**Getting Ready for the Second Sunday of Advent**

**Themes of the week:** Peace andrestoration are the themes for week of Advent

**Scriptures for Sunday, December 6, 2020**

**Isaiah 40:1-11 -** In this Old Testament reading, we hear Isaiah speaking to Judah, a nation of refugees living in exile. Judah had failed God by worshiping idols and making alliances with foreign nations. The obstacles to getting back home seem too hard to overcome. In spite of their failures, God offers comfort and tender words of restoration.

It’s never over between God and us – even when we fail. God still sends people like Isaiah to comfort us. They remind us that God does the hard work of restoration. Our dreams of being partners in God’s work here on earth is not forgotten. Instead, God manages to weave our failures into a path of victory revealing God’s glory.

**Psalm 85, 1-2, 8-13 –** In the Psalm, we hear that God’s ability to rehabilitate and restore us is not just a nice thought or evidence that God has a poor memory. God’s desire for our restoration means we aren’t second-class citizens. God does for us what we cannot do for ourselves- God forgives us. The more we accept God’s forgiveness, and experience God’s grace, the more we are able to let it flow from us to others

**Mark 1:1-8 –** When we hear Mark or Isaiah mention “wilderness,” we think of that terrible place where the Hebrew people wandered for 40 years. The wilderness for Israel was a place of danger, wild animals, temptation, sin, and bewilderment. For Mark, the wilderness is where Jesus’ story really began. For most of us, there has been a wilderness where we found ourselves lost and wandering aimlessly. Mark says, this is good news, because the wilderness is a great place to meet and be met by Jesus, the Messiah. If we only listen for Christ in places of comfort and contentment, we might not ever hear his voice.

**Second Peter 3:8-15 –** Just when we are sure that God’s great vision for the world may never happen, the “day of the Lord: may suddenly appear – and pounce on us “like a thief.” The goal “of that day,” is not destruction, but restoration, the appearance of a new heaven and a new earth. On “that day,” our lives will finally be spotless, blameless and peaceful. Our task is not simply waiting for these things to happen, but to prepare for their arrival. We are called to live an inner life that focuses on God and makes peaceful paths for others.

**A Final Word**: It is my hope the readings for this Sunday will help each of us be more open to God’s presence among us, as together we work to find ways to bridge the gap between God and people.

**A Prayer for the week:** Loving God, thank you for your love and the privilege we have to prepare your way, so that we and others may encounter you every day. Guide us as we walk your way and see to transform this world with you. Amen.