

Advent Discipleship

Study provided by UMC Discipleship Ministries, adapted by Kathryn Rauhauser

Gathering

- Reflect and respond to the following: How have you seen the hope of God during hard times in your life?
- Read: Isaiah 2:1-5

Discussion

- Isaiah prophesied during a difficult period of Israel's history, during the time when the northern kingdom of Israel fell to Assyria. How might Isaiah's prophecy have influenced the people of both Israel and Judah during this period of their history?
- Where do you find hope in hard times?
 - Are there specific messages that have been helpful for you to hear in the past?
 - How do present struggles impact the way you think about the future?
 - Are there certain people you know you can turn to for an encouraging word of hope?
- How does Isaiah's message of hope speak to you today?
- What might it look like in our modern world to imagine "swords beaten into plowshares?"
- How can that birth story of Jesus give us hope today?
- How does hope for the second coming of Jesus influence the way we live our lives?
- Who in your life needs a message of hope this season?
 - How might you be a blessing and encouragement to them?

Prayer and Sending Forth

- If studying with a group, share prayer requests and praise reports as well as those on the church prayer list. If studying on your own, take time to pray for those on our church prayer list and lift up your own prayer concerns to the Lord.
- Consider praying the following or a similar prayer: O almighty God, by the birth of your holy child Jesus you gave us a great light to dawn on our darkness. Grant that in his light we may see light. Bestow upon us that most excellent Christmas gift of love to all people, so that the likeness of your Son may be formed in us, and that we may have the ever brightening hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen. (THE BOOK OF WORSHIP 1965, ALT.)