

MAY 27, 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 the story of Pentecost. Fifty days after the resurrection, the disciples were gathered together and a sound like a rushing wind came through the house and tongues of fire danced on their heads. Then they began to speak and the multilingual crowd gathered outside could understand them in their own language. As I think about how the disciples could speak and everyone understood them, I think that they must have been speaking love. As they say, "Love the universal language." How might we continue to spread universal love especially during this time apart?

Take some time to reflect on Acts 2:1-21 on the following pages.



Read the passage:

Acts 2:1-8, 12-21

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, ‘What does this mean?’ But others sneered and said, ‘They are filled with new wine.’

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: ‘Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

(Continued on next page)

“In the last days it will be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams.
Even upon my slaves, both men and women,
in those days I will pour out my Spirit;
and they shall prophesy.
And I will show portents in the heaven above
and signs on the earth below,
blood, and fire, and smoky mist.
The sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,
before the coming of the Lord’s great and
glorious day.

Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”





Reflect:

1. Pentecost is described as the birthday of the church. Why do you think this is?
2. How might you be more open to God working in your life – be it like a roaring wind or a gentle breeze?
3. What is this passage calling you to do today? This week?

Pray:

God, you began the Church on Pentecost by gathering people together to share in your hope and grace. While we cannot gather together in person, help us to be filled with that same hope and grace and be bold enough to share it with others. Amen.



Image: Charlie Peterson

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the dedication of the Maple Street Chapel. Unfortunately, we are not able to celebrate this milestone with worship in the chapel followed by an ice cream social as planned. But we can still remember this significant anniversary and the strong legacy of serving the community which First Church continues to this day. Charles Caverno, served as the pastor of the First Church from 1874 - 1887. He said looking back at the hard times the community had faced:

Behind us and conditioning all our lives lay two major disasters--the great fire of Chicago and the panic of 1873. We didn't call it a depression, we called it 'hard times' and faced it grimly. We had nothing to live by but brains and character.

The church was a bulwark in time of storm.

Our church continues to be a bulwark in time of storm for our members and our community. In this time of isolation and social distancing, if you are facing a "time of storm," the church can help. Please contact a staff member. Resources are available and conversations are confidential. Thank you for all the ways you help First Church continue to be a bulwark in time of storm through your generous agape love for God and for the community.

What I have been **re-reading**:

Harry Potter and Sorcerer's Stone (Getting ready for trivia on June 14!)

What I have been **watching**:

Win the Wilderness

What I have been **listening to**:

Look Up Child by Lauren Daigle

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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