

## Sermon Wesley Box Hill 30 November 2025

### LIVING IN HOPE – Isaiah 2: 1-5

Greetings once again in the precious name of our Lord Saviour Jesus Christ.

It is our custom here at Wesley Box Hill Uniting Church (and also in many other churches) to light Advent candles in a circular wreath on successive Sundays in the 4 weeks leading up to Christmas Day when we celebrate the birth of Jesus of Nazareth.

Part of this Advent tradition is to allocate a different name for each of the Advent Sundays: hope, peace, joy and love.

When you use the word “hope” we generally use it with a feeling something good will eventuate for ourselves or maybe other people ... or further afield we hope that people will stop fighting each other or nations will learn not to resort to war and all the awful consequences that always flow from violence.

Just take a few moments of quietness and then I would like you to share with someone else a time when you were “hoping” for a certain good outcome would occur. I will then ask a few people what they shared.

My hunch is that in a great many instances when we use the word “hope” we will do so without a feeling of certainty as to the outcome of our time of waiting.

Our reading today from the Hebrew Scriptures in chapter 2 and verses 1-5 are full of hope that there will be a better world than the present world. It is believed that the author of today’s first Bible reading was a Jewish person living in exile a long distance from what we know as Palestine/Israel.

Drawing on his own Jewish background he describes a vision where the mountain of the Lord's temple is established as the highest of mountains, symbolizing the supremacy of God's kingdom. This passage emphasizes that all nations will come together to seek God's wisdom and guidance, leading to a time when war and conflict will cease. The imagery of turning swords into ploughshares signifies a profound transformation from violence to peace, highlighting the hope for a future where nations live in harmony under God's rule.

If you were to travel to New York and visit the headquarters of the United Nations, you will see emblazoned on a side of the building the very words found in Isaiah 1:4 asserting that the nations will one day stop making weapons of war and instead focus on producing implements to feed and help nations live in peace.

In today's context, Isaiah's vision challenges us to reflect on our own societal divisions and conflicts. The call to "walk in the light of the Lord" (Isaiah 2:5) invites believers to actively pursue justice, compassion, and unity in their communities. It prompts us to consider how we can contribute to a culture of peace rather than one of division and strife. The passage encourages us to be agents of hope, sharing the message of God's love and guidance in a world that often feels hopeless.

Isaiah's prophecy also emphasizes the role of the church and believers in embodying this vision of peace. As the "house of Jacob," the church (including us here at Wesley Box Hill) is

called to be a place where people can come together to seek God's wisdom and settle disputes amicably. This communal aspect of faith is crucial in a society that often prioritizes individualism over collective well-being. The church is challenged to be a beacon of light, demonstrating the transformative power of God's love in action.  
Amen.

**Robert Humphreys - Advent 1A 30 November 2025**