

# Hoon Hay Presbyterian Church

Welcome to the Second Sunday of Advent, 6<sup>th</sup> December 2020



## Mission Statement

**To love and serve the Lord Jesus in the Hoon Hay Community**

Worshiping God as a family

Offering opportunities to grow in faith

Sharing God's love with people in our community and beyond

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# Order of Service

## Welcome & Opening Prayer



### Lighting of Advent Candle

*Candles symbolise the light of God coming into the world through the birth of His son. It also reminds us that we are called to be a light to the world as we reflect the light of God's grace to others (Isaiah 42:6).*


*The second candle is the candle of Peace. Jesus is our Peace.*

**Advent Song:** 'A candle is burning'

*Tune: 'Away in a manger'*

**Prayer Chain Activity**

**Notices & Celebrations**

**Hymn:** 'Angels from the realms of glory' 

**RESPONSIVE READING**

**PSALM 1**

**(NIV)**

<sup>1</sup> Blessed is the one

who does not walk in step with the wicked  
or stand in the way that sinners take  
or sit in the company of mockers,

<sup>2</sup> *but whose delight is in the law of the LORD,  
and who meditates on his law day and night.*

<sup>3</sup> *That person is like a tree planted by streams of  
water,*

*which yields its fruit in season  
and whose leaf does not wither—  
whatever they do prospers.*

<sup>4</sup> Not so the wicked!


They are like chaff  
that the wind blows away.

<sup>5</sup> *Therefore the wicked will not stand in the  
judgment,*

*nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.*

<sup>6</sup> *For the LORD watches over the way of the  
righteous,*

*but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.*

**Hymn:** 'God rest you merry people all' 

**Prayer of Confession & Supplication**

**Offering**

## Prayer of Intercession

**Hymn:** 'Love came down at Christmas' 


**Message:** 'How to read the Bible for all it's worth'  
Part 7: Jesus as Prophecy and History

**Scripture Readings**  
(NIV)

Old Testament  
New Testament

Isaiah 7: 1-17  
Matthew 1

## Time of Quiet

**Hymn:** 'Joy to the World' 

**BENEDICTION:** 'Now unto Him'

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU IN TODAY'S MESSAGE?

JESUS<sup>vs</sup>  
The REASON  
FOR The  
SEASON



# Teaching Notes

We continue the series 'How to read the Bible for all it's worth' today looking at a prophecy of Jesus in Isaiah 7. This clearly ties in with Advent and is also a good passage for close study because it can be used to illustrate a number of 'tools' for interpretation we have been discussing, including:

- understanding the historical context and who was originally speaking or writing
- reading around the passage
- researching the cross references (and)
- understanding the use of key words, and phrases, and the genre (the type of text) and metaphor (etc.).

At first glance we might get tongue-tied with the names and their pronunciation. But despite this and other complexities in interpretation, we need to persevere because as we read on we see that this is a very messy situation and yet, in among the intrigue, the threat of war, disobedience and idolatry, God is present. This is also true for us, and it's good to be reminded of that given the situations and issues we face.

Having had an incredible vision of glory (Chapter 6) Isaiah confidently engages with King Ahaz of Judah (the southern kingdom) at a time when the northern kingdom (Ephraim/Israel) was in an unholy alliance with the Arameans (Syrians) to wage war on Judah. They sought to force Ahaz to join them against the Assyrians, but Ahaz had his own arrangements with the king of Assyria by buying him off with silver and gold taken from the temple (see 2 Kings 16:8). How sad that God's chosen people had compromised their worship, given in to idolatry, and divided into two kingdoms (following Solomon's death), and their kings had by and large become very evil (I suggest you read 2 Kings 16 to put yourself in the picture regarding Ahaz and his rule). Isaiah assures Ahaz no attack will come and God then speaks directly to Ahaz (v.10) asking him to look for a sign, but Ahaz's response is disingenuous; to not put God to the test (v.12). In reality, he didn't want to know and tried to hide behind a false piety. Isaiah then says God Himself will 'give you a sign' (v.14) and he proceeds to speak of a virgin and boy child who will be called *Immanuel* ('God with us').

Neither the confused Ahaz nor the prophet himself could, at that time fully appreciate the import of this prophecy (vv.14-17), but we can – especially as we read Matthew 1 (our second passage). There (in vv.9-11) we read of Ahaz in Jesus' family line. So what, you might say? Well, this tells us a number of important things: 1. God is at work in human lives even amidst the mess. 2. From evil and disobedience and all the twists and turns of even ungodly leaders, God has a greater plan, and 3. This greater (cosmic) plan can never be thwarted by political agendas and grandstanding.

To know that God is *with*, *in*, and *among* us in Christ by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit means God is involved in all our messiness; and as in the Ahaz story, Almighty God always has a plan greater than we can grasp. What's your 'messiness'/struggle this Christmas? I encourage you to yield whatever the issues are in prayer – and trust that God is with you, *and* working out a greater plan.