

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 the image.

JUNE 17, 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 Matthew 10:40-42. In this passage Jesus is telling his disciples what it will be like when they are sent out into the world to share the Gospel. He tells them that those who welcome the disciples will also be welcoming Jesus. This serves as an encouragement to the disciples, but also as a reminder that not everyone will be receptive of the message they have to share. It is hard to believe that the Gospel message of love for all people would be rejected by anyone. But current national tensions demonstrate how unconditional love and welcome is not a message that everyone can easily get behind.

Take some time to reflect on Matthew 10:40-42 on the following pages.



Read the passage:

Matthew 10:40-42

‘Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.’



Reflect:

1. Have you ever felt that when you welcome someone to your home, business or church, you are welcoming Jesus? How would remembering this affect how you treat people?
2. Jesus emphasizes that giving even a cup of cold water to someone is an act of faith. What small, simple thing are you being nudged to do?
3. What is this passage calling you to do today? This week?

Pray:

Holy God, if we need to feel welcome, provide us a place to call home. If we need to be more welcoming, open our hearts and our lives to people in need. Thank you for our church family that attempts to offer extravagant welcome to all. Amen.



Many Americans are acting as if COVID-19 has “gone away” or has lessened its grip on the United States. Unfortunately, that is not the case. Public health specialists fear the United States is heading for a nasty second wave of COVID-19 infections this fall. The new CDC guidelines, published on the CDC’s website, are divided into two sections - “deciding to go out” and “considerations for events and gathering.” Here is a brief snapshot of the new guidelines:

1. Before **meeting up with friends**, consider the number of people, amount of space and length of time you plan to engage.

2. **Opt for the outdoors at restaurants**

CDC recommends wearing face coverings when not eating or drinking and remaining six feet apart even while outside.

3. Here is a sampling of other considerations:

- **Using the gym** – don’t share items that cannot be cleaned or sanitized.

- If the **library** is open, see if curbside is available.

- If you decide to gather with friends for a **cookout**, as much as possible use single-serve options and remind guests to wash their hands before and after eating.

4. When **making decisions**, consider how quickly COVID-19 is currently spreading in your community before hosting or attending gatherings.

(from: https://www.ucc.org/daily_covid_19_brief_issue_54)

What I have been
reading:

The Book of Longings by
Sue Monk Kidd

What I have been
watching:

The Kindness Diaries on
Netflix

What I have been
listening to:

25 by Adele

**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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