

A photograph of a church interior, showing rows of wooden pews facing a sanctuary. The sanctuary features a large, colorful stained glass window and a wooden altar. The ceiling is made of exposed wooden beams with several pendant lights hanging from it. The date "JULY 15, 2020" is printed in the upper center of the image.

JULY 15, 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 Genesis 28:10-19. This continues the story of Jacob and Esau from last week, but skips over an important story. In Genesis 27 Rebekah and Jacob trick Isaac into giving his blessing to the younger son, Jacob. Rebekah then tells Jacob to run away because Esau is so mad that she is afraid he will kill Jacob. This week's lesson begins with Jacob escaping from his brother's fury and having a dream about a ladder to heaven with angels going up and down. Jacob is so moved by his dream that when he awakens he exclaims, "'Surely the LORD is in this place--and I did not know it!'"

Take some time to reflect on Genesis 28:10-19 on the following pages.



Read the passage:

Genesis 28:10-19

Jacob left Beer-sheba and went towards Haran. He came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And the Lord stood beside him and said, ‘I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.’ Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, ‘Surely the Lord is in this place—and I did not know it!’ And he was afraid, and said, ‘How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.’ So Jacob rose early in the morning, and he took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. He called that place Bethel.



Reflect:

1. Jacob had a dream that altered the course of his life. Have you ever had a dream that changed the course of your life? (Interpreting 'dream' as either a vision while asleep or as an aspiration/life goal)
2. In this time of separation from our church building, where have you found unexpected holy ground?
3. What is this passage calling you to do today? This week?

Pray:

God, we want you to show up in unexpected places and give us visions, too. Open our eyes and our hearts so that no matter where we are we can say, "Surely the Lord is in this place—and I did not know it." Amen.



We are tentatively planning to resume in-person worship on **Sunday, August 9**. As we plan and prepare to gather together as safely as possible, some of our practices will be different. But many will be the same.

Different:

- You will see the sanctuary from a different perspective (seating will be assigned)
- You will be encouraged to use your phone/device to access the bulletin and read scripture (Yes, phones are okay in church!)
- You will get to look into people's eyes (because the rest of their face will be covered by a mask)
- You will have extra time in your day (because worship will be brief to minimize time inside the building)

Same:

- Beautiful inspiring music will be played
- Friends will be excited to see you
- Joys and Concerns will be shared
- Sermons will be preached (but Pastor Jill won't be able to tell if you are yawning)
- God will be there

As we anticipate gathering together in-person again, we grieve that the experience will look different than before. At the same time, we celebrate all that we learned during this time apart--that the church is deeply important and it so much more than a building. More communication will be forthcoming as we tentatively plan to meet in-person on August 9. Please reach out to a staff member if you have any questions or concerns.

**OUR PATH MAY BE
DIFFERENT BUT OUR
PURPOSE OF JOURNEY IS
THE SAME**

What I am **reading**:
The Invention of Wings
by Sue Monk Kidd

What I have been
watching:
Cooked
(Documentary about the
1995 Heatwave)

What I have been
listening to:
Hamilton Soundtrack
(yes, I am obsessed)

**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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