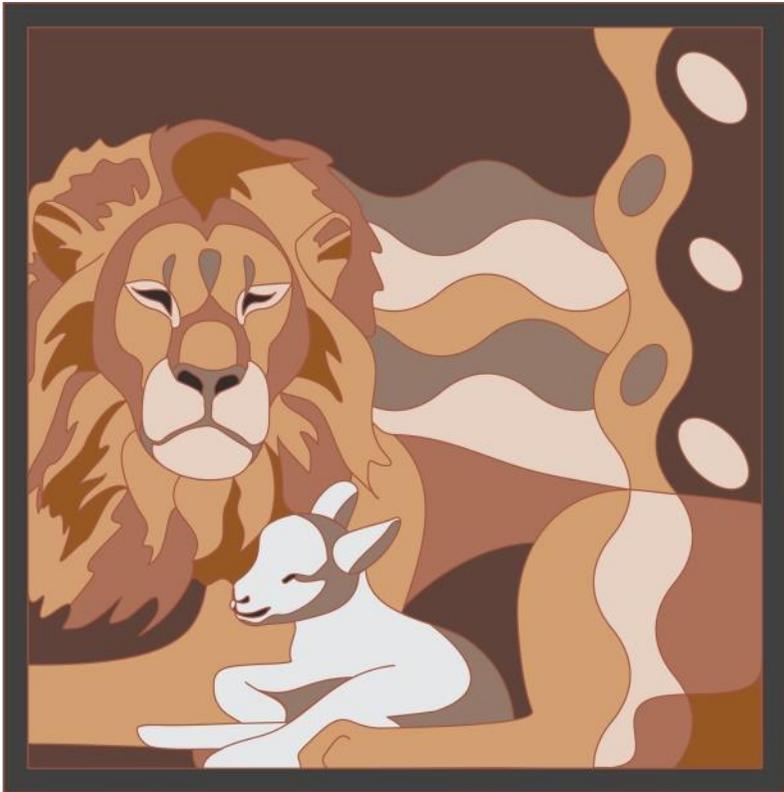




... THROUGH THE PROPHETS



SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

OPENING RESPONSES

Reader We gather in the name of the Father:

**All Whose Creative Word was spoken
and all Creation came into being.**

Reader We gather in the name of the Son:

**All The Word of God made flesh
who made his home among humans
to help humans discover the divinity with them.**

Reader We gather in the name of the Holy Spirit

**All Who opens our ears to hear the Word of God;
our minds to know and begin to understand it –
and our hearts to feel the love of our God
spoken to us by the God who speaks.**

LISTENING TO THE WORD OF THE GOD WHO SPEAKS

A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
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.
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;
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.
Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

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.

The cow and the bear shall graze,
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.
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.
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.

Isaiah 11: 1-10

REFLECTING TOGETHER

- What images did the Reading conjure up for us?
- How do the spiritual gifts or qualities that Isaiah lists make for a good ruler?
- Thinking of the images at the end of the passage – of lions and lambs – and children playing near snakes' nests – how might these be symbols of the world as it is and what it could be? (Suggest things like – who are the human lions and lambs? Where are the lives of children “stung” or “poisoned” or put in danger by others?)

LISTENING WITH THE HEART

Time for personal reflection with the reading and discussions.

CLOSING PRAYER

Reader As we close our meeting, let's call to mind some of the ways
in which we have heard the God who speaks...

Perhaps there was a word or phrase in the Reading that seemed particularly significant...

Why might it have struck you today?

What does it invite you to take away?

Was there something someone said that seemed to come from God through them?

Was there something you received in the silence?

Was there a spiritual gift that seemed to resonate with you – as something you need to pray for – or use better?

Were there ‘lambs’ and ‘lions’ you felt drawn to pray for? Or children?

How did God speak to you today?

Reader God speaks his Word –
from the dawn of Creation
to our present day.

**All May our ears and hearts be open
to hear the Voice of the God who speaks.**

Reader God speaks words that offer hope

**All May we hear God’s Word
and be formed in the wisdom and understanding of the Holy Spirit
to receive it deeply into our hearts.**

Reader God speaks of the world as he desires it to be:
a world in which knowledge, wisdom and understanding are honoured
and all of Creation finds peace in the reign of God.

**All May we too yearn for such a world –
and use the gifts we have received in working with God to build it –
a place of peace, of healing, of wholeness.**

Reader And may God bless us this night and all nights (*or today and all days*)

All The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Reader And until we meet again, may God hold us in hope in his promises.

All Amen.