



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

700 King Street West, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8P 1C7

Second Sunday of Advent

Children's Liturgy of the Word

The readings for the Second Sunday of Advent revolve around three core themes: God's promise, our renewal, and the call to prepare.

Isaiah paints a striking vision of the Messiah. He describes a ruler shaped by the Spirit, one who brings justice to the poor, integrity to public life, and peace that reaches every corner of creation. It serves as a reminder that God's future is not built on power or fear, but on wisdom, courage, and righteousness.

Saint Paul then encourages the community in Rome to endure with patience and to find strength in the Scriptures. He points out that the hope God gives is not abstract. It comes alive when believers live in harmony and welcome one another as Christ has welcomed them.

In the Gospel, we encounter John the Baptist. He calls from the wilderness with a simple but urgent message: repent. His call cuts through distractions and excuses. John reminds us that Advent is not a passive waiting period. It is an active turning of the heart, a realignment of our lives so we can receive the One who is greater than all our expectations.

All four readings pull toward the same center. God's future draws close. It brings justice for the vulnerable, fosters unity in a divided world, and calls for real change. The kingdom begins quietly, like a shoot from a stump, but it asks for a response as bold as John's preaching. Together, these readings encourage us to examine our lives honestly, to trust in God's promise, and to prepare a path for Christ, who comes to renew the world and us.

Background

Isaiah 11:1–10 speaks into a moment when the Davidic monarchy looked burned out. The image of a stump shows how far things had fallen; yet, the promise is not of a rebuilt empire, but a new shoot from the same root. The Spirit's gifts listed here describe a ruler shaped by wisdom, justice, and reverence for God, rather than by political strength. The dominant theme is reversal: the vulnerable are defended, the wicked lose their power, and creation itself is reordered into a state of peace. The wolf and lamb imagery is not sentimental; it is prophetic shorthand for a world reordered around God's justice. This passage sets the tone for Advent: hope that begins in smallness and grows into renewal.

Psalms 72 is a prayer for the ideal king, who is ultimately understood as a reference to Jesus. It pictures leadership defined by justice for the poor and oppressed. Prosperity appears, but as a byproduct of righteousness. Advent uses this psalm to frame the Messiah as a ruler whose strength is measured by his care for the weak. God's future arrives through compassion, not domination.

Romans 15:4–9: Paul anchors the church's hope in Scripture, not as mere information, but as a source of endurance and encouragement. He urges the Roman Christians, a mixed community of Jews and Gentiles, to live in harmony so that their shared praise becomes a visible sign of God's welcome. Christ becomes the example: he entered the story of Israel to confirm God's promises and, at the same time, opened the door to the nations. Advent hope is therefore communal. It calls believers to reflect the unity and generosity of the one they wait for.

Matthew 3:1–12 John the Baptist appears without preamble. His location in the wilderness links him with Israel's prophetic tradition and signals a new beginning. His core message is simple: repent, because God is near. John's baptism is a preparation, not an endpoint. His sharp words to the Pharisees and Sadducees expose the temptation to rely on heritage instead of genuine transformation. Fruit, not lineage, shows readiness for the coming Messiah. John describes the one to come as stronger, holy, and decisive. The winnowing imagery is about discernment. The Messiah will separate what is alive from what is empty.

The Liturgy

Procession from the main Church

After the opening prayer, when all are seated, the leaders come forward and stand facing the altar.

Priest: (in these or similar words)

We gather today to celebrate the second week of Advent, a special time when we continue to prepare for the coming of Jesus. Go with your leaders to listen to the readings and learn about ways to prepare for Jesus.

Once most of the children have formed a procession, the leader with the book proceeds to the celebration site. The second leader usually walks behind the children. Upon arrival at the CLoW room, the leader places the book on the prepared table.

Welcome.

The leaders assist the children in sitting and preparing. **Begin with the Sign of the Cross.** Help the children think and connect their actions as they touch their foreheads, shoulders, and stomachs. The leader may offer the following prayer, in these or similar words.

Lord, we thank You for this beautiful season of Advent. Help us to open our hearts, to listen for Your voice, and to share the joy of Your coming with everyone we meet.

Amen.

Invite the children to listen to the readings. Proclaiming all the readings is unnecessary; however, the Gospel is required.

FIRST READING

A reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah.

On that day:

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse¹, 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 righteousness² 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.

The word of the Lord.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

¹ Stump of Jesse is interpreted as a sign of hope for restoring the Davidic dynasty, initially referring to the hope of the restitution of the kingship, but later interpreted in a Messianic sense.

² Righteousness is fundamentally about conformity to a moral standard that satisfies expectations and obligations toward God and others.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 72.1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17

R. In his days may righteousness flourish,
and peace abound forever.

Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to a king's son.
May he judge your people with righteousness,
and your poor with justice. **R.**

In his days may righteousness flourish
and peace abound, until the moon is no more.
May he have dominion from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth. **R.**

For he delivers the needy when they call,
the poor and those who have no helper.
He has pity on the weak and the needy,
and saves the lives of the needy. **R.**

May his name endure forever,
his fame continue as long as the sun.
May all nations be blessed in him;
may they pronounce him happy. **R.**

SECOND READING

Romans 15.4-9

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

Brothers and sisters:

Whatever was written in former days
was written for our instruction,
so that by steadfastness
and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope.

May the God of steadfastness and encouragement
grant you to live in harmony with one another,
in accordance with Christ Jesus,

so that together you may with one voice
glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you,
for the glory of God.

For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised
on behalf of the truth of God
in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs,
and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.
As it is written, "Therefore I will confess you among the Gentiles,
and sing praises to your name."

The word of the Lord.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew.

In those days John the Baptist³ appeared in the wilderness⁴ of Judea, proclaiming, "Repent,⁵ for the kingdom of heaven⁶ has come near." 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.'"

Now John wore clothing of camel's hair⁷ with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, John said to them, "You brood of vipers!⁸ Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit worthy of repentance. 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 children to Abraham. Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 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."

The Gospel of the Lord.

³ The immediate precursor of Jesus was called "the Baptist." John was a prophet and ascetic who prepared the way for Jesus as the Messiah and baptized him in the Jordan River. The role of the Baptist was expressed eloquently in the Gospel of John: "He was not the light but came to bear witness to the light" (John 1:8).

⁴ In Scripture, the word wilderness includes the barren deserts of dunes or rock that colour the popular imagination of a desert, but also sands and pasture lands suitable for grazing livestock.

⁵ A conversion of heart away from sin and toward God. The call to conversion and true repentance is one of the central themes of the New Testament and a cornerstone of the Christian life.

⁶ The reign of God culminating in eternal life for all who remain faithful to Him. Christ brought forth or inaugurated the kingdom through His words and deeds.

⁷ Camel's hair was a material woven from different parts of the camel, with varying levels of coarseness - a very coarse material from the back and hump, and a finer material from underneath the animal. Camel's hair was a simple purgative garment. Some scholars link this to Elijah's prophetic garment, suggesting it was intended to identify John as Elijah's spiritual successor

⁸ The religious leaders continued the hypocrisy and error of their predecessors, imitating their ancestors by envying and persecuting good people.

REIMAGINED READINGS FOR CHILDREN

The reimagined readings below are intended for use after the children have heard the original reading. The intent is to allow the children to hear the original reading and help them better understand it (not replace it).

Read at a minimum, the Gospel, which has the highest priority, and then ask the children to sit down. You can then read the reimagined reading. Leaders may not have time to read all of the reading. If time permits, after the Gospel, proclaim the Psalm, and then the first reading, if time permits.

Reimagined readers must always remain faithful to the original Scripture's intent, making it age-appropriate for children to understand.

First Reading

We will now listen to our first reading again, but in a different way.

In a quiet field stood an old tree stump. It looked worn out and forgotten, like nothing good could come from it anymore. Most people passed by without a single thought. But God had a secret growing there.

One bright morning, a tiny green shoot pushed up from the stump. It was small, but it shimmered with hope. God had planted it on purpose. This little shoot was a picture of someone very special that God would send into the world: Jesus.

Just as the shoot grew from the old stump of Jesse's family, Jesus would come from that same family line. He would grow up with wisdom. He would listen to God with his whole heart. He would care for people others forgot. He would make fair and kind choices. He would protect the weak and lift up the lonely.

And because of Jesus, the world would begin to change. Imagine wolves lying down next to gentle lambs. Imagine leopards curled up with baby goats. Imagine children leading lions the way they lead friendly pets. Imagine cows and bears sharing their lunch. Imagine lions eating grass in the sunshine. Imagine babies playing near once scary creatures, safe and happy.

This is the peaceful world God dreams for us, the world Jesus came to bring. And one day, Jesus will stand like a bright flag for everyone to see. People from every place will come to him. They will find peace. They will find hope. They will find a forever home in God's new world.

Responsorial Psalm

We will now listen to the Responsorial Psalm again, but in a different way.

R. May peace abound forever.

God, help the king make good choices
and be fair to everyone. **R.**

Let good people grow and be safe.
Let there be peace for a long time.
May the king's rule reach everywhere. **R.**

When people are poor or need help,
let the king listen and be kind.
Let him take care of those who are hurting. **R.**

May the king's name last forever,
and may everyone praise God. **R.**

Second Reading

We will now listen to the second reading again, but in a different way.

Long ago, a group of people were trying hard to follow God, but sometimes they argued and forgot how to get along. Paul, one of God's apostles, wrote them a letter to remind them why God's words matter so much.

He told them: A long time before you were born, God gave people stories, songs, and teachings. They were written down so that when you read them today, you can learn from them. These stories help your heart grow strong. They teach you to be patient and to keep hoping, even when things are tough.

Paul said that God is the one who gives patience and comfort. And Paul prayed something special for the people who listened to him. He asked God to help them think the same way and work together with kind hearts. He wanted them to speak with one voice when they praised God, the Father of our Lord Jesus.

Then Paul added something important. He said, "Welcome one another just as Christ welcomed you." Jesus did not push people away. He opened his arms to everyone who came to him. When we welcome others the same way, we show how great and loving God truly is.

Paul also explained that Jesus came to help both the Jewish people and the rest of the world. For the Jewish people, Jesus proved that God keeps His promises. For everyone else, Jesus showed God's mercy and gave them reasons to praise Him, too.

So Paul encouraged everyone to remember: God keeps His promises, Jesus welcomes all, and we can bring joy to God when we choose patience, hope, and harmony.

Gospel

We will now listen to a reading from the Gospel again, but in a different way.

A man named John lived out in the desert before Jesus began teaching and healing. His clothes were made of camel's hair, and he wore a leather belt around his waist. He ate simple foods: locusts and wild honey!

John believed that God wanted him to help people understand that God wanted them to live holy lives. He stood by a river, called the Jordan and told people, "Get ready! God's chosen one is coming soon! Turn away from doing wrong things and start living the way God wants you to live!"

People came from everywhere to listen to John. They felt sorry for the wrong things they had done. John helped them change their hearts by washing them in the river. This washing was called baptism—it was a sign that they wanted to begin again with God.

John told them, "I am baptizing you with water to help you change your hearts. But someone much greater than I is coming! I am not even good enough to carry His shoes. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire!"

Everyone wondered who this great person would be. Soon, Jesus Himself would come to the river, and John knew that the Saviour had arrived.

Reflection

The leader may offer this reflection in these or similar words. Remember the amount of time available to return to the main assembly. The leader may wish to reduce the number of questions. An excellent place to begin is the question:

What did you hear? Allow children to respond.

In our Gospel, John the Baptist shouted out loud. John used the words "in the wilderness" because the wilderness is a place where people are often alone. Yet God chose an empty place to send a loud call because Jesus is always calling us. He calls us even when we feel alone. John's "voice" prepares us for Jesus. He is inviting us to be part of God's great adventure.

What did John the Baptist tell people to do? Repent and say, "I'm sorry."

We do this after we realize that we should have played nicer or kinder. To repent means to say, "I'm sorry," and try to change. John is asking us to show that we are trying to produce good deeds—kind words, sharing, and forgiveness. Every small act, such as helping a friend pick up pencils, is a sign that shows we are trying to live as God wants us to.

Why did John use water for baptism? Washed from our sins or making changes for God.

Imagine that you are in a playground where someone shouts, "Let's play!" But your shirt becomes dirty while playing. You know that washing it with water will make it clean again. Water is a sign of our baptism. When we were baptized, the priest poured water on us. Like water cleans a dirty shirt, baptism cleans our souls.

Why do our souls need to be clean?

Who did John say would come after Jesus? The Holy Spirit

If you could ask the Holy Spirit for help today, what would you ask for?

John's message is simple:

- Say sorry when we hurt others or forget to pray.
- Ask God to help us change, just like John asked people to change.
- Be ready for the Holy Spirit, which gives us courage to love, share, and forgive.

Following the reflection, the prayer leader invites everyone to stand to profess their faith. Recite the Creed or use the sample below to ask the children to respond.

Alternative Reflection

The leader may offer this reflection in these or similar words. Remember the amount of time available to return to the main assembly. The leader may wish to reduce the number of questions. An excellent place to begin is the question:

What did you hear? Allow children to respond.

Today's readings help us prepare our hearts for Jesus.

Isaiah tells us about a tiny green shoot growing from an old tree stump. It looks small, but it grows into something strong and full of life. That tiny shoot is a reminder that even small good things can grow into something beautiful.

What small good thing can grow in your life this week?

The tiny green shoot also prompts us to think of Jesus because Jesus is of the family of King David. Jesus is now our King.

In the Gospel, John the Baptist stands by the river, inviting people to prepare for someone wonderful who is coming. He asks everyone to open their hearts, choose kindness, and walk toward goodness.

What helps your heart feel ready for Jesus?

During Advent, we do the same thing. We prepare. We try to be a little more patient, a little more loving, and a little more willing to help. These choices might feel small, but they matter.

Can you think of a time you chose kindness even when it was hard? How did it feel afterward?

Every good choice we make brings more peace into our world.

What is one way you can bring peace to your home or school this week?

And as we get ready for Christmas, it is good to pause and wonder:

If Jesus appeared today, what do you think would make him smile?

Advent invites us to let those little lights inside us grow brighter, one good choice at a time.

The Creed

Depending on the time, a simple profession of faith may be made (see below).

Leader: Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth?

All: I believe.

Leader: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, who gave his life for us?

All: I believe.

Leader: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who lives in our hearts and gives us everlasting life?

All: I believe.

Leader: This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it.

Prayer of the Faithful

Leaders may begin the intercessions by announcing the needs they know. The leader may need to repeat and paraphrase the petition, concluding it with the cue for the response: 'We pray.' All respond to each petition by saying, "Lord, hear our prayer." Sample intercessions are below.

The intercessions are said. The Leader introduces them, and an assistant announces them.

The leader says:

Let's pray to God for the Church, our families, and our world. After each prayer, please respond, Come, Lord Jesus. R: Come, Lord Jesus.

Assistant

For the Pope, bishops, priests, deacons, and all who lead us to love Christ more deeply. We pray to the Lord. R:

Assistant

For government leaders – that they may work for justice and peace, especially for those who suffer from war or poverty. We pray to the Lord. R:

Assistant

For those who are ill, hungry, or lonely – especially children who are sick, and families who are hungry. We pray to the Lord. R:

Assistant

For our families, parents, teachers, and caregivers – that they may be patient, loving, and strong. We pray to the Lord. R:

Assistant

In the quiet of our hearts, we offer our own prayers... [pause] We pray to the Lord. R:

The Leader says:

Almighty God, hear our prayers. May the light of Advent fill our lives. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Return to the church

Ask the children to return to the main assembly. Ask them to return quietly and think about what they have heard and are now doing. Be mindful of children having difficulty finding their families.

Readings: Lectionary Sundays and Solemnities,
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