

A photograph of a church interior, showing rows of wooden pews facing a sanctuary with a large, colorful stained glass window. The ceiling is made of exposed wooden beams. The text "JUNE 10, 2020" is overlaid at the top center.

JUNE 10, 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 Romans 5:1-8. The Apostle Paul's letter to the Romans is the longest letter of Paul's in the New Testament, and it contains the most theological doctrines. The main point that Paul wants to emphasize is that there is nothing anyone can do to earn God's grace – it is simply a gift. How might we live our lives in response to the unearned gift of God's grace?

Take some time to reflect on Romans 5:1-8 on the following pages.



**Read the passage:**

### **Romans 5:1-8**

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.



### **Reflect:**

1. Verses 3-4 say, "suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us." What do you think we can learn from suffering?
2. This passage talks a lot about hope. What is the difference between hope and wishful thinking?
3. What is this passage calling you to do today? This week?

### **Pray:**

God of all, give us hope when we feel hopeless and perseverance when we feel weak. Thank you for your unending-always-available grace and love.

Amen.



Be sure to plan on attending the Congregational meeting on Sunday, June 14 via Zoom. You will be able to log in beginning at 11:15 AM and the meeting will begin promptly at 11:30 AM.

This is an informational meeting where the leadership will share about the church reopening plans and the financial situation of the church.

If you have any concerns you would like to be addressed at the meeting please email Vice Moderator Becky Kirsh at [bkirsh3@gmail.com](mailto:bkirsh3@gmail.com) in advance of the meeting.

If you are unsure how to use Zoom, or if you would rather telephone into the meeting, please contact Bea ([bcastillo@firstchurchoflombard.org](mailto:bcastillo@firstchurchoflombard.org)) or 630-629-2630. She will put you in touch with someone who can help with the process.

Of course this will not be the same as an in-person meeting, but it will be good to connect and to see one another and remember that the work of the church continues even though we are apart.

What I have been  
**reading:**  
*The Leavers* by Lisa Ko

What I have been  
**watching:**  
*Just Mercy*

What I have been  
**listening to:**  
*Chromatica* by Lady Gaga

**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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