

NOVEMBER 25, 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 from Jeremiah 33:10-16. With this Sunday being the First Sunday of Advent, this passage contains God's promise to "cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David" which is Jesus. In this passage God promises to bring restoration to a community that feels hopeless because they have had many years of hardship. Isn't that a message we need to hear today?

Reflect more on this passage on the following pages.



Read the passage:

Jeremiah 33:10-16

Thus says the Lord: In this place of which you say, “It is a waste without human beings or animals,” in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate, without inhabitants, human or animal, there shall once more be heard the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voices of those who sing, as they bring thank offerings to the house of the Lord: “Give thanks to the Lord of hosts, for the Lord is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!” For I will restore the fortunes of the land as at first, says the Lord. Thus says the Lord of hosts: In this place that is waste, without human beings or animals, and in all its towns there shall again be pasture for shepherds resting their flocks. In the towns of the hill country, of the Shephelah, and of the Negeb, in the land of Benjamin, the places around Jerusalem, and in the towns of Judah, flocks shall again pass under the hands of the one who counts them, says the Lord. The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: “The Lord is our righteousness.”



Reflect:

1. In this reading Jeremiah reminds the people of the Lord's promise to them. How does that promise relate to hope?
2. Why is Advent called the season of hope?
3. What would your life be like without hope?
4. What can you do to bring hope to people you know?
5. What is this passage calling you to do today? This week?

Pray:

God, there is a lot going on in our lives and world that make us feel hopeless. Help us to cling to your promises. When we feel despair, give us daily glimpses of your hopeful presence in our lives. Amen.



In this time when we are not able to sing our favorite Christmas carols together, let us spend Advent looking at the history behind some of our favorite songs:

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

*O come, O come, Emmanuel, And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here, Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

This hymn, originally in Latin, takes us back over 1,200 years to monastic life in the 8th- or 9th-century. Seven days before Christmas Eve monasteries would sing the “O antiphons” in anticipation of Christmas Eve. British hymnologist J.R. Watson provides a context for the antiphons saying: “The antiphons, sometimes called the ‘O antiphons’ or ‘The Great O’s’, were designated to concentrate the mind on the coming Christmas, enriching the meaning of the Incarnation with a complex series of references from the Old and New Testaments.”

Put together, the first letter of the second word of each antiphon spells SARCORE. If read backwards, the letters form a two-word acrostic, “Ero cras,” meaning “I will be present tomorrow.” The “O Emmanuel” antiphon was traditionally sung on the night before Christmas Eve, revealing the meaning of the liturgical riddle through the completion of the acrostic.

When you hear this carol may you feel connected to Christians throughout history who have eagerly awaited Christ’s birth.

Excerpts from: <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-o-come-o-come-emmanuel>

What Pastor Jill is
reading:
CHRISTMAS BOOKS!

What Pastor Jill is
watching:
CHRISTMAS MOVIES!!!

What Pastor Jill is
listening to:
CHRISTMAS MUSIC!!



**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
Lombard, IL 60148
630-629-2630**

info@firstchurchoflombard.org