

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 date "OCTOBER 14, 2020" is centered at the top.

OCTOBER 14, 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 22:15-22. In this passage, the Pharisees are trying to set a trap to trick Jesus by asking if Jewish people should pay taxes to Rome. Jesus asks for someone to show him a denarius. The act of producing a denarius reveals that the Pharisees themselves bow to the government, because denarii have the graven image of Caesar on them. Jesus concludes this encounter with the well-known phrase, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

Reflect more on this passage on the following pages.



**Read the passage:**

**Matthew 22:15-22**

Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap him in what he said. So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?” But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, “Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin used for the tax.” And they brought him a denarius. Then he said to them, “Whose head is this, and whose title?” They answered, “The emperor’s.” Then he said to them, “Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” When they heard this, they were amazed; and they left him and went away.



### **Reflect:**

1. In this encounter, the Pharisees are trying to trick Jesus. What parts of your faith, do other people scrutinize in hopes that your beliefs fall apart?
2. Jesus says, "Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's." Is it possible to separate what belongs to the government from what belongs to God?
3. How do you balance your obligations to civic society with your calling as a Christian?
4. What is this passage calling you to do today? This week?

### **Pray:**

God, we know that everything belongs to you. May we use whatever we have to bring your love, peace and justice to our community and the world.  
Amen.



The Be the Church focus this week is **SHARE EARTHLY AND SPIRITUAL RESOURCES.**

Sharing earthly resources is pretty straightforward. But what are spiritual resources and how do we share them?

Reflect on the following poem by Teresa of Avila, a Carmelite nun and mystic who lived in the 16th Century.

### **Christ Has No Body**

Christ has no body but yours,  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,  
Yours are the eyes with which he looks  
Compassion on this world,  
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,  
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.  
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,  
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.  
Christ has no body now but yours,  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,  
Yours are the eyes with which he looks  
compassion on this world.  
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.  
—Teresa of Avila (1515–1582)

What Pastor Jill is continuing to **read**:  
*Water Dancer* by Ta-Nehisi Coates

What Pastor Jill is **watching**:  
*Dolly Parton: Here I am*

What Pastor Jill is **listening** to:  
*Unlocking Us*  
podcast with Brene Brown

**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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