

Dear Friends,

Among church folks, colleagues, family members, and friends, almost every conversation I have these days includes talk about receiving the coronavirus vaccine. Here are some of the questions we discuss:

Have you been vaccinated? How did you get an appointment? Where did you go? How long did the appointment last? What vaccine did you receive? Did you have any side effects? What were they? When's your second shot? Where are you going for that? (And just in case you are wondering – or even if you are not wondering – I am pleased to report that I received my second shot on Monday!)

Whether you've been injected with Moderna or Pfizer or Johnson & Johnson, I think it's accurate to say that in addition to the ingredients of each vaccine, you are also receiving *a shot of hope*. Moreover, the healthcare providers giving the vaccinations are also experiencing this hope.

A few weeks ago, *The Washington Post* published an article that said, "The people giving the shots are seeing hope, and it's contagious." The article described the joy that vaccinators are feeling whether it be in a parking lot, baseball stadium, shopping mall, convention center, pharmacy or medical office – just to name a few locations!

Sometimes the shots are brought to the place where people live. Arizona CVS pharmacist Justin Ellis has a roving vaccination clinic that he takes to assisted-living and nursing homes in the Phoenix area. Noting the isolation and deprivation that many residents have suffered during the past year, he says that it's very common for people to break into tears of joy when they are vaccinated.

Medical personnel who have faced terrible burdens in caring for Covid-19 patients are particularly uplifted by their new role. The article stated, "For health-care workers, the opportunity to administer the vaccine has become its own reward: Giving hope to others has given them hope, too. In some clinics, so many nurses have volunteered for vaccine duty that they can't accommodate them all." Christina O'Connell, a clinic director at the University of New Mexico said, "I don't think I've ever had an experience in my career that has felt so promising and so fulfilling."

These vaccinations are real – and figurative – *shots in the arm!* They bring hope to the vaccinator as well as to the vaccinated.

This evening, we will have the third and final discussion of our Lenten series on "Three Words of Faith." The Zoom invitation is below. Come to share or simply to listen as we talk about hope. What brings you hope? What has brought you hope this past year? Wear the color green if you would like in celebration of St. Patrick's Day, and be blessed by his words:

*May the strength of God pilot us, may the wisdom of God instruct us, may the hand of God protect us, may the word of God direct us. Be always ours this day and for evermore. Amen.*

Yours in faith, hope, and love,

Jane

First Church Portland is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: First Church Portland's Lenten Series: Hope

Time: Mar 17, 2021 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88330474202?pwd=Um9oNmI0dWRUTE9DS1JtNXVDSnZJdz09>

Meeting ID: 883 3047 4202

Passcode: 203875

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kc0czJly4X>