

MAY 12, 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 Luke 24:44-53. This is Jesus' final moments with the disciples before he ascends into heaven. I don't remember learning this story as child in Sunday School, but as an adult it has become a meaningful part of my faith. How amazing it is to think about Jesus returning to God and bringing our humanness back to God! Jesus' ascension completes the circle that began at the incarnation when Jesus was born.

Reflect more on this passage on the following pages.



**Read the passage:**

**Luke 24:44-53**

Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and they were continually in the temple blessing God.



**Reflect:**

1. Have you in the past considered Jesus' ascension important? Why or why not?
2. How is the knowledge of the Ascension significant to us as Christians today?
3. In the passage Jesus opens the disciples' minds and explains the scriptures. What scripture(s) do you wish Jesus would explain to you?
4. What is this passage calling you to do today? This week?

**Pray:**

Jesus, your ascension brings up some abandonment issues for us. We don't like to be left behind. Give us the courage to carry on your ministry and remember that your spirit is always with us. 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.