

**Weekly Sermon Discussion Guide**  
***Comfort, O Comfort My People***

December 11, 2023

**ILLUMINATE**

**Isaiah 40:1-5**

**EXPLORING THE SERMON**

- \* What did you hear?
- \* What did you think or feel about what you heard?
- \* What is one thing you can take away from the sermon this week?

**KEY VERSES**

*Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. <sup>2</sup> Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. <sup>3</sup> A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. <sup>4</sup> Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. <sup>5</sup> Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."*

This Advent we're being invited to pause and look with honesty at the darkness both in our world and our own lives. Isaiah encourages the Israelites that there is indeed something to live for, though their homeland has been destroyed by Babylon and they question God's goodness and grace. **What dark places in your life are you being prompted by God to notice and move toward this Advent season?**

This passage marks a turning point in the life of a broken and humiliated community. God offers comfort and encouragement to the people of Israel through the words of Isaiah, and has made possible their restoration and salvation. **Recall a time when God comforted you. How did he show up? How has telling your story to others encouraged them to trust Jesus more?**

"Make straight in the desert a highway for our God" describes the ease of accessibility between God and His people. God is present and available in the places where we feel low and hopeless, and this is precisely where formation happens. Like the Hebrew people, we will journey in and out of wilderness. One clear way God provides a way is through other people, which is how we are able to incarnate God's goodness. **How has the presence of grace been extended to you through other people (Jill's example was greeting cards in her entry hall)?**