



December 4, 2022
Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ

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Advent Thought

John the Baptizer proclaims the coming "One." It is noteworthy that the "coming" to which John refers is not Jesus' birth, but his ministry, a helpful reminder in this season that the advent we celebrate is more than just a nativity; it is a life, a ministry, and even a death.

Community News

Prayer List and Prayers of the People

Prelude/Lighting of the Candles

* *Call to Worship* *Inspired by Isaiah 11:1-10 and Romans 15:4-13*

A shoot soon comes from Jesse's stump,
And a branch shall spring from roots.

Rejoice! Rejoice! All God's children.

Let all the people give God praise.

A leader soon comes who will lift the poor
With righteousness around his waist.

Rejoice! Rejoice! All God's children.

Let all the people give God praise.

A child soon comes from an innocent place
With wisdom and might he'll lead the way.

Rejoice! Rejoice! All God's children.

Let all the people give God praise.

* *Invocation*

God of the waiting wanderers in the wilderness, we enter this moment of worship expecting that when we leave this hour of prayer, we will be full of the courage needed to stand as a signal. We come to the mountain to feel closer to your presence, O God. May the mountains yield prosperity for your people. May righteousness flourish and peace abound. You, alone, are the God who does wondrous things. May your glory fill this place as we worship you in spirit and in truth. Amen.

* *Opening Hymn* *"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"* TH #89

Advent Candle Lighting Litany

We gather around the Advent wreath today knowing that we are not perfect – that we all make mistakes and do bad things. Only Jesus obeyed God fully. Jesus helps us to live as God wants us to live. Jesus gives us peace.

Old Testament Scripture

Isaiah 11:1-10 NIV

¹ A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.

² The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and of might,
the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD—

³ and he will delight in the fear of the LORD.
He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,
or decide by what he hears with his ears;

⁴ but with righteousness he will judge the needy,
with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.
He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth;
with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.

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

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

⁷ The cow will feed with the bear,
their young will lie down together,
and the lion will eat straw like the ox.

⁸ The infant will play near the cobra's den,
and the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest.

⁹ They will neither harm nor destroy
on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.

¹⁰ In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious.

Lighting the Second Candle of PEACE

We light this candle to proclaim the coming of the light of God into the world. With the coming of this light there is *peace*, for Christ is called the “Prince of Peace.” Christ’s name is also Emmanuel, “God with us.” The presence of Christ with us gives us peace day by day.

<lighting of the candle>

Advent Prayer

Eternal God, we thank you that through all the years you have given peace to your people. Help us to have your peace in our lives. We pray that, in this Advent season, we may, by what we do, show your presence to the sick, to the hungry, and to the lonely, so that they too may have peace. Amen.

** Candle Lighting Hymn* “Wonderful Peace” VH #271 vs 1-3

Prayer for Transformation and New Life

We gather together in this season of Advent anticipating hope, praying for peace, attempting to cultivate joy and share love.

<observe a brief stretch of silence>

God, we admit that we do not always stand as a signal for your righteousness. In the hustle and bustle of our lives, we have left little room to witness - to be your hands and feet in a world that needs us now more than ever. In the warm belly of comfort, many of us have relaxed in the layers of our privilege, not attending to the needs of the least of these. Forgive us, O God. Give us the courage to stand tall, to follow in the footsteps of the one who came to secure justice for the poor, bring equity to the meek, and condemn the wicked with his lips. And on that day, we shall stand as a signal to the people.

Words of Grace

Beloved, know that God's grace and mercy abound, and in God and Christ, we are forgiven. Let us live in this gift. Amen.

* *The Reading of the Holy Gospel*

Matthew 3:1-12 NIV

Gloria Tibi (Glory be to Thee, O Lord.)

TH #497

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea ² and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." ³ This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah:

"A voice of one calling in the wilderness,
'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.'"

⁴ John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. ⁶ Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸ Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. ⁹ And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. ¹⁰ The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

* *Gloria Patri*

Children's Message

* *Meditation Hymn* *“Behold a Branch Is Growing”* TH #113

Today's Message

* *The Apostle's Creed*

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: And in Jesus Christ his only begotten Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hades; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

**I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic/Christian church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting.
Amen.**

* *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 evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

* *Sung Response* *“Hear Our Prayer, O Lord”* TH # 501

The Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory Statement

Offertory (MH)

* Doxology

TH # 551

* Offertory Prayer

We dedicate these gifts that have been shared for the fortification of the beloved community. Let these gifts do justice in the world. Let them be a signal to the people that there is a God who saves, heals, and sets us free. Amen.

* *Closing Hymn*

“It Came Upon the Midnight Clear”

VH #95

* *Benediction*

Let us go forth knowing that we are led by God, that we are held by God, that we are loved by God. Let us know that God empowers us as God holds and leads and loves us; And knowing all that, Let us stand as a signal that the glory of God dwells with us now and forever more. Amen

* *Three-Fold Amen*

TH # 558

* *Postlude/Extinguishing of the Candle*

Peace: Rev. Mia M. McClain is the Senior Pastor of Riverside Baptist Church in Washington D.C. She is an ordained UCC minister.