

South Newbury Union Church
Bible Study Fall 2021
The Prophet Isaiah, chapters 40 - 55

The Book of the Prophet Isaiah includes material that can be dated from the mid BC 700's down to the late BC 500's. It is unified by its view of God as the Lord of History and by its confidence that God continues to choose Israel as its servant in spite of Israel's faithlessness.

Scholars loosely divide the book into three sections. Chapters 1 - 39 generally address the situation in Judah, the Southern Kingdom, in the BC 700's (although many passages appear to speak to a later period, and chapters 34-35 are routinely grouped with the second section). Chapters 40 - 55 address the exiles who were deported from Judah to Babylon in the years 598-586, and probably were spoken late in the exile, about the 540's, just a few years before Persia overthrew Babylon and allowed the exiles to return home. Chapters 56 - 66 speaks to the period in the years following the exile, when the deportees had returned home and found that things were not getting better of their own accord.

Our study this fall will explore the middle section, chapters 40 - 55. We'll enter into the spirit of a prophet who was totally convinced that God was about to do a radically new thing right inside human history, and that God's deed took into account the power of vulnerability, the lifting up that comes when we know we are perfectly loved, and the ways that God's plan can be fulfilled through the course of political and national events.

In your reading for this study, read the passages for each date. In some cases, because the assigned passage is long, we will only study a portion of that passage.

August 31	Isaiah 40:1-31	"Comfort, my people" "Those who wait for the Lord"
September 7	Isaiah 41:1-29	"I will make of you a threshing sledge"
September 14	no class	
September 21	Isaiah 42:1-25	"Here is my servant"
September 28	Isaiah 43:1-28	I am about to do a new thing"
October 5	Isaiah 44:1 - 45:7	"Cyrus, my anointed"
October 12	Isaiah 45:8 - 46:7	"God did not create it a chaos"
October 19	Isaiah 46:8 - 47:15	"Come and sit down in the dust, Babylon!"
October 26	Isaiah 48:1 - 49:26	"I will give you as a light to the nations"
November 2	Isaiah 50:1 - 52:12	"My salvation will be forever"
November 9	Isaiah 52:13 - 54:17	"He was wounded for our transgressions"
November 16	Isaiah 55:1-13	"My word shall accomplish that which I purpose"