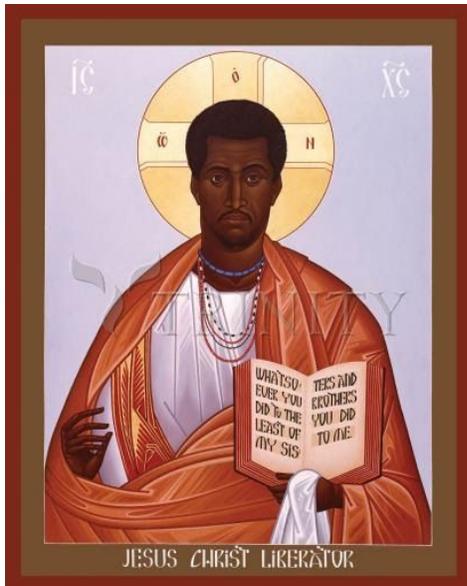


Dear Church Family:



King Uzziah is dead. Under his reign, the people of Judah have experienced growth, peace, and prosperity. These were the golden years of Judah on which the people's hopes had been built upon. Now, Uzziah is dead, his reign ended with his disobedience towards God. The future is uncertain and unsure for the people of Judah. In the midst of grief and loss of the reign of Uzziah the prophet Isaiah is caught up in a heavenly vision.

Isaiah sees the Lord “sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train[a] of his robe filled the temple.” In this heavenly vision, the glory of God’s presence is overwhelming and magnificent. Isaiah, aware that this is no ordinary moment then becomes aware of his own sinfulness in comparison to God's majesty. “And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of

a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!” Isaiah beholds the depth of the beauty, glory, majesty, might, and holiness of God. It is in that vision that the comparisons of earthly kings and rulers fall apart. Uzziah is nothing in comparison to the lord of hosts.

Uzziah the King had been the source of Judah’s hope, they placed their future on the military prowess of Judah and the strength of a King. With Uzziah's death, they questioned their future and what was to become of them. Isaiah’s vision and later on in the text, his commission to preach is grounded in the awareness of God’s majesty and sovereignty. In this era of COVID-19, we grieve the loss of so many dreams, plans, ideas, and even things we placed our hope in. For many of us, the Obama years were our Uzziah years we placed our hope in a “post-racial” society. Yet, the world has shown us that our quest for racial justice has not been achieved. For others, we hold tightly to particular pastors and religious memories. For others, we remember our glory years when we held particular positions and had certain levels of influence missing what God might be calling us to do in our retirement years. We all have Uzziah moments, people, and things we cling to. Perhaps, God is calling us to let go of Uzziah and to see the glory of God around us and in our lives! When we are captivated by the vision of God we realize that there is even more that is possible for us than what we could have imagined.

We are called to gain a glimpse of the holiness of our God. Yet, when we see this glimpse of God's holiness and majesty we see our own human frailty. God does not leave us there. For in the text a Seraphim (a heavenly being) cleanses Isaiah's unclean lips with charcoal thus forgiving his sins and with his sins forgiven Isaiah is sent by God to be a prophet to his people. "And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me."

Church family through Jesus Christ our sins have been forgiven and through Christ, we see the character of God. When God makes us new, when our sins are forgiven, we are also commissioned and sent forth for the sake of someone else. At this moment and in this time let us not place our hope in Uzziah and Uzziah moments. Perhaps, God is calling us to a new awareness, to be aware of God and God's glory for the sake of the world around us. Let us be caught up in a vision of our holy God and when we see God's holiness. We must respond to God "Here I am! Send me."

With Love & Prayers,

Rev. Brandon C. Harris