

Greetings Friends at LUMC,

As you may know, Pastor Elizabeth is on vacation. As your lay leader I am filling in while she is taking a much needed rest. Please remember to pray for her as she takes on more and more responsibilities as our spiritual leader. As I have found out, doing a weekly service is one thing, but adding in the technology aspect creates a new level of spiritual leadership.

I will be recording the worship this week and posting it on facebook. You are welcome to view it anytime, but you also may view it as a group on Sunday morning at 9:30 if you wish. I will post it on Saturday, probably afternoon or evening. Because I am a "visitor" posting, you will need to go to the Lisbon United Methodist Church facebook page, find the row of words under the Learn More Banner (home-about- photos-...), click on community, then scroll down until you find the most recent video of me. There are two tests that I did on Wednesday with a pink shirt on. You don't have to watch those. I tried to delete one, but I couldn't.

Please remember to pray for those on our prayer list. During our outdoor service we offered prayers for those receiving our community meals. They are Nancy Samson, Connie Doboga, and Jim Ross. We prayed for Andy and Priscilla Higgins, and celebrated with Ginny Barden for the improved health of her daughter-in-law Anne Marie. Barbara Reid is grateful for the cards she received. Below is a prayer sent by the conference that may help you as you prepare for Sunday.

God of hope, you opened the gate of heaven for Jacob, a fugitive, deceiver, and goal-driven man. Fueled by his desires for a better life, he chose a life of turmoil and dishonesty. We imagine his night in the desert, which was mixed by hope and fear, light and darkness, assurance and uncertainty, pride and shame, and belief and doubt. Certainly, he achieved something, something important, tangible and promising. But, at the same time, he lost something valuable: integrity, relationship, accountability, and brotherhood.

God of uplifting hope, you sent him an angel in the night of mixed possibilities. You lifted him up to the ladder of transformation. You lifted him up to the gate of heaven from the land of earthly desires. Clothed in a new sense of hope, he found YOU at the gate of new possibilities. You opened a much bigger path for Jacob than he desired: 'he shall be the blessings for the families of the earth.'

God of ever-present hope, be present in our world of wanting, of aspiring, and of craving. In the midst of need for our shared efforts to climb the hill of pandemic, racial injustice, grieving, and suffering, we struggle to find the gate of possibilities and hope. Oh Lord, you are perfect, but we are not: you are loving and gracious, but we are self-centered and narrow-minded; you are empathetic and compassionate, but we are careless and insensible. God of healing and compassionate love, come near us and bind us together in constructing the foundation for a healthy and embracing community full of peace, love, and care in this desert of human sufferings. We have spent the night of mixed possibilities like Jacob. Lift us up on the ladder of hope and salvation, so that we can glimpse the light of new possibilities. Help and guide us to be the blessings for all the families of the earth. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

***Rev. Jinyong Choi, Pastor at North Boston Korean UMC in Andover, MA; Commonwealth West District***

God's peace and love be with you,

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