

*“Oh that you would tear open the heavens and come down so that the mountains would quake at your presence.”* Isaiah 64:1

Isaiah pleads to God to get down here and fix things up. In the time when Isaiah is writing this the cities of Judah have been destroyed. The Temple in Jerusalem has been flattened by the Babylonian invaders and life was in ruins for the ancient people of Palestine. Isaiah sounds like he is quite at the end of his rope. Don't just look down on us God, get yourself down here and help us.

That's a pretty direct appeal that Isaiah makes. He admits to God that, sure, the people haven't been perfect by any means. The Chosen People of God had to acknowledge that they had *been* wrong and had *done* wrong. It was time to humbly come to God with an open heart and a ready will. They had to repent. Isaiah says, *“Yet, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter.”* 64:8. God can rework us if we will allow it. It was true then, and it's still true now.

When things don't happen as we wish they would, when our whole lives are turned upside down, we can't help but become frustrated and impatient. You and I might be able to identify with that this year. And maybe the day on which Isaiah wrote this passage was one in which he was just tired of patiently praying. We've all felt that way too, right? At times we can be accepting of the reality of our world right now, accepting of the things we're asked to do; wear a mask, wash our hands, keep our distance. And then there are times when we'd like to be able to just hug someone, and go to a movie or have people over.

The person writing the psalm we heard today is also wanting and waiting to see God, in the form of the light of God's countenance. He or she is saying, “We might not actually see you in a bodily form, OK, but can we at least see the light reflected off of your face?” The psalmist uses holy imagination to wonder what the face of God shows us.

Would we see calm, concern for us, anger at us, love for us? God is Spirit, of course, not a human with a face, but perhaps we see God's light which might reveal what God thinks of us and how God cares for us. So, this writer says to God, “Could you just send us your light. Can we just see a beam of brightness showing through all the darkness.” We might symbolize that with a single candle in the darkness.

Jesus himself speaks to us from the Gospel of Mark today. If Isaiah asks, “God, come down to us, “ Jesus says, “Be ready because God will come again in Christ.” When the time is right or maybe when the time is very wrong, Christ will come again.

God, we keep saying *Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.* Well, we're waiting. We are waiting for the Holy Presence to help us see our wrongs and become ready to right them. We are

waiting for you Light to bring justice to those who have been waiting far too long for it, and we are waiting for your Truth to give us healing and mutual respect and understanding for each other.

And we wait knowing that God has already once opened up the heavens and come down in Christ Jesus our Lord. As we get ready to celebrate the annual remembrance of God with us, the birth of Emmanuel, that gives us hope in this season and hope for a better year in 2021.

Now you'll hear our last Stewardship Minute in the season, this one from Scott Frost. Many thanks to the whole stewardship committee who put together this year's campaign. And **many** thanks to you, our generous parishioners, who have continued to support this parish and our ministries. If you have not had a chance to pledge support the church for the coming year please do so now because your vestry is working hard to put together and approve a balanced budget. We need everyone's help to make this happen in this challenging year.