

## **Advent Devotional November 27, 2022**

### **Scripture**

Isaiah 1:1-9

*1 The vision of Isaiah son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. 2 Hear, O heavens, and listen, O earth; for the Lord has spoken: I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me. 3 The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib; but Israel does not know, my people do not understand. 4 Ah, sinful nation, people laden with iniquity, offspring who do evil, children who deal corruptly, who have forsaken the Lord, who have despised the Holy One of Israel, who are utterly estranged! 5 Why do you seek further beatings? Why do you continue to rebel? The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. 6 From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but bruises and sores and bleeding wounds; they have not been drained, or bound up, or softened with oil. 7 Your country lies desolate, your cities are burned with fire; in your very presence aliens devour your land; it is desolate, as overthrown by foreigners. 8 And daughter Zion is left like a booth in a vineyard, like a shelter in a cucumber field, like a besieged city. 9 If the Lord of hosts had not left us a few survivors, we would have been like Sodom, and become like Gomorrah.*

### **Devotional**

#### **The Rev. Kate Mauch, DMin student**

When I was little, I got a picture book from the library about the people of Israel. Even as a kid, I noticed a pattern. There would be a picture of the people celebrating that God had saved them, and then a picture of the people rebelling against God and being attacked by invaders. Rinse and repeat. As a kid, the solution seemed so obvious. Just stop!

Of course, things aren't that simple. We can probably all think of people we know who can't seem to break a destructive cycle, or are stuck in toxic patterns, or who can't seem to break free from addiction. Maybe we are the very person who comes to mind.

From outside, it can seem so simple. Just stop! But as we all know, it's not that easy. Just like the people of Israel, we can struggle to break destructive cycles and patterns even when we know the pain they cause.

We have reason to rejoice, however. God saw the painful cycle of the people of Israel and took it upon Godself to end it. When the people of Israel could not break the cycle, God broke it for them, by offering them redemption that depended not on themselves, but on God's abounding grace and love.

If you, too, are caught in a cycle you wish to break, dear reader, may you remember that God's redemption, love and grace are already yours. May you find reason to rejoice this season.

### **Prayer**

God of freedom, too often we do the things we know we shouldn't, and fail to do the things we know we should. Help us to break free of harmful patterns and to embrace the freedom you offer with joyful hearts. In your name we pray. Amen.