December 7, 2025
Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ

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Advent Thought

"Advent is the season to remind us that God is not finished with the world yet."

– J. Philip Newell

Welcome

Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ **December 7, 2025**
Joint Service **Grace 10:00am**
2nd Sunday of Advent / A Branch Shall Grow

Community News
Prayer List and Prayers of the People
Prelude/Lighting of the Candles

* *Call to Worship*

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

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

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

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

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

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.

Children's Message / Congregation Conversation

* *Opening Hymn* ***"Away in a Manger"*** **VH #92**
Tune: CRADLE SONG (UK version)

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!

Advent Candle Lighting Litany

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

The Peaceful Kingdom

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
2 The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.
3 His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.
He shall not judge by what his eyes see
or decide by what his ears hear,
4 but with righteousness he shall judge for the poor
and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth;
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
5 Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

6 The wolf shall live with the lamb;
the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
the calf and the lion will feed together,
and a little child shall lead them.
7 The cow and the bear shall graze;
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
8 The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.
9 They will not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.
10 On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples;
the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

Lighting the Candle of Hope

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.

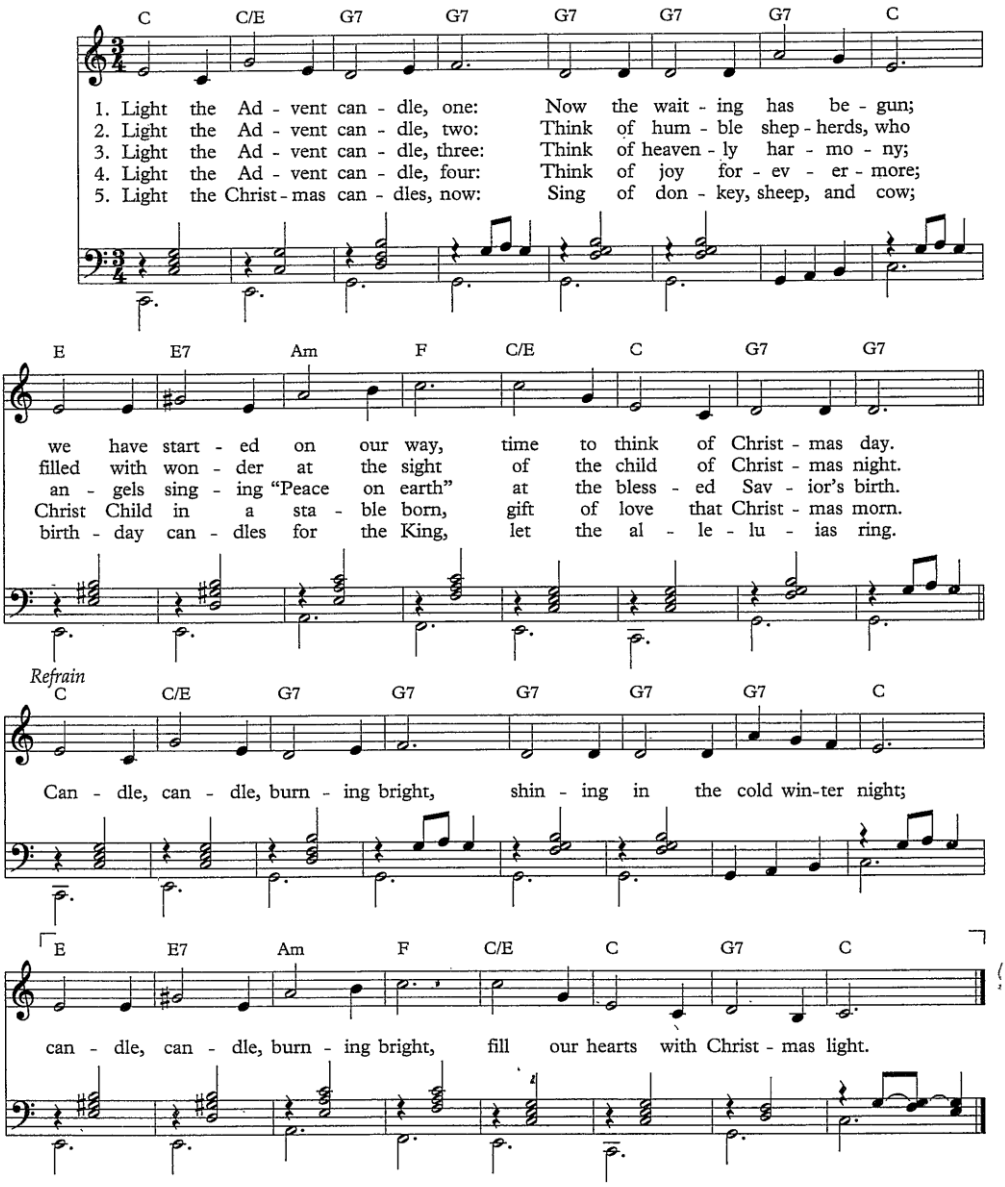
Peace is the hush, and it is the clatter. Peace is God's love, acted out loud.

* Advent Candle Lighting Hymn **Insert vs #2**

"Light the Advent Candle"

Advent Song

2090

(Light the Advent Candle)

Congregation: Unison

WORDS: Mary Lu Walker (Luke 2:1-20)
MUSIC: Mary Lu Walker

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ADVENT CANDLE SONG
77.77 with Refrain

* Advent Prayer

Loving God, you have planted the seed of hope within us. As we light this candle, remind us that your peace is not distant, but present here and now. Help us to be instruments of your peace, offering kindness to the weary, justice to the oppressed, and love to those forgotten. May this season of waiting awaken our hearts to your transforming power. Amen.

Psalm Reading **Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19 NRSV**

Prayer for Guidance and Support for the King Of Solomon.

1 Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to a king's son.
2 May he judge your people with righteousness
and your poor with justice.
3 May the mountains yield prosperity for the people,
and the hills, in righteousness.
4 May he defend the cause of the poor of the people,
give deliverance to the needy,
and crush the oppressor.

5 May he live while the sun endures
and as long as the moon, throughout all generations.
6 May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass,
like showers that water the earth.
7 In his days may righteousness flourish
and peace abound, until the moon is no more.

18 Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
who alone does wondrous things.
19 Blessed be his glorious name forever;
may his glory fill the whole earth.
Amen and Amen.

* *The Reading of the Holy Gospel* **Matthew 3:1-12 NRSV**

Gloria Tibi (Glory be to Thee, O Lord.) **TH #497**

The Proclamation of John the Baptist

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea,
proclaiming, **2** "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come
near." **3** This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he
said,

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
'Prepare the way of the Lord;
make his paths straight.' "

4 Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt
around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. **5** Then
Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region around the Jordan were
going out to him, **6** and they were baptized by him in the River
Jordan, confessing their sins.

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming
for his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who
warned you to flee from the coming wrath? **8** Therefore, bear fruit
worthy of repentance, **9** and do not presume to say to yourselves,
'We have Abraham as our ancestor,' for I tell you, God is able
from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. **10** Even now the
ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not
bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

11 "I baptize you with water for repentance, but the one who is
coming after me is more powerful than I, and I am not worthy to
carry his sandals. 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 and will gather his wheat into the granary, but the
chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

* *Gloria Patri*

* *Meditation Hymn* ***"There's A Voice In the Wilderness Crying"***

Grace TH #94

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

Gracious God, receive these gifts we offer in gratitude and hope. Bless them, and bless us, that through our giving, your peace may reach every corner of our world. Let our offerings become instruments of your justice and love, bringing comfort to the afflicted and joy to those in need. Amen.

* *Closing Hymn* ***"Comfort, Comfort Ye My People"*** **TH #90**

* *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.

* *Three-Fold Amen* **TH # 558**

* *Postlude/Extinguishing of the Candle*

A Branch Shall Grow: Service Prayers for the Second Sunday of Advent Year A was written by the Maria Mankin.