to bring the salt and light of Christ in this world, bringing the Prince of Peace into the lives of our neighbors and our enemies.

Advent is a season in which God tries to reach everyone through his grace, the same way he spoke to the nation of Israel through the prophets. This is God's perfect gift to the world. The shoot of Jesse, the Saviour who redeems us and brings us back to God. The one who gives us eternal life, a future filled with hope and peace, regardless of what is happening here, because of what Christ has done for us and the eternal life we have received. This we are called to remember during Advent and to carry in our hearts, that hope and peace, as we await his Second coming.

Let us pray,

Dear God,  
 protect us and keep us in your grace  
 that we may be that little flock,  
 which gladly receives Christ,  
 singing, "Hosanna! God be praised,"  
 that we receive him as our King,  
 and that we may be Christians.  
 We know why we are called Christians,  
 namely, after our King Christ,  
 since we are baptized in his name  
 and washed in his blood.  
 Help us remain in him.  
 Amen.

**Music Ministry: "Once in Royal David's City" by Rob Noyes**

### **Communion**

#### **Invitation to the Table**

This is the joyful feast of the people of God!  
 They will come from east and west, and from north and south,  
 and sit at table in the kingdom of God.  
 This is the table not of one denomination, but of our one Lord Jesus Christ.  
 It is made ready for those who love him  
 and those who want to love him more.  
 So come, you who have much faith and you who have little,  
 you who have been here often  
 and you who have not been for a long time.  
 Our Saviour invites all those who trust him  
 to share the feast which he has prepared.

#### **Invitation**

Jesus invites us to this table and now we do as Jesus did.  
 We take this bread and this wine, ordinary things of the world.  
 In these, Jesus has promised to be present.

Through these Christ can make us whole.  
Come all of you this is the joyful feast of the people of God.

As Jesus offered thanks for the gifts of the earth,  
let us also bless God with great thanksgiving.

### **The Prayer of Great Thanksgiving**

The Lord be with you;  
**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts;  
**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God;  
**It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Holy God, Holy One, Holy Three,  
You are source of all that exists.  
You are beyond the galaxies, deeper than the oceans;  
You pour down rain and bring forth the fruit of the earth.  
You carry us through deep waters and hold us in the darkest night.  
So with all your creatures, great and small,  
with angels and archangels, with saints and servants in every generation  
we join in the rejoicing of your creation:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

Holy is your Son Jesus, O God,  
Walking this earth, feeding the hungry, calling the lost, noticing the forgotten,  
healing those who reached out, teaching those who sought wisdom,  
he revealed your kingdom in our midst.  
Today we thank you for all Jesus shared with us  
to show us that you are always with us in times of plenty and times of pain.  
And so we celebrate the mystery of our faith in him:

**Christ has died;  
Christ is risen;  
Christ will come again.**

Holy God,  
 When the sounds of our rejoicing fall silent,  
 we remember those who cannot rejoice today,  
 who face times of pain or fear or upheaval.  
 We think especially of those whose countries have been overwhelmed  
 by earthquake, flood and storm, by conflict, drought or famine.

Draw near to them in the power of the Spirit  
 to strengthen and sustain them through Christ's compassion and ours.

Holy Spirit, come now and settle on us  
 and on these gifts of bread and wine.  
 May they become for us Christ's body and life blood,  
 healing, forgiving and making us whole.  
 So may we become Christ's body, the Church,  
 loving and caring throughout the whole world  
 until that day when all creation feasts with you  
 in the fullness of your mercy and peace  
 that we savor today in the name of our Saviour  
 who taught us when we pray to say together:

#### **The Apostles Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
 creator of heaven and earth.  
 I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
 who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
 born of the Virgin Mary,  
 suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
 was crucified, died, and was buried;  
 he descended to the dead.  
 On the third day he rose again;  
 he ascended into heaven,  
 he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
 and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.  
 I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
 the holy catholic church,  
 the communion of saints,  
 the forgiveness of sins,  
 the resurrection of the body,  
 and the life everlasting. AMEN.**

### **The Story of the Last Supper**

The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed took bread,  
and when he had given thanks for it, he broke it, and said,  
'This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'  
In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying,  
'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in  
remembrance of me.'  
For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup,  
you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

This is the body of Christ broken for you.

This cup is the blood of Christ shed for you.

### **Prayer after Communion**

Loving God, Christ our Lord, Holy Spirit,  
you have nourished us, body and soul, in this meal.  
We have heard your love, so send us out to speak it.  
We have seen your love, so send us out to show it.  
We have been fed by your love, so send us out to share it.  
And let all things be done for your glory. Amen.

### **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 #122: “O Come, O Come Emmanuel”**

O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
 And ransom captive Israel,  
 That mourns in lonely exile here,  
 Until the Son of God appear.

Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
 Shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, thou Day-spring, come and cheer  
 Our spirits by Thine advent here;  
 Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
 And death's dark shadows put to flight. [Refrain]

O come, Thou Wisdom from on high,  
 And order all things, far and nigh;  
 To us the path of knowledge show  
 And cause us in her ways to go. [Refrain]

O come, Desire of nations, bind  
 All peoples in one heart and mind;  
 Bid envy, strife and quarrels cease,  
 Fill all the world with heaven's peace. [Refrain]

**Pastoral Prayer**

Eternal God,  
 you taught us that the night is far spent and the day is at hand.  
 Keep us awake and alert, watching for your kingdom,  
 and make us strong in faith,  
 so that when Christ comes in glory to judge the earth,  
 we may joyfully give him praise  
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
 one God, now and forever. Amen

**Benediction**

May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely;  
 and may your spirit and soul and body  
 be kept sound and blameless  
 at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
 The one who calls you is faithful,  
 and he will do this.