

ADVENT TWO
 Sunday, December 6, 2020
 Mantua Center Christian Church
 MCCC Worship at the Windows

Order of Worship

1 - GATHERING MUSIC **“Savior of the Nations, Come”** **Jan Green**
By D. E. Wagner; Tune; nun Komm, Der Heiden Heiland (1524)

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome to the Mantua Center Christian Church this second Sunday in Advent. We come together in this season of waiting and expectation to proclaim our hope in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We want to welcome any visitors today and everyone that is on our YouTube Live video feed. We are reaching out in all sorts of different ways and grateful for your presence with us.

INFO

- Bulletin and Music Lyrics
- Communion is “bring your own.” Please participate as you feel led.
- If you have an offering to give you can stop at the basket on your way out!

God of Peace,
 Mighty God, who speaks a word of peace to calm our troubled spaces;
 Caring God, who nudges us away from fear and toward courage and faith;
 Ever-present God, who fills us with awe and anticipation... but who also moves us to ask questions and sit in mystery...
 Open our eyes to see you in scripture, in song, in prayer.
 Strengthen our hearts for any challenge ahead,
 Give us your peace, so we might be your people...
 This we pray, In Jesus’ name. Amen

2 - OPENING HYMN **“Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”**

*1. Let all mortal flesh keep silence, and with fear and trembling stand;
 ponder nothing earthly-minded, for with blessing in his hand,
 Christ our God to earth descendeth, our full homage to demand.*

2. Rank on rank the host of heaven spreads its vanguard on the way,

*as the Light of light descendeth from the realms of endless day,
that the powers of hell may vanish as the darkness clears away.*

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING written by Rev. Dr. Terri Hord Owens

Week 2 - PEACE Isaiah 11:1-5

CHAD: Today we celebrate the 2nd Sunday of Advent, and we light the candle of Peace. The famous image of the “peaceable kingdom” shows animals who are natural enemies lying down together in peace. In Isaiah 11:1-5, we also hear the prophet Isaiah speak to Israel about who the Messiah will be:

3 - SARAH: A shoot shall come out from the stock 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 the poor, and decide with equity for the meek 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.

CHAD: God says that the Messiah will be filled with the Spirit of the Lord, that he will not judge by what his eyes see or what his ears hear. Jesus was to come to us in righteousness and faithfulness, to bring a world where all have enough. In such a world, there can be peace.

4 - SARAH: When the Spirit of the Lord fills us, we can have peace, and our movement for wholeness will be grounded in justice and faithfulness. We thank God for this vision for our movement as we light the candle of peace. (The Peace candle is lit.)

Prayer: We receive your Spirit, O God, that our hearts might be filled with your righteousness and faithfulness. May we see and hear with your wisdom and your peace, and may our work together serve to bring your reign of peace to pass. In Christ’s name we pray. Amen.

5 - CL RESPONSE

When God is a Child – verse 2

Pam Auble

6 - CHILDREN’S MOMENT - Ally Hurd

PASTORAL PRAYER - Chad

A Prayer for Peace - David Tonghou Ngong.

Dear God, we hear of peace only as a faraway dream; we long for it in our lives, in the lives of our families, our friends, and our countries. But with each passing day the prospect for peace seems to be increasingly tantalizing. Restlessness seems to be the order of our present existence:

our inner restlessness rooted in various anxieties,
our societal restlessness rooted in the evils that go on around us,
the restlessness of our world plagued by conflicts of all sorts.

Dear God, we hear of peace only as a dream; a dream we would love to be part of, a dream we long to have in our hearts, in our neighborhoods, in our countries, and even in our churches.

We pray this morning, dear God, that we may experience that peace that passes all understanding,
we pray, O God, that we may experience You, the Peace of the world.

Penetrate the grieving heart, accompany the lonely one,
remember the forgotten, reclaim the strayed,
make music out of the disharmony of conflict and chaos.
Let our restless hearts rest in you, O God.
This we pray in the name of the Christ,
who beckons us into the vision of Peace. Amen.

God, we now lift to you the concerns, hurts, desires, joys, and thanksgiving of our hearts to you in silent prayer....

Amen.

LITANY of PREPARATION (*based on Psalm 130*) - Chad

Leader: Wait for the Lord, like those who hope in God's mercy.

ALL: God's steadfast love endures forever.

Leader: Watch for God, like those who eagerly await the morning.

ALL: We watch for God, whose power redeems.

SCRIPTURE READING **Isaiah 11:6-10**

SERMON **Chad Delaney**
 2020 - Advent 2 - Isaiah 11:6-10 - Dec 6, 2020

Isaiah 11:6-10

⁶ 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.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.

When I was in college I developed this hope to be a good guitar player. I always loved listening to the guitar riffs in the bands I liked--whether Queen or Led Zeppelin or Journey. Could I play like them? Now, listen. I didn't have delusions of grandeur. I didn't see myself on stage playing....but I just wanted to have a hobby and enjoy playing the music I liked. Maybe be able to lead people in music. Maybe sell 10 platinum albums. You know just for the fun of it.

I had an acoustic guitar and my friend gave me his electric guitar...and I was on my way. At first I tried mimicking what I heard. Sit down with the guitar, listen to music. Pause. Try to get it. Go back. Over and over and over and over again. Ok this was harder than I thought. I signed up to take class guitar 1 and started learning the bases. Conditioning my finger tips, learning the frets, finger positioning. There was much more to this than I imagined. I was going to have to practice days at a time to learn a couple of chords. I was so discouraged, I stopped enjoying those awesome guitar licks in my favorite music -- only hollow reminders now of how bad a guitar player I was. I gave up. This would require more of me than I was willing to give. Oh I learned some and can still fiddle with it a bit...but the dream is gone.

I bring this story up because sometimes I see something similar within myself and the church today in regards to our passage today. Does it feel too big, too much, too silly...Does the passage motivate you and inspire you.....or just ridiculous?

Look around. There are way too many wolves, lions, and asps having their way in the world economically, politically, socially. Those with power, money, prestige, and comfort...those on top of the political and economic food chain are always going to dismiss the cause of the poor and most vulnerable...That is not changing anytime soon. Maybe we should GIVE UP.

I mean aren't you overwhelmed by the HUGENESS of the problems? Each one with a long, complex history of suffering and anger and injustice. Poverty, racism, homophobia, addiction, abuse and all the powers working for them? GIVE UP its way too hard.

And let's not even start with our political leadership. And the Social media and news cycles constantly heralding the dread and propagating polarities for profit. Wolves and Lions and Leopards, OH MY.

Anyone else tired? Weary of all the anger and hostility? Weary of the effort it takes to confront these or even just to ignore them? Living in the likeness of Jesus honestly is a challenge, right. Maybe you've tried doing the right thing over and over again....over and over again, but it's hard and nothing seems to be sticking. So what is happening inside of us? Have we abandoned the vision? Believe its possible? Or have we even started reversing it...returning anger with anger. Hostility with hostility. Hate with hate? We live in a dangerous time. A difficult time.

But here's the thing....somebody, somewhere has GOT to hold up this vision of peace though right? When the people are tired, angry, hopeless, and hostile...somebody's GOT to hold up God's way.

A couple weeks ago we heard the story of when God called Isaiah. The throne, holy smoke, and seraphim. The hot coal on his lips. God says, Who will go for us? Isaiah says, "Here am I. Send me." At that time he had no idea what he was getting himself into. He would have to speak to the powers of sin, death, and greed...but also in the middle of the violence of exile to hold up hope for the people. In the middle of their own destruction, Isaiah would hold up God's vision of Peace that was to be a light shining in their darkness.

It may have seemed so implausibly distant, fantastical, and even overwhelming in those moments...yet God's people were called to place their hearts, minds, and actions not just on what is...but what could be. What God was in the middle of creating. And If God's people can't hold that vision up....who will?

People of God, if the vision of the Peaceable Kingdom--of lions laying down with lambs---only moves you to resentment and bitterness about the state of the world now...we are missing the point. If it only moves you to chuckle at the wishful naivete. We are missing the point. If it moves you to inaction because its only something God could do in the future. We are missing the point. Instead, even in the face of all the powers working against us, might it point us to something greater. Might it be a signpost to remind us of who we are to be in the world. What we are creating with God. To see the potential that God sees...and to find ways to live that vision now. Thy Kingdom come...on earth as it is in heaven.

In that guitar class way back in the 90s, my guitar teacher actually gave me a piece of wisdom that I wish I had put more into practice. He said, don't worry about practicing for an hour or two every day...you will become overwhelmed and more than likely give up. It will seem too big and unattainable. Instead, just do 5 minutes. 5 minutes and see where it takes you." Even today in this crazy time...can we try making peace for 5 minutes? What wolves exist in you that need to repent & relent? What lamb needs to

learn to trust and forgive again? Can we find small ways to encourage, nurture God's vision? Someone you can reach out to. One post to resist commenting on. One less time of raising your voice. One less harsh judgment of someone you don't know. A smidge more patience? What small step can you take to encourage and live with peace? All the while remembering that God loves you and will be beside. Ready with forgiveness and mercy when we mess up.

Family of God, I know we are all weary of the angst and hostility...we just can't give up. For better or worse, we've all given up on ideas and things in our lives...we've all had our share. But the peace that God calls us to can't be one of them. There is too much at stake and every act of kindness, forgiveness, welcome, and love matters. Someone, somewhere needs to hold up that vision and shine light into darkness. Someone, somewhere needs to break down barriers and break the chains of injustice. To end the cycle of fury, violence, and hatred. Why not you? Why not me? Why not us....? May it be so. Amen.

HOLY COMMUNION

7 - Communion Song "These I Lay Down"

1. *Before I take the body of my Lord, before I share his life in bread and wine,
I recognise the sorry things within: these I lay down.*
2. *Lord Jesus Christ, companion at this feast, I empty now my heart and stretch my
hands
and ask to meet you here in bread and wine; which you lay down.*

8 - INVITATION - Sarah Smith

Communion Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Words of Institution

As we gather around Christ's Table we remember that on the night that Jesus was betrayed, he took the bread and broke it, gave thanks and said to his Disciples, "This is my body which is give for you, eat of it all of you in remembrance of me." In like manner he took the cup and blessed it saying, "This is the cup of the new covenant in me, as often as you drink of it do so in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's life, death, and resurrection until he comes again. Remember, all...ALL are welcome at

the Lord's Table.

(Share in the Bread and Cup together)

90 - BENEDICTION - Sarah

91 - CLOSING SONG "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear"

*1. It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold;
"Peace on the earth, good will to all from heaven's all-gracious King!"
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.*

*2. And you beneath life's crushing load whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way, with painful steps and slow,
look now, for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing;
O rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing!*

*3. For lo, the days are hastening on, by prophet seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years, shall come the time foretold;
when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
and the whole world send back the song which now the angels sing.*

92 - DEPARTURE "Come, Thou Long-expected Jesus" Jan Green

By Robert W. Thygerson; Tune: Hyfrydol By R. H. Pritchard