

**SHARING THE FAITH: WEEKLY EMAIL DEVOTION
FOR THE WEEK ENDING JANUARY 10, 2010**

Reading for January 10, 2010, Baptism of Our Lord:

ISAIAH 43:1-7

But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. ²When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. ³For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour. I give Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you. ⁴Because you are precious in my sight, and honoured, and I love you, I give people in return for you, nations in exchange for your life. ⁵Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you; ⁶I will say to the north, 'Give them up', and to the south, 'Do not withhold; bring my sons from far away and my daughters from the end of the earth—⁷everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.'

Faith Questions:

1. What hope exists in this passage for you?
2. We are entering the season in the church year called Epiphany. Epiphany is considered to be the Season of Light, when the light that Jesus brought into the world spreads to all the corners of the earth. What in this passage, if anything, speaks of light to you? What, if anything, speaks of darkness? Where do you find yourself in this passage? Why?
3. The context for this week's text from Isaiah is one of exile, and a sense of abandonment by God. The people of Israel have been scattered and are far from their home in Palestine. One of Isaiah's themes, therefore, is to have faith in God's plan, despite adverse circumstances. When have you felt exiled or abandoned by God? Where in your life might you need to hear Isaiah's message about God's plan?
4. Trinity is entering a time of pastoral transition. What might this passage say to us as a community of believers during this time of uncertainty and change?
5. We as a community of believers have recently opened a Code Blue homeless shelter—we open our doors to welcome homeless people into our building on the coldest nights of the year. How might this text from Isaiah inform the Code Blue ministry as it moves forward? How might this text inform other ministries that take us out into the world?

Let us pray:

Dear Lord, grant us hope, show us light, point us in the direction you would have us go. Remind us of your plan. Teach us to serve you and all people, regardless of circumstance.

For whom else, and for what else, shall we pray? (Insert your own prayer here)Amen.

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Devotion prepared by staff at Trinity Lutheran Church, Lansdale, Pennsylvania, under the direction of Rebecca Kolowé, Diaconal Minister.

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