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# WORSHIP AT HOME

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## Announcement regarding Public Worship and In Person



### Gatherings of Trinity United Methodist Church

As of August 6th, 2020 public worship services and in person meetings such as Bible studies and business meetings are cancelled until further notice.

What we experience as Chaos, God sees as potential mercy, grace, and love.

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Let us experience this time of Fasting as an opportunity to submit

ourselves to the power and authority of Jesus who promised the time people like us will worship in Spirit and Truth.

**Who Makes the Decision:** The United Methodist Book of Discipline states that the pastor has authority regarding worship and the temporal life of the congregation. The Pastor, however, serves as the fiduciary agent of the Local Congregation, The District Superintendent, the Bishop of the Annual Conference, and God

Trinity's approved Covid 19 Protcols guides your pastor in his fiduciary capacity.

**Reasoning:** The Bishop and District Superintendents use the following Covid -19 Risk Map and risk levels to determine the if and when we hold in person gatherings. <https://globalepidemics.org/key-metrics-for-covid-suppression/>.

When a county has an average of more than 10 new actives cases reported within a moving 7 day period, per 100,000 people, the risk of spreading the disease makes in person gatherings **harmful** to the congregation, and community.

Look inside your heart-soul-mind and you will become discontent.

Robert

On Thursday of this week the number of new active Covid-19 cases was 12.2 and rising. This morning we are at 13.4. A week ago last Thursday we were at 6.1.

We are simply following our approved Covid -19 Protocol.

**Authority and Opinion:** Everyone has an opinion. To whom do you



**God is Spirit.  
Jesus reveals  
the Truth of  
Suffering,  
Death, and  
Eternal Life.**

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**Worship makes  
the Physical  
Body, Invisible  
Spirit, and  
Soul One Being  
who reflects  
God!**

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give authority. Some have the opinion that the pandemic is a conspiracy. Others draw their opinion from their political party. Opinions speak about “Herd Immunity.” I encourage you to read the following definition of herd immunity.

“When most of a population is immune to an infectious disease, this provides indirect protection—or herd immunity (also called herd protection)—to those who are not immune to the disease.

For example, if 80% of a population is immune to a virus, four out of every five people who encounter someone with the disease won’t get sick (and won’t spread the disease any further). In this way, the spread of infectious diseases is kept under control. Depending how contagious an infection is, usually **70% to 90% of a population needs immunity to achieve herd immunity.**”

### What is Worship?

In this issue of Worship at Home I focus on the Spiritual Nature of Worship. Let me be clear! Physical Worship makes born again , John 3:16 Believers, of Jesus Christ. Worshipping in Spirit and Truth leads those John 3:16 Believers to grown up in Christ, experience being ed by the Holy Spirit, and Being sent as the Father sent Jesus. (See John 3:16; John 14:12; John 20:21-23)

Furthermore, I see our current level of Worship-Maturity in Jesus encounter with the woman at the well. Like us, she had been taught the physical nature of worship. Listen to Jesus’ promise. The time of which he speaks is NOW!

“Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. **24** God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.” (John 4)

Therefore all popular worship styles like Traditional, Contemporary, Praise, Pentecostal... have ONE thing in common. They are all in person, physical gatherings that are outwardly focused. They teach us to sing, pray, listen to leaders, baptize in water, fellowship, and bring others into the worshipping community through outreach and mission. We have been so busy making people like us that we have missed the SOUL- Purpose of Worship! Worship transforms people to be sent as the Father sent the Son!

Worship in Spirit leads us not into temptation but into an experience of Jesus’ Mercy delivering you/us from the CURSE! The word Curse means to harm self or neighbor through intention, word, or action. Opinions quickly become a Curse.

Worship in Truth leads us not to commit evil but into an experience of Jesus' Grace. Grace heals the evil-memories ingrained in our thinking and feelings. Grace teaches us to think, feel, and act like Jesus in the midst of daily suffering.

Worship in Spirit and Truth leads us into an experience of being sent into this world of suffering and death as the Father sent the Son.

Jesus was sent by the Father to fulfill three things! Jesus delivers us from sin through God's Mercy. Jesus heals our heart and minds through the Grace of abiding in His presence. Jesus restores our souls to reflect God's image by sending us as the Father sent him.

Now is the time to experience worship in Spirit and Truth. To get there we must let the Holy Spirit lead us into the wilderness of our hearts and minds. In the wilderness, Jesus reveals the Truth! The truth is that our "earthly nature" is the Curse of worshipping self, denomination and liturgy, and creed as shadows of our salvation kept hidden in Christ who is seated at the right hand of the Father! The truth is that our fallen, evil nature worships Satan? The truth is that God has chosen to pour the fulness of His Holy Spirit into hearts and minds focused on being the Curse and defending self, powers, and institutions with Evil.

Opinions are part of our "earthly nature." Proving our opinions used to make us "right and good" unleashes all kinds of evil. Friends, Jesus cleansed the temple. Will we?

### **The Power of Faith**

Faith in our earthly nature trust the power of Harm, the Curse. Faith in anger, wrath, malice...trust the power of Satan. Faith lets our earthly nature be to let evil go, and let Christ in to deliver, heal, and send us to worship in Spirit and Truth.

One in Christ,  
Robert

## **Centering Hymn: Standing on the Promise**

Standing on the promises (John 4:23-24) I cannot fall,  
Listening ever moment to the Spirit's Call, (Worship in Spirit)  
Resting in my Savior as my all in all, (Worship in Truth)  
Standing on the Promises of God.

## **Prayer**

**Prayer of Intercession:** Here we lift the people we love into God's presence. Nancy Toney, Joe Toney, their family. Donna Mahan's granddaughter, Kaylee. Kathleen's daughter,

Sue. Kenny and Martha Spurlock's grandson, Nicholas. Just to name a few. Please add yours.

**Prayers of Petition:** Give thanks for God's Promises. Petition God to guide you, your family, community, nation, and world to trust and live His Promises of mercy that delivers us from sin, grace that heals our hearts and minds, and love that restores our souls to reflect the Father.

**Prayers of Spiritual Discernment: Uniting the Body, Spirit, and Soul to reflect God's Image.**

Life teaches us the power of choice. To make Kingdom of Heaven choices Paul teaches us the practice of awareness. Awareness Lets reality Be. Let the reality of Christ Be. Let the reality of our Earthly Nature Be. Let the reality of Evil Be. We may choose to reflect these realities. We do not have the power to change their reality. Christ is Blessed and always will be. Earthly Nature is cursed and always will be. Satan is Evil and always will be. Prayer is the Holy Sanctuary we enter to become aware of reality. Choice becomes truly available when see Christ's will, our Earthly Nature's will, and Satan's will in us.

**Are you Being the reflection of God through Jesus Christ as led by the Holy Spirit? Paul teaches us how to be aware of Christ - Being.**

Colossians 3:12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Ask God to show you where you let the Holy Spirit clothe you in Christ. This exercise has nothing to do with bragging or ego. It is designed to train your heart and mind to remember the experience of being in God's Grace. This is what it means to worship in Spirit and Truth.

**Are you Being the reflection of the World through Selfishness as led by your "earthly nature"? Paul teaches us how to be aware of Being our Earthly Nature.**

Colossians 3: 5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.[b] 7 You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived.

Ask God to show you where you let your Earthly Nature clothe you in the Way of the World. Imagine your self being led by the Holy Spirit to see your Earthly Nature for the sole

purpose of being delivered from its temptation. Imagine yourself at the foot of the cross listening to Jesus say, "Father, forgive \_\_\_\_\_ he/she does not know what he/she is doing." This awareness teaches us to remember Christ is Merciful. Receiving his Mercy is worship in Spirit and Truth.

**Are you Being the reflection of Satan through Evil as led by temptations? Paul teaches us how to be aware of Being Evil.**

Colossians 3: 8 But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11 Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

Ask God to show you where you let Satan tempt you and clothe you in evil. This exercise teaches us that we are saved by grace, not futile attempts to changing reality. Look at how you use labels to align yourself with Right and Good and justify your earthly nature as good and your evil as right justice.

Being worships the Lord of the reality you CHOOSE to let your thinking and feeling become action.

Once we comprehend that true choice comes through awareness of Three Kingdoms battling for our Being, we practice "Prayer Without Ceasing." Friends we are not in a battle with one another. Our battle is with the invisible spiritual forces of the Holy, the Cursed, and the Evil.

Spiritual Discontent happens the moment we first become aware we are in a spiritual battle. The first time I experienced such awareness my soul cried the words Jesus spoke from the cross, "My God, my God why have you forsaken me." I felt forsaken but also believed God to be my God.

## Homily

IN his book ***Maximum Faith*** George Barna describes Ten Stops in the Christian Life.

**Stop 1:** Ignorant of the concept or existence of sin

**Stop 2:** Aware of and indifferent to sin

**Stop 3:** Concerned about the implications of personal sin

**Stop 4:** Confess sins and ask Jesus Christ to be their Savior

**Stop 5: *Commitment to faith activities***

**Stop 6:** Experience a prolonged period of spiritual discontent

**Stop 7:** Experiencing personal brokenness

**Stop 8:** Choosing to surrender and submit fully to God: radical dependence

**Stop 9:** Enjoying a profound intimacy with and love for God

**Stop 10:** Experiencing a profound compassion and love for humanity

His interviews indicate that only 11% of adults get past stop 5, and only 2% get past stop 7.

I contend that Covid 19 has ushered many Believers into “Spiritual Discontent.” In Spiritual Discontent we encounter our physical life coming to terms with the invisible spirit - energy of the heart and mind. For a clear picture of Spiritual Discontent read Matthew 4.

In chapter 3, we heard God say, “This is my Son, with whom I am well please.” Jesus just emerged out of the physical water of John’s Baptism. Immediately, Jesus is driven by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness. Jesus fasts for 40 day. The physical things, yes, His most basic needs become scarce. Through Jesus’s temptation we see how physical needs deliver him, and us, into conflict in grasping our spiritual needs. Awareness of the difference between physical needs and spiritual needs are essential for growing up in Christ Jesus, moving through Stop 6, loving self, God, and neighbor.

The institutional Church is in steep decline because we have so few leaders who have experienced the blessedness of spiritual discontent, personal brokenness, and surrendering to God’s mercy, grace, and love.

Listen to Jesus’s awareness of physical needs and spiritual needs. “Man does not live by bread alone, physical need, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God, spiritual need.” Do not confuse the physical, written words of scripture with hearing the still small voice of God! The goal of Prayer is to hear God’s voice, not impress God with how many verses of Scripture you can quote.

When Satan tempts Jesus to physically prove what scripture says about Him, Jesus says, “Do not put the Lord your God to the test.” In the Lord’s Prayer we say, “Lead us (me) not into temptation, but deliver us (me) from evil.” The temptation to fill spiritual needs with physical things and prove doctrines to be the only right and good leads us into our earthly nature and to justify evil of all kinds!

When Satan tempts Jesus with possession of all of the physical kingdoms of earth; Jesus responds, Worship the Lord your God only.



Are you aware of your physical needs and spiritual needs? Have you or are you suffering Spiritual Discontent?

I have experience with Spiritual Discontent. At Barna's Stop 6, I come face to face with the truth. Physical things cannot satisfy the heart and mind's hunger and thirst for Spiritual food and drink. Right and Good Values, ethics, and morals are the highest good of our earthly nature. Like the Law of Moses, moral failure serves as a sign and a symptom of the "poor in spirit." Jesus didn't tell those who made him suffer to change. He offered them spiritual food and drink. He offered mercy, grace, and love. These spiritual disciplines transform our hearts and minds. Friends, true change flows through us according to the lord we choose to reflect with our lives.

I appreciate and deeply value public, corporate, physical worship. Joining the congregation in singing "Great is Thy Faithfulness," "He Touched Me", or "Here I Am, Lord" satisfies my need for physical community. Those who find themselves at stops 1-5 leave public, corporate worship services filled to the brim. Their hearts and minds are "correctly" set on physical things like worship through song, creed, liturgy, water baptism, Holy Communion, Bible Study, UMM, UMW, UMYF, Mission Outreach. Commitments to these faith activities and various boards, agencies, and Civic Organizations are physical, daily bread that delivers us from Sin and Self to have compassion, mercy, and love for our neighbors.

Once a person tastes the Spiritual energy of compassion, mercy, and love an unexplainable Discontent begins. The physical things that once filled us to overflowing reveal our spiritual brokenness. If your experience is anything like mine this discontent becomes unrelenting. Thankfully God placed people like Henri Nouwen, Richard Rohr, Anthony De Mello, James Bryan Smith, and the Desert Father's and Mothers in my life. My hope is to journey with as many people as possible from Stop 5 through Stop 6 to experience the Blessedness of Stops 7-10.

All of the Great Spiritual Teachers echo Jesus. Those who seek to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for Jesus' sake and the Gospel will find it. Friends, through physical suffering, Jesus reveals the Spirit of Mercy. In physical death, Jesus reveals the Spirit of Grace. In physical resurrection, Jesus reveals the Spirit of Love. For every physical thing God gives the spiritual counterpart. The Spirit of Mercy delivers us from physical suffering by the Spirit of Compassion. The Spirit of Grace delivers us from sin that divides and separates us with Labels, Creeds, and Doctrines into the Kingdom of Heaven, here on earth. The Spirit of Love delivers us from experiencing our Body, Spirit, and Being as separate realms into a place of Oneness with God and neighbor. (Stop 10)

Therefore, Paul says your Life is hidden in Christ who is seated at the right hand of the Father. We live a physical life on earth. At the same time our eternal LIFE is hidden with Christ in Heaven. We suffer in Christ. We died in Christ. We were raised in Christ. Prayer is the experience of being led into the wilderness to meet the spiritual beasts who lives in each of us.

Look inside your heart-soul-mind and you will become discontent. The Holy Spirit often leads me to see my earthly nature give birth to evil. Is it any wonder Jesus prays, "Father,



take this cup"? We all have the beast of our earthly nature living in us. We all have a spirit of evil that becomes incarnate through anger, wrath, malice... This is why Paul counsels us to let our earthly nature die and take off our evil ways!

Friends, the first Five Stops of Barna's Maximum Faith delivers us from sin into the realm of Grace that feels like Spiritual Discontent. God delivers us from sin into Grace to lead us on a Life-Journey of healing our Body, Spirit, and Soul to be One as The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are One.

Many seek the narrow gate that opens into the Kingdom of Heaven. Spiritual Discontent is the narrow road. Personal Brokenness is the Narrow Gate. Many seek it. Few find it. Most who find it turn away. The Broad Road that leads to destruction is paved with our Earthly Nature and Temptations to commit evil. Of those who find it only 2% knock and enter.

The Narrow Gate is described in vivid detail in Matthew 4. We see the Narrow Gate again as Jesus prays in the Garden of Gethsemane. Prayer is the only way I know to remain awake, AWARE, with Jesus.

Jesus reveals the priceless pearls, the treasure hidden in Personal Brokenness. (See Stop 7) He cries my God, my God why have you forsaken me. Listen with spiritual ears to Jesus cry My God, My God. God is hidden in human suffering. Every act that causes Human Suffering touches God, self, and neighbor. SUCH PERSONAL BROKENNESS opens the eyes of the Soul to see and hear Jesus saying "Father forgive them they do not know what they are doing." But the One who knows God has received the keys that unlock the Gate to Life. Mercy is the key that frees us from Suffering. Grace is the key that delivers us into God's Presence. Love is the key that brings our life, which is hidden in Christ, from heaven to earth.

Where are you along Barna's 10 Stops. I am aware that I experience moments of living in Stop 8. Most of my moments, however, are spent journeying again and again through Stop 5 and 6 to abide with the Holy Spirit in Stop 7.

Stop 6 is like being with Jesus in the Wilderness where He is led by the Holy Spirit to be aware of the Earthly Nature and Satan's Evil.

Stop 7 is like being with Jesus on the Cross where he Suffers our earthly nature and temptation to commit evil. It is here we become aware of the Spiritual Power of His mercy.

Stop 8 is like being with Jesus on the Cross while he dies and by faith commits His spirit and ours to God.

Stop 9: At this point in my journey I may only imagine this Stop as the Peace of Christ that compels people to be sent as the Father sent Jesus. Yes, to suffer at the hands of people's earthly nature and evil, die people's power, and rise again and again through the power of mercy, grace, and love.

Stop 10: I intellectually I believe Stop 10 is what Paul calls our life hidden in Christ in Heaven. It is more than I can imagine! But by faith in Christ's mercy, grace, and love I trust that when I see him I will be just like him and I have that same hope for you.

Amen.

## **Benediction: Come Back Quickly to the Lord, UMH # 343**

Come back quickly to the Lord, just come back to the Lord,  
Though you think that you have sinned and aren't fit to be His child,  
God will celebrate with a big feast,  
When repentance brings you Home.  
So, come back to his open arms, come back quickly unto the Lord.