

MAY 19, 2021

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 passage for this Sunday is Acts 2:1-21. This is the story of Pentecost. We often call Pentecost the birthday of the church because it is when the Holy Spirit blew through the gathering of disciples and gave them the ability and courage to speak about Jesus. May the Pentecost story inspire us to be brave and bold in sharing the Good News of God's love for everyone.

Reflect more on this passage on the following pages.



Read the passage:

Acts 2:1-21

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. Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” 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: ‘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. Why do you think the ability to speak in multiple languages was the first gift the Holy Spirit gave to the disciples?
2. How do you see the Holy Spirit at work in and through you?
3. Pentecost is described as the birthday of the church. What would the church be like without the Holy Spirit?
4. What is this passage calling you to do today? This week?

Pray:

Thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit that blows into our lives and inspires us. May we be open to speak your truth in ways that everyone can understand. Amen.



Beginning Sunday, April 11, 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.
or

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 Fridays), 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.

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 remain with their families or go directly to Sunday School.
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.