

**Devotions – May 10-16, 2015**  
**Members of Bethel Lutheran Church**  
**Menominee, MI**

On seven consecutive Monday evenings in January and February of this year, I led a Bible study for the Menominee Valley Conference of our Synod which I titled, “Jesus in the Book of Isaiah.” While it was a comprehensive study of Isaiah, I focused particularly on how the prophecies of Isaiah are fulfilled in the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus, the Messiah. At its conclusion, I invited some of the participants to join me in writing devotional messages based on their favorite passages in Isaiah. These messages, all written by members of Bethel Lutheran Church, Menominee, MI, where the study was held, are offered for your reflection this week .

Rev. Doug Schoen, Retired

**Sunday, May 10**

By Rev. Doug Schoen

Text: Isaiah 6:1-8

*In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.” The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. And I said: “Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!” Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: “Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.” Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I; send me!”*

The call of Isaiah to be a prophet took place at a worship service in the temple in Jerusalem. Isaiah’s description of his fantastic worship experience leaves us awestruck at the thought of it. But consider, for a moment, how Isaiah’s experience in the temple that day included the same elements of corporate worship that we participate in every Sunday. Isaiah had an overwhelming sensation of being in the presence of the Lord God Almighty, the Holy One. What are the features of the sanctuary in which you worship—altar, statues, paraments and banners, figures in stained glass windows—that are designed to give you a sense of being in the presence of the Holy One? Isaiah felt the foundation of the temple shake with the sounds of worship. Does the sanctuary in which you worship sometimes shake when organ, praise band, choir and singing members unite in praise to the Lord? Isaiah felt singled out for God’s attention. Do you listen to the sermon some Sundays and feel as though it is directed right at you? In the presence of the Holy One, Isaiah felt unclean and unworthy. The call to confession and the words of the

confession itself remind us that we are sinful in thought, word and deed. With the searing power of hot coals on his lips, Isaiah heard the heavenly being declare to him, “your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.” The absolution spoken by the pastor gives us this same cleansing assurance. This cleansing renewal is amplified when the bread and wine touch our lips with the words, “Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sin.” Isaiah heard the Lord ask who will go in his name and Isaiah responded, “Here am I; send me!” We receive the benediction, God’s blessing for the journey, and when the pastor says, “Go in peace. Serve the Lord,” we respond, “Thanks be to God.” If we mean what we say, it is our way of saying, “Hear I am, Lord. Send me. I’ll go in your name.” Maybe Isaiah’s calling and commissioning in the temple wasn’t so far-fetched after all. Every worship experience for us can be our renewed calling and commissioning to be God’s servant people.

*Let us pray: Holy One, turn our ordinary worship gatherings into extraordinary experiences of your mighty presence, cleansing us, calling us, and sending us to live lives of service, witness and devotion to you. Amen*



## **Monday, May 11**

By Jerry Haapala

Text: Isaiah 40:28-31

*“Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.”*

Scripture has been an important part of my life since I was in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. There are probably hundreds, if not thousands, of verses which have helped me grow in my faith and helped me to realize what an awesome God and Savior Jesus we have. Upon the passing of my first wife, Sue, I found the scripture verse from Isaiah 40:31 to be the most comforting. The key part of that verse for me is “but those who wait for the Lord.” This taught me to be patient and trusting. Then the rest of the verse would come to fruition.

*Let us pray: Everlasting God, teach us so to trust in you and in your promises expressed by Isaiah, that we will be willing to wait with patience when life exhausts us and thereby be renewed in strength. Amen*



**Tuesday, May 12**

From Darkness into Light - By Jan Ross Deetjen

Text: Isaiah 9:2

*“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined.”*

In the beginning, there was darkness. There was darkness covering, smothering Isaiah’s people. As I read those words, I am there. I am there standing small with the people, when a “great light shines,” in the darkness.

In the beginning, I am there with old Anna “of old” when we see the infant Jesus in the temple with Mary and Joseph. Later, there is darkness. There is darkness in the shadows of the cross. I am there, in spirit, beside Mary Magdala, at the cross, and at the empty tomb, when Jesus appears as the prophet Isaiah said he would—the Messiah, the Christ.

I am an elder. I have walked, stumbled, in the shadow of death, in fear. God has been there all along, the same Jesus, the same Messiah revealed in Isaiah. “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,” says Jesus (Matthew 5:3). And I am blessed, at dawn to greet Jesus, the “bright morning star” (Revelation 22:16).

*Let us pray: God, thank you for your presence: Your breath in the wind, your fragrance in the flowering fruit tree, in the river rushing, in the anointing of rain on crops and on our heads, in the voices of the animals. And as you have told us, our bodies are your temple, and I would like to add-- your stable. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen*



**Wednesday, May 13**

By Marilyn Schoen

Text: Isaiah 60:1

*“Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.”*

As a church musician, I am drawn to the texts of Isaiah. I find myself singing Isaiah as much as reading him. His beautiful poetic words are used in a multitude of hymns (52 in our hymnal), choral anthems, and oratorios, most particularly Handel’s *Messiah*. One of my favorite choral compositions is *Arise, Shine, For Thy Light Is Come* by Camille Saint-Saens, based on Isaiah 60:1. It was written to be performed primarily in the Advent/Christmas season to celebrate the advent of our Savior Jesus Christ. At that time of year, when we dwell in deepest darkness, it is so uplifting and encouraging to be reminded that the Son of God came into our world darkened by sin to shine his light upon us and upon God so that we may see the glory of the Lord. The full

meaning of this verse for me is brought out in verses 17 and 18 of the same chapter: “I will appoint Peace as your overseer and Righteousness as your taskmaster...you shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise.” Peace...Righteousness...Salvation...Praise—these are God’s gifts to us when we believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord, our Light and Life.

*Let us pray: Heavenly Father, when the world seems a dark place and when darkness, at times, settles upon our own lives, shine the light of your love on us that we may be reminded of all that you have done for us and continue to do for us in Jesus Christ your Son, that we may give you glory. Amen*



### **Thursday, May 14**

By Bob Krysiak

Text: Isaiah 28:26, 29

*“For they are well instructed; their God teaches them.” “This also comes from the Lord of hosts; he is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in wisdom.”*

This verse refers to the farmer who knows how to work his fields. He knows this because God taught him. God teaches us in all walks of life. He does this in order to make our lives prosper. All of our wisdom comes from the Lord.

*Let us pray: Wise and wonderful God, grant that all wisdom be used to your glory. Blessed are those who have been taught that they will use those blessings wisely. Amen*



### **Friday, May 15**

By Judy Peterson

Text: Isaiah 53:5

*“But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed.”*

During our study of “Jesus in the Book of Isaiah,” it became clear that Jesus Christ, Son of God, is the true Suffering Servant. In fact, there is a whole set of passages (Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12) subtitled “The Suffering Servant” that give a full description. Thinking and writing about suffering is not an easy task. But as Christians, I think it is good to reflect on the meaning of Jesus’ suffering as well as our own.

Suffering is often brought on by ourselves because we are broken people. But we can learn from our mistakes if we take an honest look inward and ask for help when we need it. Then there is

the suffering that is unavoidable due to circumstances beyond our control. We can grow through these experiences. Suffering can be a redeeming experience when we reach beyond ourselves to help, share and identify with others in their pain. We choose to suffer for Christ.

Jesus learned and grew through his suffering just as we do, and that is why he is such a great example, comforter and understanding friend for us. He struggled in his life here on earth. He knows! He feels! He cares! Finally, he suffered and died for each one of us in the greatest act of redemption. Only God saves and redeems people. He is the one who makes us whole. However, as we reach out to others in their pain and show them how to accept the grace of God for their needs, we can be a light in the darkness. We can point the way to Christ. This can be a very real privilege in life. Paul said it in Philippians 1:29 – “For you have been given the privilege of serving Christ, not only by believing in him, but also by suffering for him.”

*Let us pray: O God, we thank you for the ultimate sacrifice of your Son Jesus. Teach us your ways. Continue to show us how to reflect your love, mercy and grace to those who are suffering in the world around us. Amen*



**Saturday, May 16**

By Diane Shepard and Barb Smith

Text: Isaiah 55:1

*“Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; And you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”*

Abundance abounds all around, but some cannot see it or are afraid they are not worthy to partake. Just as a merchant might call “Come, come see my offerings for sale,” Isaiah calls to us to share in the salvation of bread and wine. Where the merchant’s call is limited to those who can afford his wares, God’s call is open to anyone, rich or poor, young or old; anyone who believes.

*Let us pray: Dear God, thank you for quenching our thirst for you. Help us to always be grateful for your salvation so freely given. Amen*

