

POEMS OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH.....

**TOUCHING THE DEEPEST LONGINGS OF OUR
HEARTS**



**SESSION 3: PREPARING FOR THE
ORDINARY – ISAIAH 35: 1-10**

NEW

IN THIS POEM the Prophet speaks of the characteristics of the coming Kingdom of God and reminds us that God's Kingdom is often evident in unexpected ways. Today, we too can know God in ways that can change our thinking forever and look forward with excitement to see how he will fulfil his promises. As we read, we join in spirit with other believers on the "Way of Holiness" and joyfully enter the city of Zion.

THIRD POEM OF THE PROPHET

Step 1: Read the passage Isaiah 35:1-10, and the rewritten prayer that follows slowly, appreciating the differences between the two presentations.

Isaiah 35:1-10 NIV - Joy of the Redeemed

35 The desert and the parched land will be glad;
the wilderness will rejoice and blossom.
Like the crocus, ² it will burst into bloom;
it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.
The glory of Lebanon will be given to it,
the splendour of Carmel and Sharon;
they will see the glory of the LORD,
the splendour of our God.

³ Strengthen the feeble hands,
steady the knees that give way;
⁴ say to those with fearful hearts,
"Be strong, do not fear;
your God will come,
he will come with vengeance;
with divine retribution
he will come to save you."

⁵ Then will the eyes of the blind be opened
and the ears of the deaf unstopped.

⁶ Then will the lame leap like a deer,
and the mute tongue shout for joy.
Water will gush forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert.

⁷ The burning sand will become a pool,
the thirsty ground bubbling springs.
In the haunts where jackals once lay,
grass and reeds and papyrus will grow.

⁸ And a highway will be there;
it will be called the Way of Holiness;
it will be for those who walk on that Way.
The unclean will not journey on it;
wicked fools will not go about on it.

⁹ No lion will be there,
nor any ravenous beast;
they will not be found there.
But only the redeemed will walk there,
¹⁰ and those the LORD has rescued will return.
They will enter Zion with singing;
everlasting joy will crown their heads.
Gladness and joy will overtake them,
and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

VERSION 2 – Prayer interpretation – *fear, joy and longing in the prison*

Here's a re-working of Isaiah 35, done by Cheryl Lawrie and a group of inmates at Port Phillip Prison in Australia.

Lawrie writes: *we talked through Isaiah 35 and reworked it together with new images for this time and place. It was a really lovely exercise. We told stories of fear and desperation, longing and even joy. We laughed a lot, and I got the sense we all*

went away feeling a bit more human. The italics below are created from the conversation with the men. The other words are lifted from Isaiah 35.

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
*Life will be lived as it's meant to be lived
everyone will be valued
everyone will know they are loved.*

We shall see the glory of the Lord,
the majesty of our God.
Strengthen the weak hands
and make firm the feeble heart,
'Be strong and do not fear!
Here is your God.
*Know you have what it takes
to live through this.
Know you can find the will to get over it'.*

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened
*The sick will be well
The elderly will be loved
The children will be safe
The prisoner will be remembered.*

For waters break forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert;
*The justice system becomes just
Governments stop being corrupt
People in Somalia and Africa have food to eat
Those who have nowhere to go find somewhere to live.*

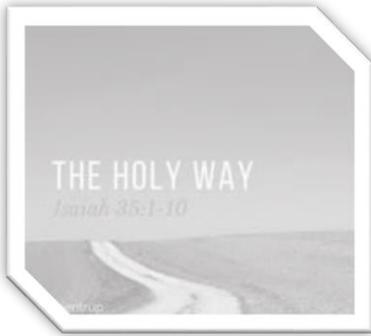
A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;

*and on this highway
everyone will be welcome
even those who we hate
and those who hate us.
We will be welcome too.*

Together, we shall obtain joy and gladness
and sorry and sighing shall flee away.

Read the poem again in the biblical version. Take time to picture the words with the eyes of your imagination

Step: 2 There are many affirming and joyful images in this poem . Choose either the bible reading or the prayer interpretation. Reflect on the most significant thought, word, or image become uppermost in your mind.



Thoughts for discussion or journaling.

In this poem we have a sense of a restored way of living that will become the "new normal"

In reflection dwell on the image of the blooming desert, flowing waters and the way of holiness, streaming towards Zion. You may like to draw the

landscape on your journaling page.

The prayer interpretation focusses on justice and acceptance for all, yet many are excluded or "exiled" from our communities. In our communities, who comes to mind when you reflect on this thought?

When God shows up, the beings that bear His image will be restored, and the world He made will be “rebooted” What in your life would you choose to have “rebooted” today?

Gladness and joy characterise the walk along the “Way of Holiness” Where are you in the picture you imagine?

Journaling space - feel free to use this space as you wish!

You may like to express this in a new version of the prayer, drawing or doodling.

LISTENING PRAYER



Listen—all creation rejoices, can you hear it?

There is so much noise and chatter, are you sure there is music?

Listen—the wilderness and desert are breaking out in song, can you hear it?

It's been so long since we've heard a melody of praise.

Listen—the crocus blooms with joyful singing, the very mountains join in the refrain.

Can you hear it?

We join our voices in hope,

worshipping our God who brings forth a new song in the world.

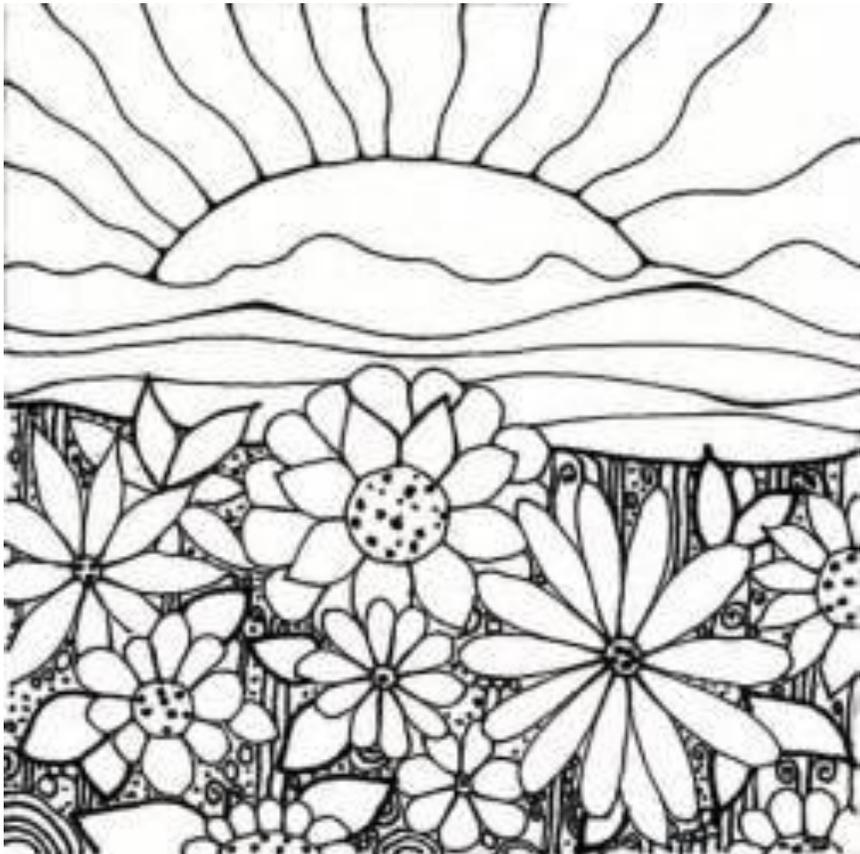
What hopeful message is God giving in the silence of your heart? What do you hope – and who is it for?

Write a one line prayer of hope on a post it and fold it up.

We will put these in a bag and draw one out each to share.

BLESSING PRAYER

Deep peace of the running wave to you
Deep peace of the flowing air to you
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you
Deep peace of the shining stars to you
Deep peace of the Son of peace to you
Iona Community



Carol Soble Advent 2017

Adapted from The Prayer Bench www.theprayerbench.ca