

MICAH 1B1C

ICE-BREAKERS

- 1 Micah names specific cities and places in his message. Is there a place (*home, town, church, or workplace*) that carries strong emotional or spiritual meaning for you? Why?
- 2 Have you ever ignored a warning sign (*literal or figurative*) and later wished you had paid attention? What made it easy to dismiss at the time?
- 3 Which do you think is harder – to hear a challenging message addressed to everyone, or one aimed directly at you? Why?

BEYOND THE TEXT

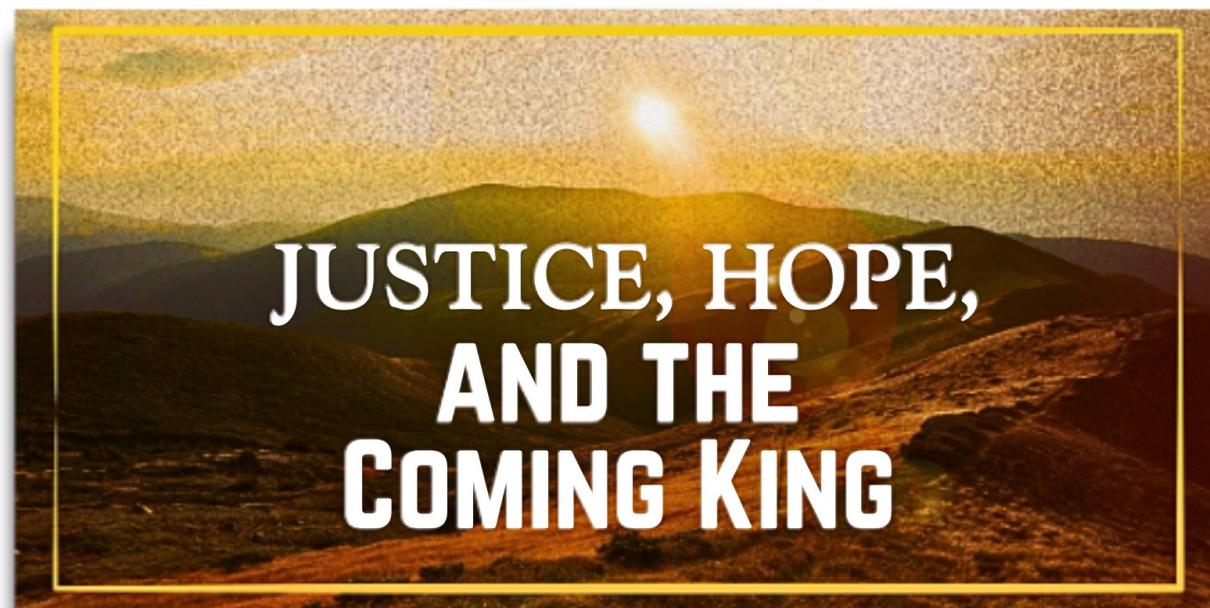
- 1 Does viewing the Old Testament through a trauma-informed lens change how you interpret the patterns in the Old Testament?
- 2 How do we support the growth of our brothers and sisters while maintaining a sense of self-awareness that allows us to look beyond others' faults and limits and grow ourselves?
- 3 How does the Christian community participate in God's work of healing trauma, confronting complacency, and nurturing faithfulness? How do we hold ourselves accountable when the Christian community participates in perpetuating complacency and traumatizing others?

SERMON BASED

- 1 How does viewing Israel and Judah through a trauma-informed lens change the way we understand their repeated failures and faithlessness?
- 2 King Amaziah is described as doing "what was right in the sight of the Lord," yet allowing unfaithful practices to continue. Where do you see a similar kind of passive or incomplete faithfulness in yourself?
- 3 Why is it easier to recognize destructive patterns in others than in ourselves? How does emotional or spiritual proximity to a situation make self-awareness more difficult?
- 4 The sermon says, "*The worship of Baal essentially started because we can not fathom that one God could have power over every aspect of life.*" Do you, in your everyday life, tend to compartmentalize God or limit God's Lordship in certain areas? (eg. Careers, finances, relationships)
- 5 The text suggests that God's abundant grace can sometimes lead to complacency. How do we balance trusting God's grace while still taking responsibility for faithful action?

FIRST united methodist CHURCH

113 West Central Ave | Van Wert, OH 45891 | 419-238-0631 | vanwertfirst.net



January 4th, 2026

HOLY JUDGMENT

EPIPHANY & COMMUNION SUNDAY

YOUTH & COLLEGE SUNDAY

THE **MISSION OF FIRST CHURCH** is to make disciples of Jesus Christ who **Love** Boldly, **Serve** Joyfully, and **Lead** Courageously in our local community and around the world.

Whatever your circumstances and no matter where you have been, you matter to God and to us. *You belong here!* We pray your experience in our Worship today will be one that blesses you and uplifts your relationship with Jesus Christ.

Order of Worship

He has told you, O man, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, to love kindness, and
to walk humbly with your God?

Micah 6:8 NASB

PLEASE FILL OUT THE ATTENDANCE PAD AND PASS IT TO YOUR NEIGHBOR
+ THOSE WHO ARE ABLE, PLEASE RISE

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS Teresa Shaffer

PRELUDE *Christmas Prelude* | arr. Edward Broughton

+ CALL TO WORSHIP Kaden Shaffer

Leader: Come, let us gather before the Lord, the One who comes forth from the holy dwelling place.

People: We come, knowing that God sees the whole earth and hears the cries of God's people.

Leader: The mountains tremble, and the valleys melt before the presence of the Holy One.

People: We come with reverence, humility, and awe, aware the God's justice exposes what is broken.

Leader: The Lord speaks – not to destroy, but to call us back to faithfulness and truth.

People: We come to listen, to repent, and to hope, trusting the mercy of the Coming King.

Leader: Let us worship the Lord our God.

People: Let us worship with open hearts and honest lives.

+ OPENING PRAYER Melissa Joseph

Holy and righteous God, You are the Lord of all the earth, the One whose presence shakes what is false and reveals what is true. We confess that we often prefer comfort to faithfulness, silence to truth, and ease to justice. We have built lives and systems that do not always reflect Your ways. Yet You do not turn away from us. You come near – calling us to repentance, inviting us into renewal, and shaping us for hope. As we hear Your Word today, give us courage to face Your holy judgement, grace to receive Your mercy, and strength to walk in Your justice. Prepare our hearts to encounter You, that the love and authority of the Coming King may transform us. Amen.

+ HYMN #251 *Go, Tell It on the Mountain* | UMH

CHAT WITH THE CHILDREN Grace Dowler

CHANCEL CHOIR ANTHEM *God of Grace, and God of Glory* | arr. Michael Burkhardt

Gloria Wendel, Accompanist

+ SCRIPTURE SERIES MESSAGE MICAH 1: 1 – 16



..... Cayden Laukhuf

..... Olivia Ramos

SONG *The Battle Belongs to the Lord*

RESPONSIVE LITANY Sydney Dowler

Leader: The Word of the Lord calls us to account, revealing where we have wandered from God's ways.

People: Lord, we heard Your truth. Search us and know us.

Leader: God's judgment is not empty condemnation, but a summons to repentance and renewal.

People: We turn toward You, O God, with humility and trust.

Leader: The Lord grieves over the brokenness of the people and the harm caused by injustice and pride.

People: Teach us to lament what breaks Your heart and to reject what separates us from You.

Leader: Even in judgement, God does not abandon the people, but remains faithful to the promise of restoration.

People: We place our hopes in You, the righteous and merciful King.

Leader: Go now as people shaped by truth, called to live justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.

People: We will follow the way of the Lord, trusting in justice, hope, and the reign of the Coming King. Amen.

OFFERTORY *There's A Song in the Air* | arr. Scott Turner

+ DOXOLOGY #99 *My Tribute* | UMH

HOLY COMMUNION Sierra Poulson, Teresa Shaffer,
and Brianna Lautzenheiser
PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE
THE LORD'S PRAYER

+ SPOKEN BENEDICTION Pastor Christian Taylor

POSTLUDE *Allegro* | by W.A. Mozart (1756 – 1791)

You are invited to be seated and enjoy the Postlude or leave quietly in peace.
Thank you for worshipping with us, and for your continued generosity and support.

Place offerings in the wooden plates coming through the Pews, during the Offering song.

