

A photograph of a church interior, showing rows of wooden pews facing a sanctuary with a high, vaulted wooden ceiling and colorful stained glass windows. The text is overlaid on this image.

OCTOBER 21, 2020

AGAPE FROM AFAR

Adjusting to life amidst Coronavirus

A WORD
FROM
PASTOR
JILL

As a way to remain connected during this time apart, I will be putting together a weekly newsletter with a reflection based on the upcoming Sunday scripture passage. I hope that by taking a few moments to reflect on the Word of God and pray, we can feel grounded and connected to God and to one another during this uncertain time. *-Pastor Jill*



The scripture for this week is Deuteronomy 34:1-12. This is the final chapter of the book of Deuteronomy and the final chapter in Moses' life. Moses goes to the top of a mountain, and God shows him the Promised Land. Moses spent most of his life leading the Israelites toward the Promised Land but unfortunately he will die before he gets to step foot in the land that God provided. Instead of Moses, Joshua will carry on Moses' legacy.

Reflect more on this passage on the following pages.



Read the passage:

Deuteronomy 34:1-12

Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho, and the Lord showed him the whole land: Gilead as far as Dan, all Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea, the Negeb, and the Plain—that is, the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees—as far as Zoar. The Lord said to him, “This is the land of which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, ‘I will give it to your descendants’; I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there.” Then Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab, at the Lord’s command. He was buried in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-peor, but no one knows his burial place to this day. Moses was one hundred twenty years old when he died; his sight was unimpaired and his vigor had not abated. The Israelites wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days; then the period of mourning for Moses was ended. Joshua son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, because Moses had laid his hands on him; and the Israelites obeyed him, doing as the Lord had commanded Moses. Never since has there arisen a prophet in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face. He was unequalled for all the signs and wonders that the Lord sent him to perform in the land of Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his servants and his entire land, and for all the mighty deeds and all the terrifying displays of power that Moses performed in the sight of all Israel.



Reflect:

1. Why do you think God showed Moses the Promise Land, knowing that Moses wouldn't live long enough to step foot in it himself?
2. Moses had the opportunity to see how his life's hard work paid off when God showed him the Promise Land. Have you ever had an experience where you got to see how the fruit of your labors impacted others? What insight did you gain from that experience?
3. What legacy do you hope to leave behind for future generations?
4. What is this passage calling you to do today? This week?

Pray:

God, we thank you that even when we don't see the results of our labors of love, you make sure they continue. Give us the inspiration we need to continue to bring about your Kingdom even when we don't see the impact immediately. Amen.



Our Be the Church focus this week is: **PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT.**

With everything else that is going on in the world (school, work, Covid, financial struggles, the election), caring for the environment might be at the bottom of your priority list. But many of the ways that we care for the environment could also help improve some of our other concerns. Here are some suggestions:

- Go outside.** Appreciation of nature helps the environment and improves your mental health.
- Drive Less.** You are probably already doing this to minimize exposure to Covid, and it reduces your carbon footprint!
- Do an Energy Assessment of Your Home.** Comed and other providers offer this service for free. Small energy-reducing fixes help the environment and save you money.
- Shop Virtually.** Shopping online is Covid safe. If you avoid rush shipping, combine orders to minimize shipments, and steer toward eco-friendly packaging, it can be earth friendly, too!
- Telecommute.** Check this one off the list! Good for the earth, good for you!
- Be Crafty.** Recycle materials into new creations. Keep children occupied with items out of your recycle bin.
- Get to Know Your Neighbors.** This is tricky in Covid-times but not impossible. Borrowing lawn equipment or tools instead of buying new is good for the environment and helps you meet new people.

While we are stuck at home we continue to Be the Church by showing agape love for creation, for others and for ourselves.

What Pastor Jill is
reading: *Talking to Strangers* by Malcolm Gladwell

What Pastor Jill is
watching: *Cabins in the Wild* on Netflix

What Pastor Jill is
listening to: Indelible Grace Music

Please reach out to a staff member if you need financial, emotional or spiritual assistance. As always, we are here to help!

**First Church of
Lombard
220 S. Main Street
Lombard, IL 60148
630-629-2630**

info@firstchurchoflombard.org



Fifty people (including staff & volunteers) may gather in the sanctuary, another 50 people may watch the service live-streamed in Hatfield Hall. Worship will continue to be available online to watch from home.

Before Coming to In-person Worship:

1. If you have any symptoms or have been in close contact with someone with Covid within the last 14 days, we ask that you watch worship from home.
2. If you have any symptoms with potential to spread germs (such as sneezing, coughing) even if you believe it's from a cold or allergies, please stay home.
3. Sign up ahead of time on the online pew pad to assist with contact tracing. Everyone (including staff and volunteers) needs to register online (link emailed on Thursdays), by phone (630-620-2630 x210), or in person on Sundays.
4. You may access the bulletin on your device ahead of time or print it out at home and bring it with you. The bulletin will also be on the screen.

Arriving at Worship:

1. Doors will open at 9:45. Plan to arrive by 10:10 so everyone may be seated.
2. You must wear a mask covering your mouth and nose.
3. You must sanitize your hands and have a temperature check before entering the building.
4. To maintain social distance, you will be directed when to enter the sanctuary or Hatfield Hall and will go directly to your seat and be seated.
5. Seating in the sanctuary and Hatfield Hall will be socially distanced and will be filled from the front to the back.
6. Members of the same household will be seated together.

During Worship:

1. Worship will be 30-40 minutes long.
2. Music will be instrumental and there will be no congregational singing.
4. Children will go directly to Sunday School or remain with their family for the entire service.
5. Offering will be collected by the doors.
6. Worship responses will be call and response or viewable on the screen.
7. Dismissal at the end of the worship will be by household.
8. Restrooms will be available, but to maintain social distancing only one person may occupy the restroom at a time.

After worship:

1. Congregating in the building will not be permitted.
2. Weather permitting, outdoor coffee hour may be held.

We will continue to reassess and make adjustments as we determine how best to move forward. While worship will look different, we know that the Spirit of God will be present as we gather together in this new way and as many continue to join us virtually, too.

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