#### Scripture

Isaiah 11:1-10, Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19, Romans 15:4-13,

Matthew 3:1-12

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah

Like a branch that sprouts from a stump, someone from David's family will someday be king. The Spirit of the Lord will be with him to give him understanding, wisdom, and insight. He will be powerful, and he will know and honor the Lord. His greatest joy will be to obey the Lord.

This king won't judge by appearances or listen to rumors. The poor and the needy will be treated with fairness and with justice. His word will be law everywhere in the land, and criminals will be put to death. Honesty and fairness will be his royal robes.

Leopards will lie down with young goats, and wolves will rest with lambs. Calves and lions will eat together and be cared for by little children. Cows and bears will share the same pasture; their young will rest side by side. Lions and oxen will both eat straw.

Little children will play near snake holes. They will stick their hands into dens of poisonous snakes and never be hurt. Nothing harmful will take place on the Lord's holy mountain. Just as water fills the sea, the land will be filled with people who know and honor the Lord.

God's People Will Come Back Home The time is coming when one of David's descendants will be the signal for the people of all nations to come together. They will follow his advice, and his own nation will become famous. Embrace wisdom for today from the First Testament

**All: May God inspire us with a holy revelation for our time and place**

The Psalm for this Sunday is Psalm 22

Give your love of justice to the king, O God, and righteousness to the king’s son. Help him judge your people in the right way; let the poor always be treated fairly. May the mountains yield prosperity for all, and may the hills be fruitful. Help him to defend the poor,

to rescue the children of the needy, and to crush their oppressors. May they fear you as long as the sun shines, as long as the moon remains in the sky. Yes, forever!

May the king’s rule be refreshing like spring rain on freshly cut grass, like the showers that water the earth. May all the godly flourish during his reign. May there be abundant prosperity until the moon is no more. Glory be to our Triune God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.

**All: As it was in the beginning is now, and ever shall be. Amen**

Paul’s letter to the Romans

Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. And the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God’s promises to be fulfilled. May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other, as is fitting for followers of Christ Jesus. Then all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, accept each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory. Remember that Christ came as a servant to the Jews to show that God is true to the promises he made to their ancestors. He also came so that the Gentiles might give glory to God for his mercies to them. That is what the psalmist meant when he wrote:

“For this, I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing praises to your name.” And in another place it is written, “Rejoice with his people, you Gentiles.” And yet again, “Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles. Praise him, all you people of the earth.” And in another place Isaiah said, “The heir to David’s throne will come, and he will rule over the Gentiles. They will place their hope on him.”

I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. Learn from the wisdom of the early church

**All: May God inspire us with a holy revelation for our time and place**

The Gospel according to Matthew

In those days John the Baptist came to the Judean wilderness and began preaching. His message was, “Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.” The prophet Isaiah was speaking about John when he said,

He is a voice shouting in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord’s coming! Clear the road for him!’” John’s clothes were woven from coarse camel hair, and he wore a leather belt around his waist. For food he ate locusts and wild honey. People from Jerusalem and from all of Judea and all over the Jordan Valley went out to see and hear John. And when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River.

But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to watch him baptize, he denounced them. “You brood of snakes!” he exclaimed. “Who warned you to flee the coming wrath?

Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God. Don’t just say to each other, ‘We’re safe, for we are descendants of Abraham.’ That means nothing, for I tell you, God can create children of Abraham from these very stones. Even now the ax of God’s judgment is poised, ready to sever the roots of the trees. Yes, every tree that does not produce good fruit will be chopped down and thrown into the fire.

“I baptize with water those who repent of their sins and turn to God. But someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I’m not worthy even to be his slave and carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. He is ready to separate the chaff from the wheat with his winnowing fork.

Then he will clean up the threshing area, gathering the wheat into his barn but burning the chaff with a never-ending fire.” Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

**All: Thanks be to God**