

Vision of Peace
Second Sunday of Advent

December 7, 2025
Isaiah 11:1-10

The year was 1481. Switzerland was on the verge of a civil war — again. Forty years earlier, the Old Zürich War raged over succession issues. For a country whose name is synonymous with “neutrality,” such factions seem unfathomable. Human nature, though, is predictable and conflicts are inevitable. This time, though, there would be no bloodstained alpine meadows. Instead, a child of God would emerge to broker peace among the divided villages.

Nicholas of Flüe was his name. He was a man of the mountains who bid farewell to his wife and 10 children two decades earlier to devote his life to God. He left with just a cloak on his back and no shoes. Legend has it that Nicholas, who would later be called “Brother Klaus,” sustained himself with the elements of the Eucharist, eating bread and wine for the remainder of his life.

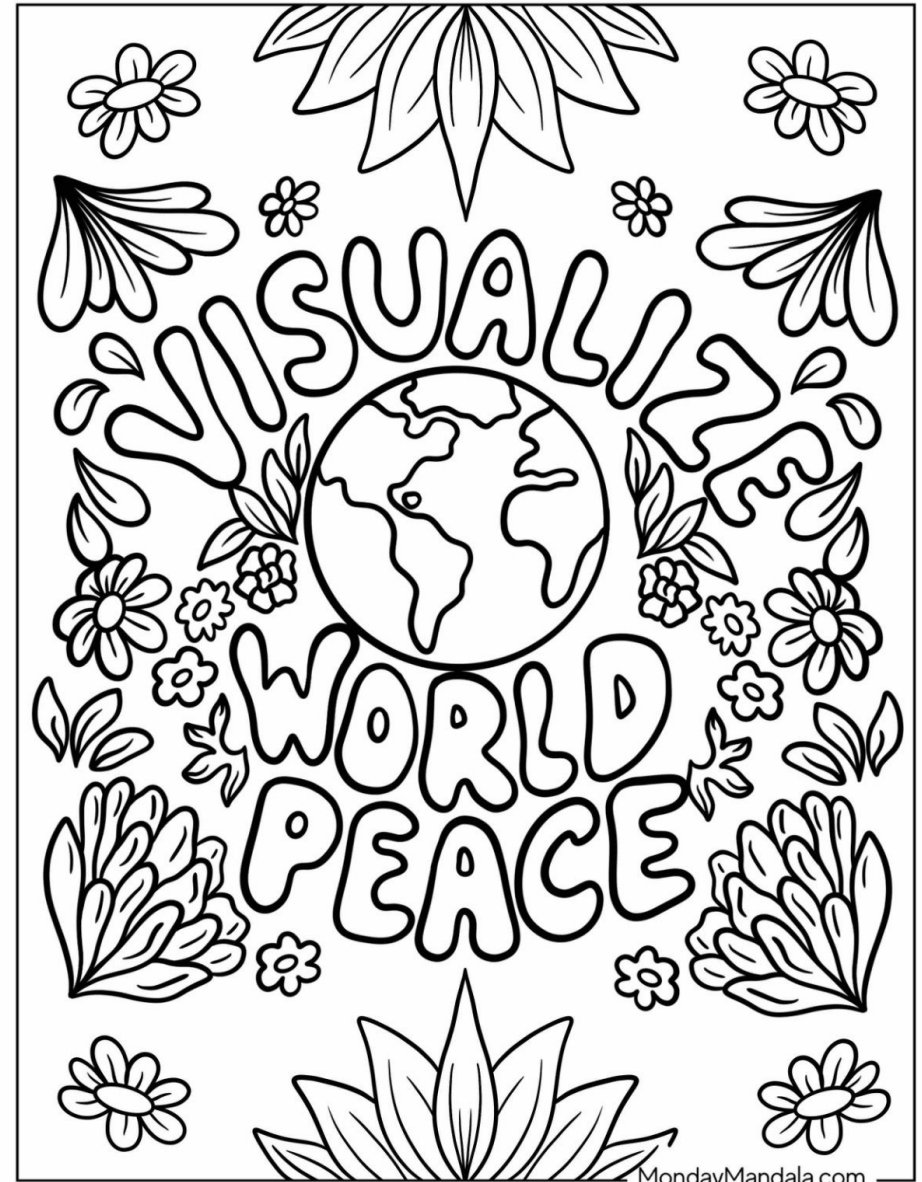
When unrest came to the country, Nicholas, a former soldier who had seen his share of carnage, knew he had to speak for peace. History does not record what he said, but opposing parties miraculously came together. What was documented was how church bells pealed triumphantly that Christmas of 1481, ringing continuously for four days.

It’s a beautiful story to have on this second Sunday of Advent — one that echoes the vision of peace Isaiah brings to us, where all get along and no one is harmed. There are cows feeding with bears, an infant plays near a cobra’s den, and a child puts its hand in the viper’s nest. The message is clear: On God’s holy mountain there will be no destruction to anyone or anything.

That holy mountain is still, though, a vision. Just ask Switzerland about its warring history. Yet that doesn’t mean we let go of hope. Rather, as God sent the prophets to speak of peace, we are being called to speak to our communities of a better way to live together. We are to be the brokers of peace who, like Nicholas, hold steadfast to the belief that “peace cannot be destroyed, but discord can” and that true peace is “always in God, for God is peace.” It was this thinking that led to Nicholas’ canonization by Pope Pius XII in 1947, making him Switzerland’s only saint.

The Christmas bells rang with the good news of peace on Earth in Switzerland in 1481 thanks to a soldier-turned-hermit-turned-saint who believed Isaiah’s vision was possible. Imagine the peace we could bring into the world today if we too believed.

God of Advent waiting, help us become brokers of peace. Soften our hearts and make tender our words so that love is heard rather than hate and discourse. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.



MondayMandala.com

St. John's United Church of Christ

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WELCOME VISITORS! Thank you for coming! Please sign a pew card to place in the offering plate.

WORSHIP: When reading this bulletin Leader Speaks Plain Font, Everyone Speak Bold Font

Announcements

Nursery: There is no nursery attendant today so everyone is able to participate in Communion. Kids are welcome to quietly play in the back of the sanctuary or have their adult join them in the nursery.

The Belvidere Group (AA) meets at everyday at 7pm.



Delicious Fundraiser



Amazon List



T-Shirts

Announcements

✠ **Know Your Rights** with League of Women Voters, December 7th, 2025, 1:30-3:30pm in the sanctuary. Join a conversation with an immigration lawyer about ICE, Police and Immigration Court. In a time when there is so much conflicting information let's gather and hear from an expert in the field.

✠ **Soloist Nicolai Janitsky of the Chicago Lyric Opera** is RETURNING on Sunday, December 14th at the 10:30 service, to help prepare our hearts for Christmas, through his beautiful voice and message!

✠ **Chair and Mat Yoga** with Katherine Ray is going weekly! Chair yoga at 10 AM and mat yoga at 11:30 AM. No RSVP required and classes are \$5.

✠ **Sunday school** is on break until Sunday, January 11th, 2026.

✠ **Fellowship Meal** is held on December 14th. Meal will be after service downstairs. Bring something delicious to share with your church family and friends! We love new recipes.

✠ **Community Meal** December 17th from 5 pm to 6 pm. The menu is chicken and noodles, green beans, fruit, dessert, milk, coffee. The WIC Mobile Unit from the Health Department will be parked in the parking lot from 4 pm to 7 pm.

✠ **Christmas Eve Service** begins at 4 pm and is candlelight.

SPONSOR A POINSETTIA

Deadline: December 15th

Cost: \$13.00 each

Given by _____

In Memory of _____

In Honor of _____

As a Thank Offering _____

Payment must accompany order. Make checks payable to St. John's UCC. Leave in Pastor Muriel's mail slot or contact her before December 15th. THANKS!

**Praise God, through whom all blessings flow,
Praise God, all creatures here below,
Praise God, above ye heavenly host.
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.
Amen.**



General Giving

Prayer of Dedication

**Emmanuel, hear our prayer! We bring these gifts before you to spread peace throughout our homes, our communities, and our world. On every street corner, beside rivers, lakes, oceans, at the top of your tallest mountains, and dwelling below the cliffs, your people are in need. Take these gifts to strengthen our church and bring relief to your beloved children.
Amen**

Hymn #116 "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (Verse 1 & 7)

Benediction

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Raised Above: Service Prayers for the Second Sunday of Advent Year A was written by the Maria Mankin.

Prelude

Announcements

Choral Introit "God Will Make a Way"

**God will make a way where there seems to be no way,
He works in ways we cannot see,
He will make a way for me;
He will be my guide, hold me closely to His side,
With love and strength for each new day,
He will make a way, He will make a way.**

Responsive Welcome Statement

At St. John's United Church of Christ, we are Living Outwardly & Valuing Everyone!

We live and work amid God's love!

In that spirit, we extend love to all who come into our midst, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, race, nationality, skin color, culture, differing abilities, age or political affiliations, to participate fully in all aspects of church.

Our ministry is to bring the Good News of Christ's love to all.

We work in God's name to tear down walls and build community,

to walk with each other through all of life's circumstances,

to provide for those in need,

to offer comfort to the hurting and the sick,
and to uplift the brokenhearted.

Where we fail, we ask for God's forgiveness.

May the Holy Spirit and our siblings continue to challenge us to do better.

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!

Lighting the Candle of Peace

Today we light the Candle of Peace.

There is a hush in our hearts as we wait to feel the

peace of God envelop us.

We imagine it as delicate as a lily's petals opening,
as a blanket pulled snug beneath our chin, as a
breeze shaking the oak's branches on a sunny morn-
ing.

We expect peace to come gently,

but when has anything worthwhile come without
pain?

A baby cries in birth as the mother sweats and
shakes.

Imperfect compromises leave both sides vulnerable.
A voice that rallies us to change is often silenced too
soon.

Striving for peace is no different.

It is fierce, and loud, and it requires tenacity.

Peace is complicated.

Peace is a sip of water after the longest night.

Peace is the flame within

that we must keep lit for the sake of all.

Peace is the hush,

and it is the clatter.

Peace is God's love, acted out loud.

Pastoral Prayer~ The Lord's Prayer**Hymn #104 "We Hail You, God's Anointed"**
(Verses 1, 2, 4)**Children's Time** "Leaving the Light On"**Hanging of the Greens** Light in the Windows**Hymn #109 "With Joy Draw Water "****Prayer for Transformation and New Life**

Gentle God, it has been too long since your peo-
ple have known peace. We turn away from the
ugliness hidden behind closed doors, from the
ravages of war, from the famine and genocide
that stalk our siblings around the world. We've

**lost hope, lost our faith in the possibility of a
small act's power to change. We talk and talk, all
the while forgetting that we are not just your
mouthpiece, but your hands and feet. Remind us,
Redeemer, how to show up for justice. Teach us
how to transform this ragged hope into peace for
all.**

Words of Grace

God does not judge based on our insecurities, but on
the promise rooted within each of us. Hope is as ro-
bust as ever when we study God's image in the mir-
ror. Peace is not only a possibility but is the ultimate
work of God's people. In faith, we rise and fall and
rise again, knowing that our Redeemer will never
stumble or disappoint. Praise be to God!

Gloria Patri

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son

and to the Holy Ghost,

**as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall
be, world without end. Amen.**

Scripture Isaiah 11:1-10**Sermon** "Puzzle Peace"**Service of Communion****Blessing and Sharing the Elements**

*All are invited to participate in this Holy symbol of Commu-
nion. You are invited to eat the as a sign of your own person-
al faith and hold the cup to drink together as a sign of our
communion faith.*

Prayer of Thanksgiving**Moment for Mission~ Christmas Fund****Doxology**