

# MINISTER'S MESSAGE

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3<sup>RD</sup>, 2017 REV. TERESA CHARLTON KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## "YEARNING"

Based on Isaiah 64:1-9

The prophet Isaiah yearned for the people he served to return to their faith, return to their synagogues, return to their trust in Almighty God. There had been a time when they had been faithful.

There had been a time when all actions and all thoughts were considered first, by what would please YHWH the

most. But much time had passed, Patience had grown thin and the people were tired of waiting. The signs of God's presence among them, those "Awesome things that we did not expect" (v3) could no longer be seen as they had been before. Discontent had replaced anticipation:

No one calls on your name or strives to lay hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us and have given us over to our sins. (v7)

Some in their dissolution played games with their trust in YHYH.

**DO NOT BE ANGRY  
BEYOND MEASURE, O  
LORD; DO NOT  
REMEMBER OUR SINS  
FOREVER. OH,LOOK  
UPON US, WE PRAY, FOR  
WE ARE ALL YOUR  
PEOPLE.**

You come to the help of those who gladly do right, who remember your ways. But when we continued

to sin against them, you were angry. (v5)

"You helped some, but you didn't help us. We turned from you, and You got mad." A self-fulfilling cycle of "He did it. No, she did it first" where no one wins the argument and everyone loses hope.

In his despair, Isaiah turned his attention from the people, to his Creator.

You, Lord, are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter;

We are all the work of your hand.

Do not be angry beyond measure, Lord (v8-9a)

"Do not be too angry with us," Isaiah might have said, "You created us to explore, to struggle, to reach deeply into our souls, to find You. For it is often in our longing for spiritual wholeness, that we find ourselves reaching out to You, believing again in You, trusting You again, returning to a place of hope. You created us to be this way, so that You may have the pleasure of watching us find You, or find You once again."

We live in a world yearning to hear a new story, a world longing to change despair to desire. Many it would seem,

are just clinging to hope by their fingertips: those in desperate financial circumstances, those awaiting news from a doctor's report, those living in places of the world with great civil unrest. Many others are searching for hope: trying to find a reason to care about anyone or anything, anymore; those disappointed by what the world has to offer, not yet convinced that a spiritual world of the heart exists, that matters of the soul can co-exist with an ever changing complex world beyond the soul. Hopefully, those of us here in the pews are living with hope, or at least, have found a place where you might explore what hope, and salvation, and a faith journey might mean for you. Perhaps you will find a place of contentment. Perhaps you will be surprised with God has yet to show you.

But what is so astounding about a simple story from Bethlehem, is that

"We are all [His] people."  
(v9)

Each of us may come to the stable, and be welcomed: a poor shepherd waiting patiently, a rich magi anticipating big things, an inconsolable innkeeper

desiring forgiveness, a bystander longing to understand. So come to the stable. Come to the table. Here you will find hope, or you will be renewed in your hope. Here the window between the world and The Way opens a little wider, and if you look carefully, there is the light of a star showing you the way.

"Do not be afraid," said the angel. "I bring you good news." Amen.

~We welcome our friends from Prince Rupert as they join us in this Advent Series.

