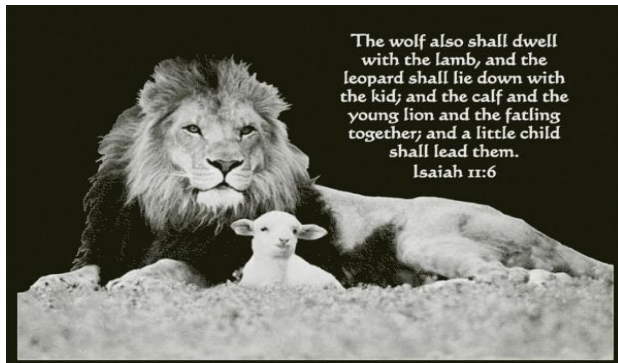


SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2025
SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT
ISAIAH 11:1-10

"A BRANCH SHALL GROW"



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(NCH) New Century Hymnal - CCLI LICENSE #11164431
Unless otherwise noted, all scripture texts
are from the **Common English Bible (CEB)**
*Please stand if comfortably able
and respond with words in **bold** print

SUMMARY OF SCRIPTURE TEXTS

Isaiah 11:1-10 This is one of the classic announcements of a future king in the line of David, one who will inaugurate a rule of peace with justice, especially for the poor.

Romans 15:4-13 The major message of this text is hope, citing Isaiah 11:10, and based on the confirmation of the Old Testament promises by the coming of Jesus.

Matthew 3:1-12 The apocalyptic dimensions of the season are dramatized in this lesson, with the account of the appearance of John the Baptist with his announcement of the kingdom of God.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER CONCERNS:
THE BELL IS RUNG:

PRELUDE: "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus"
Carol Tornquist

PENNIES FOR MISSION: The Christmas Fund

***RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP:**

One: At the start of every day,
God shakes us awake to the possibility
of reconciliation and joyful abundance.

Many: May our Great Redeemer,
who judges all with righteousness,
reward the tyrannized with justice.

One: In every season,
God tends to the child within us,
bringing into harmony
all distress and despair.

**Many: May our Beloved Emmanuel
defend the cause of the deprived,
give deliverance to the abused,
and overwhelm the will of their persecutors.**

One: Throughout all generations,
God bestows upon the people
a peace that is everlasting.

**Many: May the Prince of Peace
rain down blessed mercy upon the people,
showering the earth with righteousness and peace.**

***INVOCATION:**

Almighty God, we seek relief from the unrest of our daily lives. You, who offer peace and justice in a single hand, are our redeemer. Allow us, God, to unfold in your palm. With each breath, allow us to inhale the power of your sacred word, and exhale the turmoil within.

***OPENING HYMN: 115**

"The Baptist Shouts on Jordan's Shore"

***PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE:**

Gentle God, it has been too long since your people have known peace. We turn away from the ugliness hidden behind closed doors, from the ravages of war, from the famine and genocide that stalk our siblings around the world. We've lost hope, lost our faith in the possibility of a small act's power to change. We talk and talk, all the while forgetting that we are not just your mouthpiece, but your hands and feet. Remind us, Redeemer, how to show up for justice. Teach us how to transform this ragged hope into peace for all.

***WORDS OF GRACE:**

God does not judge based on our insecurities, but on the promise rooted within each of us. Hope is as robust as ever when we study God's image in the mirror. Peace is not only a possibility but is the ultimate work of God's people. In faith, we rise and fall and rise again, knowing that our Redeemer will never stumble or disappoint. Praise be to God!

***GLORIA:**

**Glory to the Creator, and the Christ and the Spirit so near. As it was from the start so it shall be forever, One God always here. (Repeat two more times.)
(end) One God always here. One God always here.**

LIGHTING THE CANDLE OF PEACE:

Today we light the Candle of Peace.

There is a hush in our hearts as we wait
to feel the peace of God envelop us.

We imagine it as delicate as a lily's petals opening,
as a blanket pulled snug beneath our chin,
as a breeze shaking the oak's branches on a sunny
morning.

We expect peace to come gently, but when has
anything worthwhile come without pain?

A baby cries in birth as the mother sweats and
shakes. Imperfect compromises leave both sides
vulnerable. A voice that rallies us to change is often
silenced too soon. Striving for peace is no different.
It is fierce, and loud, and it requires tenacity.

Peace is complicated. Peace is a sip of water
after the longest night. Peace is the flame within
that we must keep lit for the sake of all.

Peace is the hush, and it is the clatter.

Peace is God's love, acted out loud.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS: Isaiah 11:1-10

A shoot from Jesse's stump

11 A shoot will grow up from the stump of Jesse;
a branch will sprout from his roots.

² The Lord's spirit will rest upon him,
a spirit of wisdom and understanding,

a spirit of planning and strength,

a spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord.

³ He will delight in fearing the Lord.

He won't judge by appearances,
nor decide by hearsay.

⁴ He will judge the needy with righteousness,
and decide with equity for those who suffer in the
land.

He will strike the violent with the rod of his mouth;
by the breath of his lips he will kill the wicked.

⁵ Righteousness will be the belt around his hips,
and faithfulness the belt around his waist.

⁶ The wolf will live with the lamb,
and the leopard will lie down with the young goat;
the calf and the young lion will feed together,
and a little child will lead them.

⁷ The cow and the bear will graze.
Their young will lie down together,
and a lion will eat straw like an ox.

⁸ A nursing child will play over the snake's hole;
toddlers will reach right over the serpent's den.

⁹ They won't harm or destroy anywhere on my holy
mountain.

The earth will surely be filled with the knowledge
of the Lord, just as the water covers the sea.

A signal to the peoples.

¹⁰ On that day, the root of Jesse will stand as a signal to the peoples. The nations will seek him out, and his dwelling will be glorious.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19

Page 667-668

EPISTLE: Romans 15:4-13

⁴ Whatever was written in the past was written for our instruction so that we could have hope through endurance and through the encouragement of the scriptures. ⁵ May the God of endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude toward each other, similar to Christ Jesus' attitude. ⁶ That way you can glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ together with one voice.

⁷ So welcome each other, in the same way that Christ also welcomed you, for God's glory. ⁸ I'm saying that Christ became a servant of those who are circumcised for the sake of God's truth, in order to confirm the promises given to the ancestors, ⁹ and so that the Gentiles could glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,

*Because of this I will confess you among the Gentiles,
and I will sing praises to your name.* (Psalm 18:49)

¹⁰ And again, it says,

Rejoice, Gentiles, with his people. (Deut. 32:43)

¹¹ And again,

*Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles,
and all the people should sing his praises.*

(Psalm 117:1)

¹² And again, Isaiah says,

*There will be a root of Jesse, who will also rise to rule
the Gentiles. The Gentiles will place their hope in him.*

(Isa 11:10)

¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in faith so that you overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

***GOSPEL: Matthew 3:1-12**

Ministry of John the Baptist

³ In those days John the Baptist appeared in the desert of Judea announcing, ² "Change your hearts and lives! Here comes the kingdom of heaven!" ³ He was the one of whom Isaiah the prophet spoke when he said:

The voice of one shouting in the wilderness,

"Prepare the way for the Lord;

make his paths straight." (Isaiah 40:3)

⁴ John wore clothes made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist. He ate locusts and wild honey.

⁵ People from Jerusalem, throughout Judea, and all around the Jordan River came to him. ⁶ As they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan

River.⁷ Many Pharisees and Sadducees came to be baptized by John. He said to them, “You children of snakes! Who warned you to escape from the angry judgment that is coming soon?⁸ Produce fruit that shows you have changed your hearts and lives.⁹ And don’t even think about saying to yourselves, Abraham is our father. I tell you that God is able to raise up Abraham’s children from these stones.¹⁰ The ax is already at the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree that doesn’t produce good fruit will be chopped down and tossed into the fire.¹¹ I baptize with water those of you who have changed your hearts and lives. The one who is coming after me is stronger than I am. I’m not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.¹² The shovel he uses to sift the wheat from the husks is in his hands. He will clean out his threshing area and bring the wheat into his barn. But he will burn the husks with a fire that can’t be put out.”

MESSAGE: “We Meet John the Baptizer”

This week I thought we would spend the time to get to know John the Baptist. He probably doesn’t get the attention he should. He gets “out-staged” by his cousin, Jesus. However, John is a very important person in our story and in our quest to become more

knowledgeable in our faith. What can we learn from John?

The emergence of John was like the sudden sounding of the voice of God. At this time, the Jews were sadly conscious that the voice of the prophets spoke no more. They said that for 400 years there had been no prophet. Throughout long centuries, the voice of prophecy had been silent. As it could be put “There was no voice, nor any that answered.” But in John the prophetic voice spoke again. What then were the characteristics of John and his message?

In the words of Rev. William Barclay.

1. John fearlessly denounced evil wherever he might find it. If Herod the King, also a Jew, sinned by contracting an evil and unlawful marriage to his brother’s ex-wife, John admonished him. If the Sadducees and Pharisees, the leaders of orthodox religion, the “church” leaders of their day, were sunk in ritualistic formalism, John never hesitated to say so. If the ordinary Jewish people were living lives which were unaware of God, John would tell them so. He was a light which lit up the dark places; he was like a wind which swept from God throughout the country. It may be that there have been times when the Church was too careful not to offend. There came occasions when the time for smooth politeness

was gone, and the time for blunt criticism was necessary. LESSON ONE

2. John urgently summoned men and women to righteousness. His message was not a mere negative denunciation; it was a positive reminder of the moral standards of God. John not only denounced people for what they had done; he summoned them to what they ought to do. He not only condemned them for what they were; he challenged them to be what they should be. He was like a voice calling people to higher things. He not only rebuked evil, he also set before men and women the good. LESSON TWO

3. John came from God. He came out of the desert. He came among the people only after he had undergone years of lonely preparation by God. He came, not with some opinion of his own, but with a message from God. For a long time before he spoke to the world, he had kept company with God. Even now, the preacher or the teacher with the prophetic voice, must always come into the presence of others out of the presence of God. LESSON THREE

4. John pointed beyond himself. The man was not only a light to shine on all that was evil, a voice to rebuke sin, he was also a signpost to God. It was not himself whom he wished people to see; he wished to prepare them for the one who was to come. John was preparing the way for the true king. Preachers,

teachers with prophetic voices, point not at themselves, but at God. Their aim is not to focus their eyes on their own cleverness, but on the majesty of God. True preachers are obliterated in their message. True preachers disappear when the true message is shining through. LESSON FOUR

The people of that time recognized John as a prophet, even after years when no prophetic voice had spoken, because he was a **light** to light up evil things, a **voice** to summon men and women to righteousness, and a **signpost** to point them to God. John had in him that unanswerable authority which clings to anyone who comes into the presence of others out of the presence of God.

As we shall see soon, John's presence in the story of Jesus will become very important. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC: "Prepare the Way of the Lord" **Video**

PASTORAL PRAYER: Gracious and ever loving God, we come to you this morning with many things on our hearts. In our world of deceit and lying, it's difficult to tell who is with us and who isn't. There's too much bickering at our nation's capital. Instead of finding ways to help the citizens of this

country, it seems like the politicians just want to find ways to disgrace their colleagues.

Please remind those in charge of our country of why they have been elected and what are they expected to accomplish why they represent the rest of us. Help them realize their opportunities to care for the needs of rich and poor, weak and strong, male and female employer and employee, and that we may work together in harmony and good faith.

Bless our church as we work together to feed the hungry, and serve other missions to help In anyway we can. Help us be a presence of hope in our community as we share the good news of Jesus Christ.

Gracious God, give continuing wisdom and skill to all in the medical community who look for new ways of healing and helping us to live longer. Bless as well all who are involved in hospice and others also dedicated to helping us through the final valley of the shadow of death. Bring comfort to all who are sick, lonely, depressed, and oppressed. We remember all those on our prayer list, especially Mary Lou and Russ this morning. May the birth of your son, Jesus, be a bright light into all their hearts.

We pray all these things in the name of your son, Jesus the Christ. . .

OUR LORD'S PRAYER:

PRAYER RESPONSE:

**Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay
close by me forever and love me, I pray.**

**Bless all the dear children in your tender care,
and fit us for heaven to live with you there.**

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY:

Peace makes us generous. God's abundance pours through us to our neighbors, just as God's love showers us with blessing. As each of us gives what we can, we know that our community is only as resilient as our most vulnerable neighbor.

OFFERTORY: "Chanson de Noel" P. Beaumont

***DOXOLOGY:**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above you heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen**

***UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION AND THANKSGIVING:**

**Emmanuel, hear our prayer! We bring these gifts
before you to spread peace throughout our homes,**

our communities, and our world. On every street corner, beside rivers, lakes, oceans, at the top of your tallest mountains, and dwelling below the cliffs, your people are in need. Take these gifts to strengthen our church and bring relief to your beloved children.

Amen

HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation (Written by Liz Miller)

A local dinner where the waitress greets you by name. A cup of hot tea poured by a friend in her cozy kitchen. A summer camp dining hall buzzing with youthful joy. A family table where favorite dishes get passed a second and third time.

Shared meals have the power to transform, to heal, to reorient us toward love. A shared Communion meal draws us back to God, to sacred healing, to our place in the Body of Christ.

If you have come to this Communion meal today craving comfort and peace, hungering for justice and mercy, thirsting for reconciliation and grace the invitation to eat is for you.

Come to the table to break life-giving bread and linger over a cup of blessing. Come to the table to

remember that you are loved. We have been saving a seat just for you.

The Great Thanksgiving

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere, to give thanks to you, Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth.

Out of nothing, you created all that is. Out of the dust of the ground, you formed us in your image. When our gaze turned to earthly things and we forgot the taste of your love and grace, you fed us with manna from heaven. In the fullness of time, you sent your Son, Jesus Christ, who fed the multitudes and became living water. Even when his disciples were about to fall away, Jesus offered himself as living bread and the cup of salvation. Even when we fall away today, Christ continues to invite us to your banquet of mercy and grace.

And so, with your people on earth, and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn, singing: **790**

**Holy, holy, holy God of love and majesty,
The whole universe speaks of your glory, O God
Most High. Blessed is the one who comes in the
name of our God! Hosanna in the highest.**

Words of Institution

Jesus gathered his disciples together on his last night. He made room at the table for those who loved him, those who questioned him, those who followed him, and for the one who would betray him. As witnesses to his teachings, his earthly struggles, and his prophetic justice shifting ministry, they came.

As they were eating, Jesus took the bread, blessed it, then gave it to them, saying “This is my body broken for you, do this in remembrance of me.” In the same manner, following their meal, Jesus took the cup and blessed it and poured it out for each one of them and said, “This is the cup of the new covenant, sealed in my blood, given for you and for all for the forgiveness of your sins.”

“As often, then, as you eat this bread and drink this cup, do so in memory of me.”

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Holy Spirit, take this bread and cup and transform them into the bread of life and the cup of blessing. Prepare our weary hearts to feast on a welcome that includes all. In eating together may we be one as the Body of Christ.

Come now, open to Peace within. All are welcome at Christ’s table. We gather to renew our spirits with this sacred meal, and offer a place at the table for all.

The Elements are Shared

*** Unison Prayer of Communion**

Gracious and Eternal God, we share this meal as a symbol of Peace. In each of us, we find the beloved, the follower, the doubter, and the betrayer, and yet we know that we are welcome at this table. This meal is open to all, that it may offer sustenance as well as refuge. May we leave this table refreshed, ready to take your radical ministry of extravagant hope, everlasting peace, exuberant joy, and abundant love into the world.

Amen

***CLOSING HYMN: 120**

“There’s a Voice in the Wilderness”

***BENEDICTION:**

Beyond these walls, the world needs peace. Go out taking with you the exquisite peace of Christ. Carry it boldly and spread it to all those you meet, knowing that God is within you, strengthening the light of the world. Amen.

BENEDICTION RESPONSE: “Let There Be Peace on Earth”

THE BELL IS RUNG:

POSTLUDE: "Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord"

Stephen Schwartz

PRAYER LIST: Camille Abboud, Ingrid Alexiou, Becky Ballard, Mary Lou and Urban Baum, Ronald Bopp, Private Ben Boyle, Lorraine Brown, Geralyn Gammon, Neal Holiday, Marilyn Paul, Ella Perez, Pam and Syd Safriet, Gloria Stephens, Yvonne Weber, Sue and Dave in Florida, Russ Hartmann.