

## Welcome to the first week of *25 Weeks of Advent.*

We start with a family — a special family. Jesse's family. Jesse was the father of King David; Jesus, the Messiah, is the "son of David." Jesse's family wasn't a perfect family, however — in fact, this family tree had come to fall so far from the closeness of God, that it looked more like a stump than a tree.

Where could hope possibly be, for a stump of a family tree?

But God wasn't finished with Jesse's family; hope sprang forth! Isaiah 11:1— "Out of the stump of Jesse will **grow a shoot** — a **new branch** bearing fruit from the old root."



And here we begin our journey; of an entire testament proclaiming the promise and hope of Jesus' coming to us. Jesus would come to bring peace—and so much more—reuniting us with God.

## Week 1: The Place Where Love Grows



**Read** Isaiah 11:1-10



The branch of hope springing forth in Jesus, would become a crown of thorns, a rugged cross—and a bridge, for us.  
*How did Jesus become a bridge for us to be reunited with God?*

Jesus didn't come for only some of us, he came for us all—your grumpy cousin, your hard-to-get-along-with mother, your Muslim neighbour, etc. If the wolf will live with the lamb, and there will be peace (v6), *who in your life needs to know that God loves them? Who needs to hear the story of hope that sprang from a hopeless place?*

*When has God brought about hope, or a promise of hope, in a 'stump' of a situation in your life?*

Jesus restored peace between us and God by sacrificing himself. "Can I have peace with my grumpy cousin, my hard-to-get-along-with mother, or my Muslim neighbour?" In Jesus, there won't be a difference between Jew or Gentile—my neighbour or myself (Galatians 3:28).

*What are you going to do to allow a branch of hope and peace to spring forth from the stumps in your life?*

*In what ways can you offer help and peace to people, and begin to bridge them to the love of God?*



### Readings for your Week

*Where does Jesse fit?*  
Matthew 1:1-16

*How was Jesse involved?*  
1 Samuel 16:1-13

*Peace and praise —  
the story goes on!*  
Isaiah 11:12—12:6

*Peace in his reign*  
Isaiah 9:6-7, Isaiah 4:2-6

