FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT, YEAR B:

November 29, 2026

Leader: In the days of exile and uncertainty, the prophet Isaiah cried out:

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence. As when fire sets twigs ablaze and causes water to boil, come down to make your name known to your enemies and cause the nations to quake before you! For when you did awesome things that we did not expect, you came down, and the mountains trembled before you. (Isaiah 64:1-3)

Congregation: In the midst of our own encounters with uncertainty and upheaval and our longing for deliverance, Jesus calls to us, "Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come" (Mark 13:35).

We wait as people surprised again and again by God who shakes us out of our complacency and wakes us up to the work of the kin-dom all around us.

All: We light this candle as a sign of our shocking hope. May we stay awake to God's activity in the world as we wait in expectation that even now God is with us, working to restore us to the fullness of life with God and one another. Amen.

Light the first candle of the Advent wreath.

Advent Devotion

November 29 • Sunday - Day 1

A Shot from an Old Stump

Scripture Reading • Isaiah 11:1-9

"A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." — Isaiah 11:1

A stump can look like the end of a story. A tree once stood there, offering shade, shelter, and signs of life. Now only a remnant remains. We might walk past it without expecting anything more.

Yet Isaiah invites us to look again. From that stump, a tender shoot begins to grow.

Jesse was the father of King David. Isaiah's image speaks of hope for David's royal line and for a people living amid fear and uncertainty. God promises a ruler upon whom the Spirit will rest, one who will judge with righteousness, defend the poor, and bring peace. As Christians, we hear this promise with our hearts turned toward Jesus.

We begin Advent with this small sign of life. Before the songs of angels and the shepherds' visit, we pause beside a stump and learn to hope.

Perhaps you come to this season carrying something that feels unfinished or diminished. Someone's absence may be especially painful. Your health may have changed. A family concern may weigh on you. Even familiar Christmas preparations can stir memories of how things used to be.

Isaiah gives us an image to carry into those places. Beneath the weathered stump, roots remain. A small shoot reaches toward the light. God's work can begin quietly, long before we recognize what is growing.

For our church family, Advent is an invitation to watch for those beginnings. Hope may take shape in a phone call to someone who is lonely, a meal shared, a prayer