

**First Congregational  
United Church of Christ  
River Falls, Wisconsin**

**December 7, 2025**



**Peace**

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN**

December 7, 2025

*Second Sunday of Advent*

10:00 am

**Gathering**

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love.  
- St. Francis of Assis

Welcome to our guests who are visiting with us today!

- Activity bags are available for children.
- Large print bulletins are available.
- Visitors please stop at the welcome booth.
- Please stand when noted by the \*
- Congregation responses are in bold.
- Please note our worship service is livestreamed.

**Our Mission is to Love God and  
Serve People.**

**Everyone is welcome because  
everyone matters.**

**GATHERING MUSIC**

**WELCOME AND RINGING OF THE BELL**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

**L:** Today is the second Sunday of Advent. The second candle is the candle of PEACE. Peace is a gift from God, the assurance that we are right with the God who created us.

**P:** **It was of peace the angels sang as their great light filled the heavens and the shepherds learned of the Christmas gift of God in Jesus Christ.**

(Light the second Advent candle)

**L:** Jesus told us that the peace he gives us is a peace which can be found in no other place. It is wholeness, health, life itself.

**P:** **Jesus Christ is our Peace: May God make us a peaceful people.**

**All:** **Come, let us worship the God who leads us into life!**

**\*HYMN**

***Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn***

**Blue #160**

**\*PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

God of the Prophets, **into the wilderness you sent your messenger John to prepare for the coming of your Son. In every age, your Word has called your people from death to life, and from darkness into light. In our own day, you have raised up voices who call us to turn and mend our ways. Open our hearts to your good news, help us to repent and make us ready to welcome Jesus, in whose name we pray. Amen.**

## \*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

L: John the Baptist came to prepare people for the coming of Jesus.

P: **We too need to be prepared.**

L: John called people to be ready to greet the Christ child.

P: **We too need to be called.**

L: John reminded people of the important things in life.

P: **We too need to be reminded.**

All: **Jesus is coming to set us free. Let us watch and listen, wait and watch for signs of God's Messiah here and now so that we too may be at peace. Amen.**

L: In Christ, we are forgiven.

P: **Thanks be to God!**

L: May the peace of the Lord be with you all.

P: **And also with you.**

## \*PASSING OF THE PEACE

(Please greet one another with signs of peace)

## \*GLORIA

### *He Came Down*

*He came down that we may have love; He came down that we may have love;  
Hallelujah forevermore.*

*He came down that we may have peace; He came down that we may have peace;  
Hallelujah forevermore.*

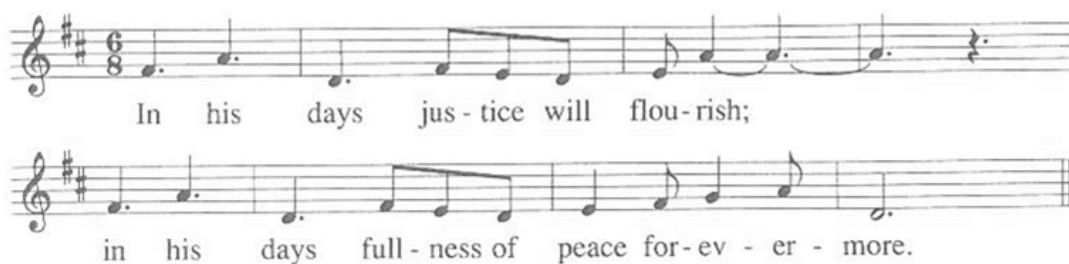
## Hearing the Word

## SCRIPTURE LESSON

Isaiah 11:1-10

PSALM 72:1-7 (Cantor will introduce; congregation, please join on refrain)

**R**



L: 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.

P: **May the mountains yield prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness.**

L: May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor.

P: **May he live while the sun endures, and as long as the moon, throughout all generations.**

- L: May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth.
- P: **In his days may righteousness flourish and peace abound, until the moon is no more. R**

<b>Celebrating the Meal</b>
-----------------------------

All Christians are welcome at the Lord's table. The bread is gluten-free. The cup is alcohol-free.  
Those choosing not to commune may receive a blessing from the servers.

***The Invitation to the Meal***

- L: Brothers and sisters in Christ, as we wait and watch during this Advent season, we pray...
- P: **Come, O Prince of Peace, and teach us your ways.**
- L: As we look for signs of Emmanuel, God with all of us, we pray...
- P: **Come, O Prince of Peace, and teach us your ways.**
- L: As we wait and watch, prepare and get ready for the arrival of the Messiah yet again, we pray...
- P: **Come, O Prince of Peace, and teach us your ways.**
- All: **Come let us gather together at the table of our Lord.**

***The Great Thanksgiving***

- L: The Lord be with you.
- P: **And also with you.**
- L: Lift up your hearts.
- P: **We lift them up to the Lord.**
- L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
- P: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**
- L: It is right and good always and everywhere to give thanks...

***The Words of Institution***

- L: We praise your name as we proclaim the mystery of faith...
- All: **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

***Prayer of Consecration***

***Distribution of the Elements***

*Hymns during the distribution of the elements:*

**We Shall Overcome**

**Blue #512**

**Choose to Hope**

*Congregation join on refrain:*

***In the times of darkness, in times of fear, choose to hope,  
choose to love, Emmanuel is near.***

**Make Me a Channel of Your Peace**

**Blue #587**

*Congregation join on refrain:*

***Master, grant that I may never seek so much to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood, as to understand, to be loved, as to love with all my soul.***

***Prayer of Thanksgiving***

**All: We give you thanks, Almighty God, that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Jesus Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

<b>Proclaiming the Word</b>
-----------------------------

**TIME WITH CHILDREN**

**Rev. Chris Myers**

**SONG (Children preschool through grade 8 leave for Sunday School.)**

***Stay awake (clap, clap). Be ready (stomp, stomp).  
You do not know the hour when the Lord is coming.  
Stay awake (clap, clap). Be ready (stomp, stomp).  
The Lord is coming soon.***

**GOSPEL LESSON**

**Matthew 3:1-12**

**SERMON**

**Rev. Chris Myers**

**\*HYMN**

***I've Got Peace Like a River***

**Black #478**

*Verses 1, 2 and 3*

**\*STATEMENT OF FAITH for Advent**

**L: In quietness and darkness, in peace and confusion, Jesus Christ wants to make his home and meet his friends. He is the light of life:**

**P: He is the hope for the world.**

**L: In him there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither Roman Catholic nor Protestant;**

**P: All are one in Jesus Christ.**

**L: He is the light of life:**

**P: He is the hope of the world.**

L: In him there is neither black nor white, neither north nor south;  
P: **All are one in Jesus Christ.**  
L: He is the light of life:  
P: **He is the hope of the world.**  
L: In him there is neither male nor female, neither master nor servant;  
P: **All are one in Jesus Christ.**  
L: He is the light of life:  
P: **He is the hope of the world.**  
L: He is the light of life:  
P: **He is the hope of the world. Amen.**

### THE PRAYERS & LORD'S PRAYER (debts/debtors)

Lord in your mercy... **Hear our prayer.**

**...Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

### GATHERING OUR GIFTS

*Et in Terra Pax*  
*Arr. by John Purifoy*

Chancel Choir

**\*OFFERTORY (sung twice)      *Prepare the Way of the Lord***

***Prepare the way of the Lord. Prepare the way of the Lord,  
and all people will see the salvation of our God.***

### **\*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

**O God, as we wait together for the day of Christ's coming, may our offerings be signs of God's fruit. In our giving, may we grow in the compassion of Jesus, in whose name we pray and whose coming we celebrate. Amen.**

<b>Sending</b>
----------------

### **\*HYMN**

***It Came upon the Midnight Clear***

**Blue #191**

### **\*BLESSING**

### **POSTLUDE**

Reprinted music used by permission under the following licenses:  
OneLicense.net A-703731; CCLI License 2892021

---

## **SUNDAY PARTICIPANTS**

Preacher: Chris Myers  
Celebrant: Chris Myers  
Cantor: David Reilly  
Liturgist: Traci Hagberg  
Deacons: Lance Lueck, Paul Shepherd,  
Ann Nelson, Laura Anderson,  
Heidi Cavaness  
Organist: Terry Mithun  
Nursery: Kahla Fuller  
Live Stream: Jeff Hoffman  
Welcomers: Julie Bauer, Lu Lueck  
Trustee: Matt Bastien  
Coffee  
Fellowship: Welcoming Committee  
Counters: Jean Smith, Allen Barnes  
*Altar table flowers are given by the  
Gustafson Family in honor of their mom  
Ann Gustafson and in memory of their father  
Bob Gustafson.*

## **CHURCH STAFF**

Pastor: Christopher Myers  
Education Pastor: Stacy Johnson Myers  
Youth Minister: Alex Plum  
Music Coordinator &  
Bell Director: Jamie Mills  
Choir Director: Sarah Plum  
Organists: Terry Mithun,  
Marsha Pearson  
Building Manager: Timothy Bylander  
Church Moderator: Marie Roe  
Office Administrator: Missy Luedtke  
Nursery Attendant: Kahla Fuller  
Custodians: Farnum Fuller,  
Troy Zakrzewski

---

## **Treasurer's Report**

	<u>Nov 30, 2025</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 10,784	\$ 508,482
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 10,623	\$ 509,904

A full accounting of all income and expenses is available in the church office.

\*Includes annual and monthly gifts.



### **Offering QR Code**

1. On your mobile device, open your Camera app or QR Code app
  2. Point your camera at the QR Code
  3. Click the tab 'Give Online'
-

Please remember the following in your prayers this week:

**Those who are ill or recovering:**

Barbara de Souza, Jeff Auchampach (nephew of Yvonne Benson), Glen Corliss (brother of Raelle Jorae), Amy (friend of Barb and Larry Peterson), Tom (friend of Barb Stephens), Eric (friend of Liz Swank), JoAnn Lentz, Don Larson, Rhonda Klink, Elaine (friend of Janice Healy), Judy (mother of Lara Koecher)

**Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:**

- For those who will receive Amaryllis bulbs and Giving Tree gifts, may they bring God's love closer to all who give and receive them
- For those participating in the Advent Event this Sunday after church, may it be a fun and faith-filled day
- For those baking cookies to trade and share at this week's cookie exchange, may it kindle joy for all
- For our congregation as we dedicate our 2026 financial pledges, may generosity power our ministry
- For the new Among Friends director Brittany Myer, may she lead with grace and be welcomed with joy
- For Louise Schmahl (sister of Becky Pajac) as she continues dialysis

**Prayers for our World:**

- For food pantries dealing with so much demand, may communities generously support them and the people they serve
- For the cast and staff at River Falls High School producing the musical Hadestown which opens this weekend and tells the story of the ancient Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydic and is directed by our own Sarah Plum with help from Tanner Pietz and Alex Plum plus lots of church kids in the cast and crew, break a ....leg?
- For students as they gear up for finals, may you be given grit and determination
- For the tentative peace in Gaza, may it lead to a just and lasting peace
- For the people of Ukraine as they battle for their freedom, may they be given strength and courage
- For all of us as we work to better care for the gift of God's good creation and reduce the effects of climate change
- For those living with dementia and families trying to care for them, may they all be given strength, grace and help along the way

**Prayers of Thanksgiving:**

- For the return of our Advent Evening Prayer worship services Wednesday, December 3, 10 and 17, may they kindle hope and joy with Advent season
- For the return of the Reverse Advent Calendar, a time to give instead of receive during Advent, may God's people be fed
- For Loral Keil and Brian Miller who celebrated their 44th wedding anniversary, may you continue to grow in love
- For 10 years of generating clean solar energy with our church solar panels, thanks be to God!
- For our church musicians who each week bring their gifts to grace our worship service, thank you!

**For those grieving the loss of loved ones:**

- For the family of Jim Filkins who died this past Sunday in Arizona, may his wife Marge and son Louie and their families be comforted (a Memorial Service is planned here at church on January 17th)
- For the family of Roland Erickson, father of Karl Erickson, who died this week, may they be comforted during this difficult time
- For those who mourn, especially the families of Steve Hove, Tom Hall, Hing Man, Kent Tomlinson, Marjorie Faulks, Chuck White, Marc Otto, may they be strengthened at this difficult time

If you have people you wish to include on our prayer list, please contact the church office or one of the pastors.



**Sunday, December 7, 2025**

**Loving God**

**New to Church:** Are you a first-time visitor? Please stop at the welcome table in the gathering area to receive a special welcome gift from us!

**Sunday Morning Bible Study:** Please join us on Sunday mornings to discuss the Bible passages used in worship. The group meets from **9:00–9:50** in the Youth Room. For more information, contact Pastor Stacy.

**Wednesday Afternoon Bible Study:** The group is currently studying the Gospel of John and will start a new study book early in the new year. The beginning of a new book study is a particularly good time to join. The group meets in the library on **Wednesdays, 1:00–2:30 pm**. If you have questions, contact Pastor Stacy.

**2026 Financial Pledges:** If you did not return yours, please do so today. We need all of our church families and friends to make a financial commitment to support and fund the mission & ministry of the church. These pledges pay for our programs and buildings, mission and staff. Please return your pledge in the offering plate or the church office. Thank you.

**Advent Evening Prayer:** Each Wednesday in Advent, we gather for worship using the Holden Evening Prayer Service of simple songs, scripture and stories. Join us on **Wed, Dec 10 & 17 at 6:30 pm** in the sanctuary for the absolutely lovely thirty-minute worship service. Youth Groups, Confirmation & Interns, will all start in worship and then move to class afterward.

**Advent Christmas Musical:** The 2025 Advent Musical, *Miracle on Bethlehem Street*, will be presented during worship on December 21. Please, please come, even if you don't have children in Sunday School. Your presence in worship on December 21 will not only feed you but also support the children in our church family.

**Christmas Eve Worship:** We will again offer our 4:00 pm Christmas Eve family worship with candlelight, communion and a story for children of all ages. The late service will be at 10:00 pm. It will again include the choir, communion and candlelight. It is beautiful, and it is not as full as the 4:00 pm family service. Please join us and consider inviting a friend to join you.

**Loving Neighbor**

**Reverse Advent Calendars:** "Reverse" reminds us Advent is a season of giving. Rather than getting candy each day, we will add a food item to the grocery bag. Each bag has a list of suggested donations, but you can add whatever you want. The Mission Ed Committee will bring the bags to the Food Pantry at the end of December. Thank you!

**Sharing Families Giving Tree:** If you would like to help some children have a better Christmas this year, please select an ornament from the tree and purchase a gift from their wish list. **The unwrapped gift with the ornament needs to be at the church no later than noon Thurs, Dec 11.** Please give the gift cards to the church office. If you would like to make a cash donation, please make out to First Congregational Church with "Sharing Families" in the memo line. Thank you for your generosity. If you have questions, please contact Diane Welsh (651-334-3128 or 715-386-6620).

**Christmas Shoebox:** The drive for donations for Christmas Shoebox items for the gentlemen at Kinnic Falls Alcohol & Drug Abuse Services has begun. If you would rather donate cash, just designate it for the Christmas Shoebox. **Donations are due by Dec 11.** The list of items needed is on the gathering table.

**Bring Christmas Joy!** Each year we invite members of the church family to deliver an amaryllis plant to one of our shut-ins or special church friends. This is a wonderful, family-friendly activity that brings joy to both the giver & recipient. Simply sign up at church, prepare the amaryllis plant, and deliver it. Feel free to add some cookies if you wish.

**The Christmas Fund:** The Christmas Fund has been caring for active & retired clergy & lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities & health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gifts to our lower income retirees. This year, your care & compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need. The envelopes are on the gathering table.

**Basics for Local Kids:** Volunteers are needed. You can help families shop or you can help sort, restock or organize winter wear. Shifts are usually 2 hours. To sign up for a day and time that works for you, go to <https://www.basicsforlocalkids.org/> or call Kim at 715-821-1623. Contact Renee Whipple at 715-307-5074 if you have any questions.

**Simpson Shelter Supply Needs:** Women's white crew socks, men's white crew socks, men's t-shirts sizes S, M, L, XL, XXL, XXXL, personal size shampoo, personal size conditioner, personal size body lotion, rain ponchos, eye masks, umbrellas, washcloths, padlocks, good buys on out-of-season clothing. All items MUST BE NEW. There is a box for donations.

**Empty Pill Bottles (Prescription Only):** The River Falls Lions Club is collecting empty pill bottles, only the clear prescription bottles that are filled by our pharmacists, to send to Africa where there is an urgent need. The bottles will be washed, and the labels soaked off before they are shipped. A tub is in the gathering area.

**Among Friends** is a community-based social respite program serving adults who have memory loss who reside in Pierce & St. Croix Counties. For more information, call (715) 293-2561. Check out the website: [amongfriendsrf.com](http://amongfriendsrf.com) & Facebook. It is held at church **Tuesdays & Thursdays 9am to 3pm.**

### ***Loving Self***

**Longest Night:** Held at Ezekiel Lutheran Church on Sun, Dec 21 at 6:00 pm. A quiet, welcoming space for anyone needing calm in a chaotic season. This service is especially for those experiencing grief, loneliness, or sadness – and for all who simply need a moment to breathe and be held in God's peace. Sponsored by churches in the River Falls area.

**Cribbage Night:** Players meet at the church and are asked to donate \$2. Playing time starts at 7:00 pm. All players and abilities welcome. **Cribbage night is ending and the last game will be December 8.**

**Merry Widows:** They will meet on **Wed, Dec 17 at 1:00 pm at West Wind in River Falls.** All widows are welcome to join us for dinner and conversation! See JoAnn Lentz for more information.

**Men's Group:** Our church men's group meets **every other Tuesday from 9:00-10:00 am** in the Youth Room. All men are welcome to join us for coffee, donuts & lively conversation. Our next meetings are **Dec 16 & 30.**

**Women's Group:** Interested in fellowship & community with other women? You are invited to join the group at noon every 2nd & 4th Tuesday. Please bring a lunch. The next meetings will be **Dec 9 & 23.**

**Church Yoga:** The church yoga group meets on **Tuesdays and Thursdays** in the church Fellowship Hall from **9:00-10:00 am** and via Zoom. Please contact the church office to receive the Zoom link.

**Let's Knit/Craft Together:** Join us on **Thursdays at 10:00 am. We meet at Sycamore on the first Thursday of each month & the Fellowship Hall the other Thursdays.** We have a great time sharing our projects & enjoying each other's company. For more info, contact Marie Roe at 715-781-2103 or [firstroe@gmail.com](mailto:firstroe@gmail.com)

**WISE Team:** NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Family Support Group meets the 2nd & 4th Thursdays 6:30pm at 113 East Elm St & Peer Support Group meets the same evenings at Luther Memorial Church at 6:30pm. The WISE Team meets the first Tuesday of the month at 6:30 pm. For more info, call Marg Downing 715-307-5905.

### ***Community Life***

**Wednesday Meals:** On Wednesday nights, we offer a home-cooked meal in the Fellowship Hall. The cost is \$9 per person with a family max of \$30. **Meals are served from 5:15 to 6:00 pm.** You can get your meal to go if you go through the line (indicate when you sign up). **Reservations must be placed by noon on Tuesdays.** Please sign up at church or online. Menu for Dec 10 is chicken-ala-king served over biscuit with fresh fruit.

**Poinsettias for Christmas Eve:** Poinsettia sales in honor or memory of someone special have begun. The order forms are on the table. The cost is \$15.00 each. Please return the order form with payment by **Dec 14.** The plants will be on display for the Christmas Eve services. You may pick your plants up after the 10pm service. Proceeds go toward youth activities.

**Annual Christmas Luncheon:** You are invited to attend a Christmas Luncheon on **Tues, Dec 9, at 12:00 noon.** The menu features Norwegian meatballs and a large collection of Christmas cookies. Please come! The cost is \$10.00 per person. Please make a reservation by calling the church office, at church or online.

**Name Tags:** We encourage you to wear your name tags so that new people and some not so new, can call you by name. It would also help the deacons when you take communion. If you do not have one, please let Missy in the church office know at [missy@firstchurchrf.org](mailto:missy@firstchurchrf.org). In appreciation, the Welcoming Committee.

### ***Youth Events***

**Children's Advent Musical:** Sunday School children in pre-school through grade 5 are working on the Advent musical for 2025 during class. It is important for the children to have consistent attendance so they are able to learn lines and songs. Thank you!

**Children's Advent Musical Dress Rehearsal:** The dress rehearsal for the children's Advent Musical is Saturday, December 21. Children in grades 1–5 should arrive at 10:00 am. Children in Pre-School and Kindergarten should arrive at 11:00 am. All the children will be done at noon.

# **16 Ways to Get Ready for the Birth of the Christ Child this Christmas**

1. Enjoy the beautiful sung Wednesday Night Evening Prayer services
  2. Pick an ornament off the Christmas Tree and help a local family
  3. Volunteer as Christmas Eve liturgist or luminary lighter
  4. Enjoy the Christmas Luncheon on Tuesday, December 9
  5. Join us on Christmas Eve at 4:00 or 10:00 pm as we welcome the Christ child!
  6. Donate items for the Christmas Shoebox Ministry given to men in Rehab at the Kinnic Falls Center
  7. Enjoy the Children's Christmas Program on Sunday, December 21
  8. Cheer the choir on Sundays, December 7 and 14 and on Christmas Eve at 10:00 pm
  9. Participate in the Christmas Fund special offering benefiting those who have served the church
  10. Do crafts and community at the Advent Workshop on Sunday, December 7
  11. Revel in the bell choir as they lend their gifts on Sunday, December 14
  12. Sponsor a poinsettia for the Christmas Eve service that can be taken home or given to a shut-in
  13. Deliver an Amaryllis plant to one of our shut-ins or special friends
  14. Bake some cookies and give them away or trade them at the Cookie Exchange on December 7
  15. Attend the Blue Christmas Service on Sunday, December 21 at 6:00 pm at Ezekiel (Dave is singing!)
  16. Pray that in your busyness, boredom or distraction you may find time to welcome the Christ child into your life
- 



## **Christmas Eve Worship Services**

**4:00 pm Family Worship with Children's Story, Communion and Candles**

**10:00 pm Worship with Choir, Communion and Candles**

**Please join us as we welcome the Christ child into our world and lives  
and consider inviting a friend**

**SCRIPTURE LESSON: Isaiah 11:1-10**

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.

**GOSPEL LESSON: Matthew 3:1-12**

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven 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 hair 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, he said to them, 'You brood of vipers! 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 up 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.'