

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 date 'MAY 13, 2020' is printed at the top center of the image.

MAY 13, 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 continues reading the 14th chapter in the Gospel of John. The passage begins with Jesus reminding the disciples to show their love by following his commandments. Jesus then promises this disciples he will send an advocate to help them after he is gone. This advocate is the Holy Spirit. When we struggle to follow Jesus' commandments the Holy Spirit steps in to nudge us toward love.

Take some time to reflect on John 14:15-21 on the following pages.



Read the passage:

John 14:15-21

‘If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.’ ‘I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.’



Reflect:

1. Jesus says, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." In what ways do you show your love for God?
2. Jesus promises after he leaves an advocate will come to help his disciples. How has God been an advocate during your life?
3. What is this passage calling you to do today? This week?

Pray:

Jesus, even though you promised that you would never leave us orphaned or alone, during this time of isolation we feel alone and afraid. Comfort our fears and shower us with your love so that we might overcome our fears and offer your love to others. Amen.



The month of May is Mental Health Awareness Month which the UCC recognizes on Mental Health Sunday, May 17. It is important for the church to support mental health just as much as physical health.

During this time of isolation it is especially important to take care of our own mental health and look out for others. Children and youth may be especially prone to anxiety during this time. Below are guidelines for helping children during this time, but are good tips for all of us:

- Take time to talk with your child about the COVID-19 outbreak in age appropriate ways.
- Reassure your child that they are safe.
- Let them know if it is ok if they feel upset.
- Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn how to cope from you.
- Limit children's exposure to media coverage.
- Help your child to have a sense of structure.
- Be a role model; take breaks, get plenty of sleep, exercise, and eat well.
- Connect with your friends, family members, church members and rely on your social support systems.

In Illinois if you need emotional support text TALK to 552020 and a mental health professional will get in touch with you

What I have been
reading:
Wolfpack by Abby
Wambach

What I have been
listening to:
Brandi Carlile -
Bear Creek

What I've been
watching:
Disney Sing-A-Long

**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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