

## ADVENT 2A - COMMENTS/QUESTIONS ON THE LESSONS FOR DECEMBER 7, 2025

### Isaiah 11:1-10

- These words of Isaiah come from what scholars call First Isaiah (Isaiah 1-39), which we believe is written before Judah is taken into exile (in contrast to Second (40-55) and Third (56-66) Isaiah which we believe are written during and after the exile). Here Isaiah sees that Judah is in disarray: it seems that only a stump remains. But God promises that God's people will not be abandoned. A shoot will come out of the stump. A branch will grow out of the roots. God's vision for God's people will not be forgotten. When this promise was not immediately fulfilled, it became a promise of a Messiah who would come from the line of David. Christians see this promise fulfilled in Jesus.
- Certainly, we believe that Jesus fulfills the promise of the Messiah. How then do we reconcile how far our world is from being a place where "The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them" (11:6)?
- Every time we have a baptism or a confirmation service, we hear these words from Isaiah:  
*"Sustain (name) with the gift of your Holy Spirit: 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 joy in your presence, both now and forever."*  
By so using these words, we declare that these promises are not simply about an anticipated Messiah. They are also meant to describe who we are and who we are called to be.
- If we are called to be in the image of Christ, how then can we live out the promises laid out here in Isaiah?

### Psalms 72:1-7, 18-19

- The title of this psalm is "Of/for Solomon." This psalm describes and asks for God's blessings upon the king. The early church began to understand many of the psalms – and particularly this one – as descriptive of Christ, especially considering the extravagant claims and requests made on behalf of the king. For example, here is what Augustine had to say about the psalm:  
*the very word Solomon is used in a figurative sense, so that in him Christ is to be taken. For Solomon is interpreted peace-maker: and on this account such a word to [Christ] most truly and excellently does apply, through Whom, the Mediator, having received remission of sins, we that were enemies are reconciled to God. ... The Same is Himself that Peace-maker. ... Since then we have found out the true Solomon, that is, the true Peace-maker: next let us observe what the Psalm teaches concerning Him.*
- If we take this psalm as descriptive of Jesus, what does it say about who Jesus is? What does it say about us, who are called to be like Jesus?

### Romans 15:4-13

- Note what Paul says that Scripture is intended for: instruction, steadfastness (what does that mean?), encouragement, and hope. How could these purposes change our conversations around and about Scripture?
- What does it mean to "welcome one another ... just as Christ has welcomed you"? How does Christ welcome us?

### Matthew 3:1-12

- How do we deal with John the Baptist? Frederick Buechner paraphrases John's words this way: "I'm the one yelling himself blue in the face in the wilderness .... I'm the one trying to knock some sense into your heads." John is understood as the one who "prepares the way" for Jesus. To appreciate what God's grace is all about, we often need someone to knock some sense into us first. "John the Baptist" comes to us still in multitude ways to "prepare the way." Sometimes "John" comes in people. Sometimes "John" comes in events or disasters. How has "John" come to you?