The reading of Holy Scripture together as a community has been a central part of Christian worship throughout the Church’s long history. It has deep roots within the practices of Israel, and sustains God’s people today.

We read Scripture together not simply to learn new information about God’s dealings with humanity in the past, but to listen in faith to what the Living God is saying to us His people today. It is in fact a profound act of worship, a turning of our full attention to our Lord. We listen to His Word to draw closer to Him, and to one another in love.

After every Scripture Reading this morning, we’re all invited to take a few moments in silence to reflect upon the passage, and how God’s Spirit might be addressing us through it, as individuals and as a community.

In those moments, pay attention to any words, ideas, or images that stand out to you. In the silence afterwards, ask God to help you hear His heart for you today.

After the Gospel is read, and we’ve taken a moment in silence to reflect upon it, I’ll share a few reflection questions that Pastor Rob has prepared to help us dig in a bit deeper.

*Reflection Questions*

* In our First Reading from the Book of Genesis, an isolated and troubled Jacob is surprised by a gracious vision from God: reaffirming the LORD’s commitment to him and reassuring him of God’s intention to bless him, and to bless the world *through* him.
* In our Second Reading from Romans, St. Paul holds two important truths together: That in Christ Jesus, we have *already* been drawn into the family of God, blessed to be God’s beloved children… and yet, in the present time we will still share in the struggles and suffering of our world, and need to hold on to God in faith and hope, letting His longsuffering love shape and guide our lives.
* In our Gospel Reading, Jesus tells a parable about a field with both wheat and weeds growing together as an image of our world, where good and evil often grow up together and are impossible for us humans to separate. This parable invites us to trust that one day the Living God *will* sort out our world (and even our lives!), calling us to faithfulness *here and now*, even when “the weeds” may seem so strong.
* **How has the Living God offered you a surprising word of hope, or an encouragement to trust Him, even when things are difficult?**
* **What are the ways that God is calling us to be faithful to Him today? Are there “weeds” at work in us we must do more to resist? Is God calling us to nurture His “good seed” in us so that it grows even stronger?**
* **What else is God’s Spirit saying to you today?**