

A Thrill of Hope in a Weary World

Week One: A Vision of Hope

Read Isaiah 2:1-5

"In days to come..." So begins the vision of Isaiah, son of Amoz. One could easily assume that the book of Isaiah is filled with such hopeful visions, especially considering that much of what we hear in the lectionary readings pull from the best of the best of what Isaiah has to say.



However, if you dare to venture back to the first chapter of Isaiah or even peek ahead to the verse just after the end of this reading, you'll see that Isaiah often has harsh, harsh words for his people. Doom, destruction, and more populate much of what Isaiah is sent to share.

Which makes these few verses of hopefulness even more poignant and needed.

Right now, everything is hard, nations are crumbling, the dreaded Assyrians are marching and threatening to take over the known world at the time. Everyone is scared. Everyone is worried.

It sounds...all too familiar. Threats all around us ranging from economic hardship to climate disaster to personal tragedies of our own. We are divided. We are frightened. We are worried. **We are weary, so very weary.**

(Devotion continues on next page)

"In days to come..."



South-Central Synod of Wisconsin



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"In days to come..." Isaiah promises, and then paints a portrait of peace, hopefulness, and harmony. The time will come when we will transform our weapons of destruction and violence into tools used for feeding the world. Imagine what such a world would look like! Imagine a world where we have buried the need to conquer and dominate, and instead turn our energy toward that which gives life, meaning, and hope. **Think of the time we would have for creating art and beauty, for forming friendships near and far, for ensuring that no one in our communities goes without the things they need to thrive.** Of course the nations would come streaming, wanting to be a part of this glorious vision and to learn more about the God who has brought it about! That too, is part of the picture Isaiah paints for us: the nations racing to learn more, not out of fear or compulsion, but because what they have heard is so beautiful they can't help but be drawn to it.

Friends in Christ, we do live in times that feel heavy and hard and joyless. And yet, just as Isaiah offered these words of hope to his weary people, so may we hear them anew in our time. **So may we be refreshed and energized as we consider how God's glorious vision is showing up – tiny thrills of hope at a time – in our day and age too.** These thrills of hope don't disregard or ignore the suffering around us. But they do offer a glimmer, a spark, to remind us that God is present in and among us yet today.

In days to come, may you see and sense the inbreaking of God's vision – a world filled with peace, with joy, with love of neighbor that knows no bounds.

Signs of Hope in the SCSW

Advocacy Ministries in the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin

This week we lift up and give thanks to God for the many advocacy ministries around our synod including, the Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin (LOPPW), the Groundswell Collective in Walworth County, the synod's Racial Equity, Queer Justice, and Caring for God's Creation teams, to name only a few!

As you go about your week this week, consider how you can be an advocate. It doesn't have to be a huge project. Advocacy comes in all forms. If you see something that doesn't seem right or just and you speak up and try to correct that wrong – that's advocacy!