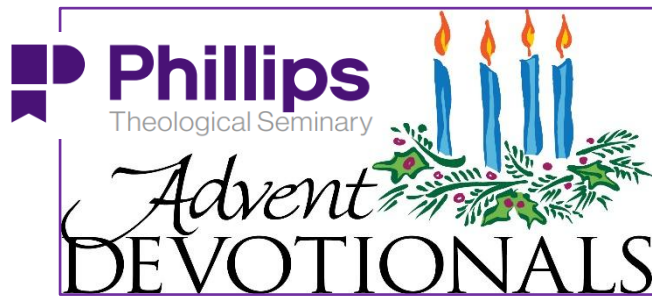


# Ponca City Christian

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Seeking, Serving, Sharing  
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## ADVENT WEEK TWO: PEACE ~DIVINE PEACE FOR ALL~ ISAIAH 40:1-11

This passage from Isaiah is found among the chapters attributed to Isaiah of the Exile, who comforted the exiles living in Babylon (circa 587-538). When the Babylonians conquered Judah, they destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem and forcibly relocated part of the Israelite community (primarily leaders and power brokers). After losing both the land that God had promised to their ancestors (Abraham and Sarah) and the Temple, the exiles began to wonder if God had forgotten or abandoned them. How would they survive? Would they ever return to Jerusalem?

Out of the despair, the Divine called a prophet to “comfort, comfort my people” (v 1a) and to deliver those words of hope. God had not abandoned them; there would be a future for their descendants and a return to the land promised to their ancestors. The prophet declares that a highway should be prepared for God “in the wilderness” to lead the exiles back to their homes. Where the exiles only saw impossible obstacles to a new future, God would make a way. Mountains will seem like small bumps in the road, and chasms will become bridges to the future (v 4a). There will be no stumbling along God’s highway; everyone will be able to travel the road safely (v 4b). Human powers and efforts to oppress others will fail when God’s word and justice become a reality (vv 6-8).

Today, with chaotic and ultrafast changes, many people experience being in “exile” even though

their location has not changed. While many may not be seeking a physical return to a tangible location/geography, everyone who knows some form of exile wonders about God’s presence and longs for the assurance of a future filled with Divine compassion and comfort. The prophetic words of this unknown voice offer a vision of what God wants for them. Their “return” may be a “coming home” to God, to the safety known by a baby in their mother’s arms. Their return may be a liberation from what has been holding them back. Their return may be a restoration of dignity that comes with no longer begging for what others take for granted. People still yearn to hear words of “comfort” and to be reminded of God’s concern for all of creation, even the “least of these.” We must work for a time when: “Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace (shalom) will kiss each other” (Ps 85:10).

Rev. Dr. Lisa W. Davison

**Disciples Women are selling shelled pecans again this year! \$13/lb. Pick some up today! We also have vintage late 1980s FCC church cookbook on sale for \$10. Contact Brenna in the office.**



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**support, guide and be present for all of us. God grows through us at church camp, search & call, pastoral care for Oklahoma clergy and more. Thank you for your generosity! This offering is collected Dec. 15th and 22nd in congregations, or you may give online.**