

Sunday April 26, 2020 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church

**Bible Study – 1 Peter 1:17-23
Setting Our Faith and Hope**

Open with a word of prayer

Gathering Time (5-10 minutes). In pairs or groups of three, share a story that brings you hope.

Group Dialogue (Approximately 30 minutes)

1 Peter 1:17-23. Context. There is a certain correspondence between this week's reading from 1 Peter and Peter's Pentecost sermon in Acts: in both, Peter speaks of the gift of salvation that has come through the crucified and risen Christ and that demands a response from those who trust in God. In Acts Peter was addressing Jews who were convinced by his message, had "called on the name of the Lord," were baptized, and looked for the day when God's faithful would be gathered from exile into the kingdom. But in 1 Peter the author addresses a Gentile audience that had already been baptized and saved into exile: as Christians in a non-Christian world they were cut off from much of their former lives. But they were still to love those amongst whom they found themselves – the opening verse here alludes to God judging/loving "all people impartially according to their deeds" even, perhaps especially, those who had not been baptized. In his Pentecost sermon Peter had promised the gift of the Holy Spirit; here, that gift takes the concrete form of "genuine mutual love."

Read: 1 Peter 1:17-23

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn't make sense to you in the story?

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

Read 1 Peter 1:17-23 again

Some reflection questions – Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

- Hope is a key concept for Peter. Read the following verses: 1 Peter 1:6, 13, 21; 3:15. What do we learn about hope from these verses?
- What does Peter command in the following verses 1 Peter 1:8, 15, 17, 22? [8 – Believe and rejoice; 15 – become holy; 17 – live in reverent fear; 22 – love one another deeply] How might the first and the last of these commands help us to do the middle two commands? [Becoming holy and living reverently are based on believing God's work within us and loving our neighbors as our self.]
- What do you think it means to "live in reverent fear" (v. 17)?
- What does Peter's contrast of "perishable things like silver or gold" with "the precious blood of Christ" highlight? [Even the finest commodities and things of this world will not sustain you like a relationship with Christ (remember blood often denotes life).]

- What might Peter’s statement “Through him [Jesus] you have come to trust in God” mean?
- How does what Peter has said lead to his command to “love one another deeply from the heart” (v. 22)? [We can only do so through our relationship with God through Jesus Christ.]
- It is routinely said this time of year that Christians are Easter people. How do you think Peter would explain what it means to be Easter people based on this passage? [Especially see v. 23.]

Prayer (10 minutes). Each person prays sharing their answer the following statements:

I ask God for....

I thank God for.....

After all, have shared, pray the closing prayer

Sending Forth (2 minutes). Ask for a volunteer to lead the group or read the following prayer in unison:

God of the Resurrection. You have clearly demonstrated your faithfulness and love to the world through sending the Son, Jesus Christ. Through a trust-filled relationship with Jesus Christ, we experience joy, peace, hope, and love. May we live as Easter people this week. Amen. And now we pray The Lord’s Prayer....

Our Father who art in Heaven
hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power
and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.