

## PREPARING AT HOME

November 27-December 3, 2017

*Focus reading:* Isaiah 64:1–9 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?q=376375795>).

*Other lectionary readings:* Psalm 80:1–7, 17–19; 1 Corinthians 1:3–9; Mark 13:34–37

*Theme:* Two-Sided Coin

We have been hearing Jesus' teachings about the realm of God and the final judgment. Those teachings have reminded us that there is urgent work to be done and that no matter how hard we try, we cannot make the world or ourselves perfectly reflect the will of God. Now we hear from Isaiah as he speaks to the returning exiles, overwhelmed with the depressing work of rebuilding their community and their lives. There is so much to do, and we cannot do it alone! And so we begin the Season of Advent with Isaiah's plea that God would "tear open the heavens and come down" (vs. 1). Show up, God! Help us! We may take comfort and delight in those words as the announcement of Advent because we know that God did "come down" in a manger in Bethlehem. Advent is remembering that, right? Well, that is one side of the Advent coin. There is another side, however, that is less familiar and perhaps less comforting. The other side of the Advent coin is the one that looks forward to the time when God will again come down. We do not know when or where or how that will happen, but that it will happen is a promise. While much of the world – Christians and non-Christians alike- will engage in nostalgic remembrance in Advent, we need to look at the other side of the coin to see our utter need for God's rescue and decide what it means to live with the promise that God will We have been hearing Jesus' teachings about the realm of God and the final judgment. Those teachings have reminded us that there is urgent work to be done and that no matter how hard we try, we cannot make the world or ourselves perfectly reflect the will of God. Now we hear from Isaiah as he speaks to the returning exiles, overwhelmed with the depressing work of rebuilding their community and their lives. There is so much to do, and we cannot do it alone! And so we begin the Season of Advent with Isaiah's plea that God would "tear open the heavens and come down" (vs. 1). Show up, God! Help us! We may take comfort and delight in those words as the announcement of Advent because we know that God did "come down" in a manger in Bethlehem. Advent is remembering that, right? Well, that is one side of the Advent coin. There is another side, however, that is less familiar and perhaps less comforting. The other side of the Advent coin is the one that looks forward to the time when God will again come down. We do not know when or where or how that will happen, but that it will happen is a promise. While much of the world – Christians and non-Christians alike- will engage in nostalgic remembrance in Advent, we need to look at the other side of the coin to see our utter need for God's rescue and decide what it means to live with the promise that God come down again. come down again.

### I WISH GOD WOULD COME DOWN!

When the people returned from exile to find that the home they remembered was in ruins, they were sad and angry and wanted God to "come down" and make things better. Ask your child, "Have you ever wanted God to come down?" What made you feel that way?

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## WAITING

Advent is a four-week period of waiting. Will an Advent wreath be part of your experience of waiting this year? If so, make a wreath together, using three purple candles and one pink candle around the outside of the wreath and one white one in the middle. Make Christmas tree ornaments, using religious symbols, so that children are reminded of the reason for Christmas. Think as a family about how you will wait this year. Is it all about buying, wrapping, baking, and decorating? What can you do to honor the one for whom we wait?

## PRAYER

Loving God, it is hard to wait.  
We want you to act quickly  
to make things right and to answer our prayers.  
Help us to remember that you created us and love us.  
Help us to trust you and your timing  
and to be faithful in our waiting.  
Amen.