Sermon: **He will be called Prince of Peace** (Isaiah 9.6)

Last week we had Queen Leona, aka Genevieve, here! Her demands were simple – something to eat!

What if her demands had been hard, or impossible? Human leaders can make erratic choices.

Early Israel understood this and declared God was their king.

But how did they know what this God wanted, and who interpreted these demands?

Early Israel had the Laws of God, and priests to interpret. Many of these laws were about keeping holy enough to make the sacrifices God required, and what those sacrifices were.

Where was morality in all this? c750 BCE prophets slowly realised that morality was important to God – looking after those in need. Prophets like Micah saw Israel and Judah were out of sync with God and this was largely a moral problem. But it was hard getting the kings and people both to see this and act on it.

Israel and Judah’s failure as nations was seen as a moral problem, but the people were too stubborn and something radically new was required. This gave rise to the various visions of prophets, eg Micah 4.1-5.

A vision of universal peace; weapons of warfare become used for peaceful purposes. Since humans were unable to do this, Jeremiah talks of God changing the hearts of people and a new covenant/agreement.

This is something God would do. God’s agent was the Messiah. TEXT.

This peace was not just lack of conflict (though that would be great), but Shalom, with echoes of harmony & wholeness. Not just for Israel, but all the world. Not just for nations, but individuals.

This is what God wants, and what we want too, so why does it seem too hard? It means not necessarily getting what I, those with me, or even humanity wants, but all creation needs. Hence Isaiah 11.6-7.

This peace still eludes us so even today we need the Messiah to come and the Shalom he brings. TEXT.