

Northminster Presbyterian Church  
Weekly Devotional  
Week of November 30<sup>th</sup> – December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2008  
1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Advent

**Scripture Readings**

- Isaiah 64:1-9
- Psalm 80:1-19
- 1 Corinthians 1:3-9
- Mark 13:24-37

(Please Note – Up to now I have been running the lectionary off by a week so that you would be reading for the coming worship service. I have now changed so that you are reading the actual lectionary for the current Sunday – therefore, the readings for this week are a repeat from last week)

Welcome

Surprise! The Advent season is here, and Christmas is only a bit more than a month away! Were you caught off-guard? Do you find yourself saying, “What? Already!!!” Welcome to this journey and may God’s blessing surround us all!

**Scripture: Isaiah 64:1-9 (NRSV)**

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence – as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil – to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence! When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him. You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed.

We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity. Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people.

## **Devotional**

The prophet Isaiah begs God to surprise the people with awesome deeds. Let the mountains quake! Let brushwood catch fire! Let water boil over! Let nations tremble! Why all the drama? Isaiah sees that the people have become complacent in their ways, they have fallen into habit-forming sin, they have forgotten God. The people need a wake-up call to remind them who and whose they are. It is God who made them! They are all God's people!

As a pastor I have heard people reflect on dramatic life circumstances – the death of a loved one, leaving home, car accident, pregnancy, divorce, cancer, war, falling in love, sexual assault. Quite often these events have led people to drastically re-orient their spiritual lives. I believe this Advent season invites us to that holy opportunity.

What is the most dramatic thing that has happened in your life in the recent past? As you get your bearing after the initial shock, are you able to see yourself and your life in new ways? Are there things you decide to change? Turn toward the God who made you. Find strength in the God to whom you belong.

Pastor Stacey