

SEPTEMBER 30, 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 Exodus 18:18-19, 22-25. In this passage, Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, finds Moses arbitrating between the Israelites and God. Believing that Moses is overwhelmed by his role as judge, Jethro encourages Moses to represent the people before God but also to recruit other people to act as judges to help him.

Reflect more on this passage on the following pages.



Read the passage:

Exodus 18:18-25

You will surely wear yourself out, both you and these people with you. For the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone. Now listen to me. I will give you counsel, and God be with you! You should represent the people before God, and you should bring their cases before God; teach them the statutes and instructions and make known to them the way they are to go and the things they are to do. You should also look for able men among all the people, men who fear God, are trustworthy, and hate dishonest gain; set such men over them as officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Let them sit as judges for the people at all times; let them bring every important case to you, but decide every minor case themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. If you do this, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people will go to their home in peace.'



Reflect:

1. Jethro tells Moses that he should "represent the people before God." What does it look like for us to represent others before God?
2. Jethro encourages Moses to delegate some of his responsibility to others. When have you neglected an opportunity to delegate and how has that impacted yourself and others?
3. What small or big actions can you take to fight for the powerless?
4. What is this passage calling you to do today? This week?

Pray:

Dear God, remind us to speak up for those without a voice. But also remind us that we do not need to go it alone. Surround us with others who will encourage us and remind us of your presence. Amen.



The Be the Church focus this week is **FIGHT FOR THE POWERLESS**. Fighting for the marginalized was a significant aspect of Jesus' ministry. Speaking up on behalf of those without a voice has been part of the mission of the church throughout history. The oldest known written Christian prayer outside of scripture, authored by Clement of Rome around the year 100, is still relevant today. This prayer reminds us to continue to go before God on behalf of the powerless.

Prayer for All Needs

Clement of Rome

We beg you, Lord, to help and defend us.
Deliver the oppressed.
Pity the insignificant.
Raise the fallen.
Show yourself to the needy.
Heal the sick.
Bring back those of your people who have gone astray.
Feed the hungry.
Lift up the weak.
Take off the prisoners' chains.
May every nation come to know that you alone are God,
that Jesus is your Child,
that we are your people,
the sheep that you pasture.
Amen.

What Pastor Jill is
reading: *Homegoing* by
Yaa Gyasi

What Pastor Jill is
watching:
The Great British Bakeoff
on Netflix

What Pastor Jill is
listening to:
American Standard by
James Taylor

**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
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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 Thursdays), 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 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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