

## TUESDAY COMMUNION

**Hymn:**

**Reading:** Isaiah 40.6-11

**Prayers:**

We can imagine how those Jewish slaves in Babylon must sometimes have been taunted with the question:

“Where is your God?”

Two and a half millennium later the question was asked by those who were herded into the extermination camps of the Third Reich.

When all our expectations of God seem to come to nothing, when our dreams seem no more than an illusion and our hopes are shattered, where is God?

Indeed, there are many times when Christians have asked, where is God in the midst of all that is happening to us as individuals and to the Christian community. When I was Eastern Turkey, in the Tur Albin, a region which has been a Christian heartland for nearly 2,000 years, there was a great sadness at the rapid decline in the number of Christians.

In 1960 there were over 60,000 Christians living in the villages and small towns of the area.

Now there are just over 2,000!

Persecution has resulted in thousands emigrating to America, Europe and Australia.

It is easy to snuff out human life! The Nazis killed six million people in their concentration camps and Stalin even more.

Isaiah compares human life to that of the flower which blossoms with great beauty but dies quickly.

Yet, he says, there is one thing that endures. He says, “The word of our God endures for ever.”

What God wills and intends does not change nor does it become worn out and old.

To the people from Jerusalem, now slaves in Babylon, and to those who still remain back in Jerusalem itself, he gives this good news: “Here is your God”. He is not far away.

He is not remote or uncaring. He is with you.

One of the most powerful biographies I’ve read is that of a much loved rabbi who was a teenager during the war and lived for many months with the threat of extinction. All his family died and he heard people asking, “Where is God?”

Where is he in the midst of that suffering and grief which goes beyond our comprehension?

For many the conclusion was that God doesn’t exist. His reaction was different. God was with us in the midst of our suffering. God suffered with us!

If God does not wave a magic wand to put right what is going wrong neither is he indifferent to what is happening. Isaiah was convinced that God was at work through what was happening in the world. Change was coming.

Freedom was at hand. Slavery would not be the end.

So he speaks of the God who has a special care for those who are weakest.

***“He will feed his flock like a shepherd;  
he will gather the lambs in his arms,  
and carry them in his bosom,  
and gently lead the mother sheep.”***

No one is forgotten and he treats each person with care!

Perhaps as we look back over our lives, as we remember the hard times we have known, the times when it has felt that God was absent, we can recognise that he was with us.

Perhaps we can recall those moments when we realised he had not forgotten us but had been our strength in our times of weakness.

Perhaps as we look forward to this day, this week, to the years that lie before us we can dare to trust that he will be with us, the God we know in Jesus.

Our communion this morning invites us to look back to one who suffered and died but who never ceased to trust that God was with him.

Our communion invites us to look forward with hope and confidence that in light and in darkness, in joy and in sorrow this will be true:

**“Our God is here” and his good and loving purposes for us will never cease.**

**Amen.**