

To the Saints, in Christ, who call Trinity UMC their sheepfold. Lord, in Your Mercy!

Beginning this Sunday, November 22, you are invited to make a few choices. Please choose how and when you will gather to worship God. I ask that you only attend the In-Person Sanctuary Service you choose from the following schedule. I am not asking us to divide. I am asking us to multiply our Desire to be merciful like the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

In-Person Gatherings

Sunday School: 9 am in the Fellowship Hall

Early Worship Service: 10 am in the Sanctuary.

Late Worship Service: 11 am in the Sanctuary.

(I ask that we not move from one service to another. My hope is to keep In-Person Worship open in at least one of the services.)

Social Media Gatherings

Sunday School: Robert's Facebook Live at 9 am

Sanctuary Worship: Trinity's Facebook Live at 10 am

Worship in Robert's Garden: Robert's Facebook page. It is usually posted by 9 am on Sunday mornings and available all week.

Worship at Home: If you canceled Worship at Home because you were attending In-Person Worship and want it delivered again, please call Robert at 423-863-7622

In Person Discipleship

Mondays at 6 pm in the Parsonage. (A Study of a Beth Moore book led by Christy Smith)

Tuesdays at 11 am in the Parsonage. (Divine Reading of Matthew's Gospel. Group Led!)

Social Media Discipleship

Wednesday at 7 pm on Zoom. (James Bryan Smith's book Good and Beautiful God.)

I am aware of separation of Church and State. I am not submitting to the State. I am submitting to the Lord Jesus Christ who says, I desire mercy, not sacrifice. I am not asking for agreement. I am offering mercy.

I wear a face mask not because some leader tells me. I see it as an act of mercy. I social distance not because I am afraid. I see it as an act of mercy. I try to offer mercy to each of you by being patient with your choices, opinions, and fears.

As your pastor, I hold an office of power and authority! Some people call the pastor a Leader. Other people call the pastor a Shepherd. A Shepherd tends, nurtures and cares for the flock. Most days I feel torn between being a Leader or being a Shepherd. As a Leader, with power and authority. I can justify my reasons for sacrificing the people Jesus identifies as the

“harassed and helpless.” Matthew 9: 36. The Shepherd in me desires to tend, nurture, and care for God’s children.

I ask for your patience even as we walk in this Valley of Darkness. The Lord is our Shepherd!

Don Henley sings, “To want what I have and take what I am given with grace. For this I pray...” The door into God’s Grace is Jesus Mercy. Many seek it. Few find it. Even fewer live it.

One in Christ,

Robert Burlingham, pastor, Elder, Teacher of the Law, and recovering Pharisee.