

## *“Into A New Land”*

*After the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: "Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them - to the Israelites.*

*I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses.*

*Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates, to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.*

*Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land, I swore to their ancestors to give them. Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so, you may be successful wherever you go. Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1)*

We will leave this desert of Coronavirus, of ~~house-arrest~~ sheltering in place. We will go forth – wearily, unsure, but forward we will go into our new and different future. We do not know the way, we do not know what it will look like, but we do know – God will be with us wherever we go.

We need to be ready to cross the river, to move forward. Be strong and move as God calls us. Into the unknown we go, knowing God will never forsake us. We are not alone. We will be careful to walk according in God's grace, to keep God's Word, to not be afraid or discouraged as we go forward into a new land, a new normal.

We all face losses and it's scary to go into the unknown. But God tells us to not be afraid, not to be discouraged, for God will go with us, into the unknown. God promises this will not be the end, we will have a new future, and it won't be all bad. God will give us success in our endeavors. It'll be different, we just don't know what it will look like. We will put one foot in front of the other and we will continue the journey – with God.

“Get ready to cross the Jordan River.” It's time to get ready to enter into our new normal. Wednesday, the Governor announced a staggered reopening of the state. The stay at home order lifts Sunday.

In the first phase, all vulnerable people should continue to stay at home. That includes those over the age of 65 and anyone with underlying health conditions.

In order to be good neighbors, to follow the Golden Rule, to care for our people, St. James **will NOT be open for worship this Sunday, April 26.** This Sunday's service will again be a Vimeo recording and the link to participate in this service will be sent to you in the Sunday morning email.

Your council meets via Zoom this Sunday. We will be cautious and will be working to make sure the church is ready to meet the mandates, that we sanitize and are able to maintain physical distancing – so we can have more than 10 people within the church at one time. We will keep you informed of our reopening date.

We are anxious to gather together. We long to have our hearts burn within us as we hear the Word of God proclaimed. We long to see Jesus in the breaking of the bread. As we long to taste the bread and wine, we will not be discouraged, we will be strong and courageous. Soon, we will be together again to worship our risen Lord.

I bid you peace.

*Pastor Tonia*