Living in a Strange Land
Next Steps
Jeremiah 29

Opening Prayer:
Give me a pure heart that I may see Thee,
A humble heart that I may hear Thee,
A heart of love that I may serve Thee,
A heart of faith that I may abide in Thee. (Dag Hammarskjold, 1905-1961)

Breaking the Ice:
- What did you agree/disagree with the sermon this week?
- If you moved as a child, what are your memories? How did you feel?
- Have you ever visited a country where you didn't speak the language? What was that experience like?

Wrestling with the Word:
This week's reading is to the exiles who are living in a strange land. The listeners of Jeremiah were living in refugee camps in Babylon. Read Jeremiah 29:1-23.
- Imagine yourself as a refugee and one of the exiles. What do you hear? What is most comforting? Painful?
- V. 10-14 is an often quoted and memorized passage. Why do you believe that to be? What is the 'hitch' to the wonderful promise?
- V. 11-14 highlight how God will bring good out of the bad situation. When have you experienced this in your life? How did/does God want to use that?
- As our state is moving from red to yellow to green, what is Jeremiah 29 trying to teach you? How can you apply this scripture to your life?

Read Jeremiah 30:1-24.
- This passage is part of a section of chapters called 'The Book of Consolation.' What words of consolation do you need to hear in this time? What verses give you comfort?
- Some scientists and experts are saying that our lives will always be different from what they were before pandemic. What does Jeremiah 29 and 30 teach you about your world and how to live in a 'new normal'?
- Despite all of the losses of this pandemic, where do you see God wanted to restore in your life?

Next Steps:
- Reflect on your life since the pandemic, beginning sometime in mid-March. What changes have you experienced? Pray with God on how to use those experiences.
- Make a list of all of the blessings you've experienced in this time. Post it as a reminder.

Prayer for the Week:
"God of life, there are days when the burdens we carry chafe our shoulders and wear us down; when the road seems dreary and endless, the skies grey and threatening; when our lives have no music in them, and our hearts are lonely, and our souls have lost their courage. Flood the path with light, we beseech Thee; turn our eyes to where the skies are full of promise..."
--Saint Augustine,