

AUGUST 12, 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 Isaiah 56:1, 6-8. In this passage, the community is arguing about whether outsiders should be included in the community. God reminds the community that everyone who serves God and keeps the sabbath is to be included in God's house. We like to think of ourselves as open-minded and inclusive of everyone. But we always must ask ourselves, "What more can we do to make sure everyone feels welcome and included?" in our churches, in our communities, in our lives and in our homes.



**Read the passage:**

**Isaiah 56:1, 6-8**

Thus says the Lord: Maintain justice, and do what is right, for soon my salvation will come, and my deliverance be revealed. And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants, all who keep the sabbath, and do not profane it, and hold fast my covenant—these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. Thus says the Lord God, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, I will gather others to them besides those already gathered.



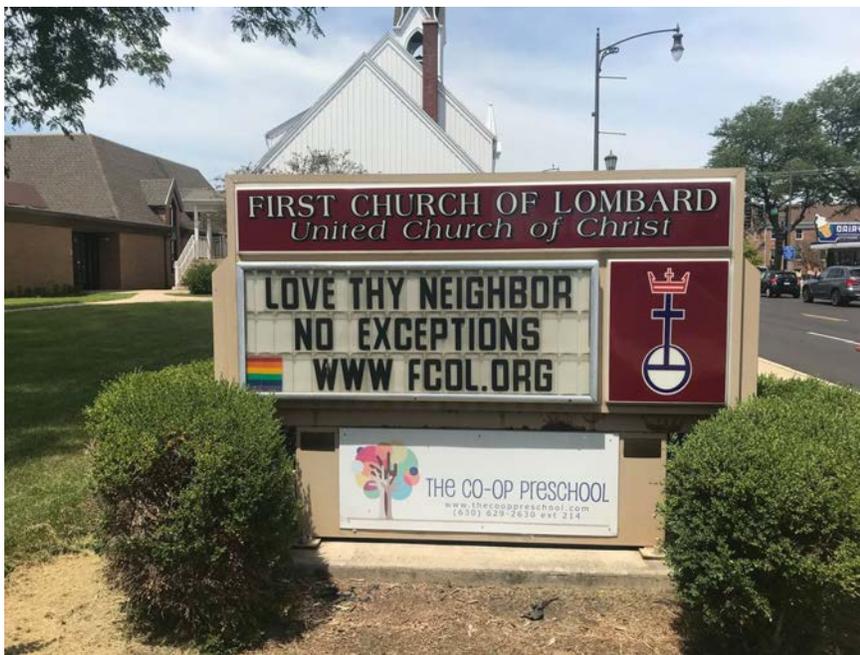


**Reflect:**

1. In this passage the outcasts were foreigners and eunuchs (see Isaiah 56:4-6). Who are the outcasts in our communities?
2. What role do you think we have in maintaining God's justice?
3. What can we do to make the church a house of prayer for all people?
4. What is this passage calling you to do today? This week?

**Pray:**

Holy God, open our eyes to see the world the way you see it. Help us to work toward establishing your justice for all people. Amen.



The test-run of in-person worship went well! We will continue to offer in-person worship while carefully monitoring the ever-changing situation.

Thank you to all the volunteers who assisted and for the patience of everyone who attended.

Fifty people physically distanced may gather in the sanctuary, another 50 people can watch the service live-streamed in Hatfield Hall.

We ask everyone to sign up ahead of time on the online pew pad so that we know who was in attendance to assist with contact tracing if necessary. Everyone (including staff and volunteers) needs to register online, by phone (630-629-2630 x210) or in person on Sundays.

Now that we are live-streaming instead of pre-recording the service, accessing Online worship is a little different. At 10:15 you can watch the service live at [www.fcol.org](http://www.fcol.org). If you aren't able to tune in at 10:15, a recording of the service will be put on the website and Facebook by Monday morning.

Weather permitting, outdoor Coffee Hour will be held after worship at 11:00. Bring a chair, a mask and join us, even if you do not come to worship.

What I am **reading**:  
*An American Summer* by  
Alex Kotlowitz

What I have been  
**watching**:  
*Down to Earth* on Netflix

What I have been  
**listening** to:  
Grace VanderWaal

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

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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. 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 Fridays), by phone (630-620-2630 x210), or in person on Sundays.
3. 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 remain with their families and have activity bags to take home.
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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