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# WORSHIP AT HOME

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## Call to Worship



Have thine own way, Lord! Have thine own way! Thou art the potter; I am the clay. Mold me and make me after thy will, while I am waiting yielded and still.

**Hebrews  
12:29, "Our God  
is an all  
consuming fire."  
Cleansing and  
Purifying!**

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## Prayer and Confession

Father, we know how to lay things down and take them up again. During a simple meal how many times do we lay down our fork to take up a cup. Your Son tells us there is no greater love than for a disciple to lay down her or his life. Show us the way to lay. Down our ways of living to take up Christ's ways of Life!

Send your Spirit to Truth to show us the way to love as you love us. Give us eyes to see the life we create with our will. After seeing our will, show us Your Will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Most Holy Father, You laid down your life in heaven to take it up earth. Open, again our hearts, to experience such humility. Teach us the way of humility that we may lay down our lives of earth to take up your heavenly ways.

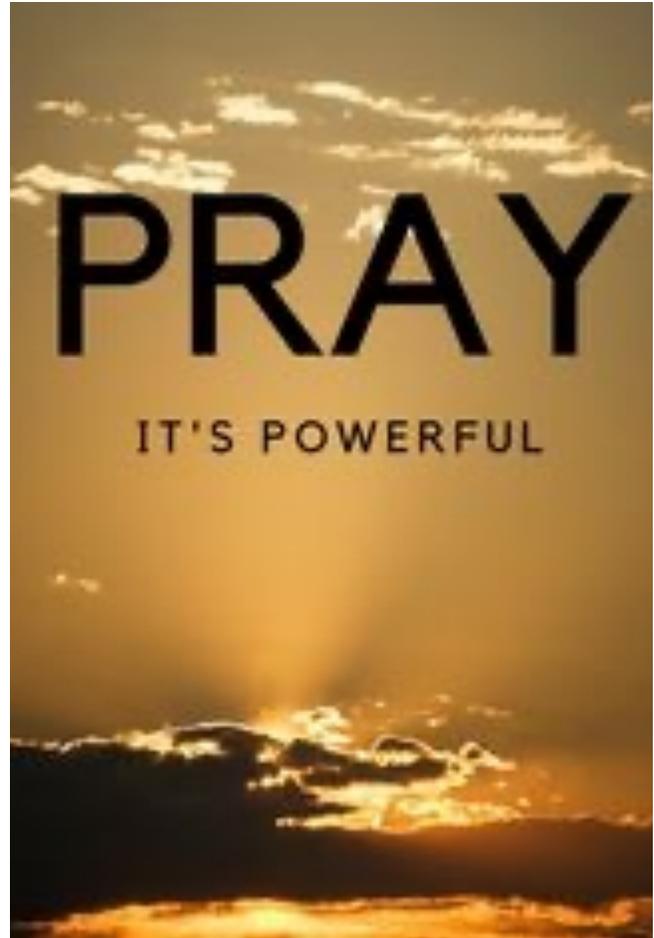
How, Father, may laying down judgement raise us in Mercy? How,

Jesus Christ, may laying down Mercy raise us in Grace? Come Spirit of Truth. Lead us not into the temptation of saving our life. But teach us the way Christ Humbly laid down His life on earth to take it up in heaven.

**What use is a car without an engine? What use is an engine without fuel? What use is fuel without a spark of fire. What use is Living without the Spirit of Truth.**

Father, what would you have me lay down to take up the Cup of New Covenant Love?

Father, what would you have me to take up to have eyes to see you with me, in me, and waiting to reach through me?



*Nulla nunc lectus porttitor vitae pulvinar magna. Sed et lacus quis enim mattis nonummy sodales.*

Father, show me today's sin Jesus took up, suffered, and died, to prove your all consuming fire is full of mercy, grace, and love?

Come, Spirit of Truth, lead us not into the temptation to go back to our ordinary ways of living. Deliver us. Show us again how the greatest lays down their ways of living on earth to take up the Cup of Salvation and celebrate Life in Christ. Amen

### **Suggested Ways to Lay Down Our Ways of Living**

- Call a friend. Lay down your thinking, reasoning, judgement and planning to listen. Then repeat what you believe you heard your friend say. Listening and Hearing reveal our desire to be present with our neighbor as God is present.
- Know your ways, beliefs, ethics, and morals. Unity has nothing to do with thinking, believing, or even acting the same. Our unity with God is revealed by our obedience to receiving and giving Christ' Mercy. Mercy makes the way of Grace. The Way of Grace paves the Way to love one another as Christ first loved us.
- Lay down the Law of Moses to take up the Good News of Jesus Christ.

## **The Word of God for the People of God!**

### **Jesus the True Vine**

**15** "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. **2** He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes<sup>[a]</sup> to make it bear more fruit. **3** You have already been cleansed<sup>[b]</sup> by the word that I have spoken to you. **4** Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. **5** I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. **6** Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. **7** If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. **8** My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become<sup>[c]</sup> my disciples. **9** As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. **10** If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. **11** I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

**12** “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. **13** No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. **14** You are my friends if you do what I command you. **15** I do not call you servants[d] any longer, because the servant[e] does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. **16** You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. **17** I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

## Homily

### Shall We Return to Normal?

Jesus knew the Disciples would be tempted to return to normal. Aren’t we? Aren’t we chopping at the bit to return to normal? The last we saw of the Disciples they had returned to normal. They went fishing. Fishing was their normal. (John 21)

Take a moment to write your normal! What will you do when we are freed from this pandemic-exile? Will you go back to normal? Will you lay down your normal-life to take up Life in Christ?

In today’s text we hear Jesus tell His Disciples, “no one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for a friend.” And look at the friend for whom we are called to lay down our lives.

Jesus says, I no longer call you servants. I call you friend, because I have made known to you everything I have heard from the Father.

But what does it mean to lay down our lives? Is Jesus asking us to die, hang on a cross, and be buried? Do we not remember what Jesus asks Peter in last weeks text? “Peter, do you love me more than these?” I hear Jesus asking me,

Do you love me more than being a servant to the Law of Moses?

Do you love me more than your profession or trade?

Do you love me more than your suffering?

Do you love me more than your fear?  
 Do you love me more than what people think of you?  
 Do you love me more than being right and good?

What will happen when we lay down our normal lives? What will happen when we lay down our servitude to: the Law of Moses; our suffering; our fear; our need to be right? What will happen when being sent as the Father sent the Son becomes our Identity? Imagine the freedom of laying down the labels placed on us by the world and religion!

What Label do you need to Lay Down to be sent as the Father Sent the Son?

When I lay down my jackass ways, I rise a humble donkey who comes in Christ's peace.  
 When I lay down my prejudice, I rise in Christ's mercy.  
 When I lay down my fear, I rise with Faith in Christ's Grace.  
 When I lay down my religion, I rise in Holy Communion with God and Neighbor.  
 When I lay down my politics, I rise in united Community

When I lay down my life, I am a branch being pruned by the Father. The Father's pruning has one purpose. Pruning initiates fruitfulness. The fruit of God's love is planted a seed of mercy. Mercy flowers with Grace. The flower lays down its life to rise as the fruit of Love. Look! Listen! Hear the Good News! The pruning take place in Christ. As the Father sent the Son so too we are sent. At least when we receive the Holy Spirit who leads us not into the temptation to return to normal.

Amen.

### **Dig Deeper**

Read John 20 and 21. The Disciples face three barriers to faith in Christ: Fear of the Jews; Doubt; These Things!

John 20:19-23. Look at Jesus on the cross. See him suffering our sin. See him dead and buried, our penalty. Now, let what you see explain "for fear of the Jews." Watch closely to how Jesus meets the Disciples. In their fear of the Jews he speaks Peace. Notice the nature of Jesus' Peace. It is peace with God. "As the Father has sent me so I send You." But how as Jesus sent. Jesus answers, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

What did the Disciples lay down to receive Peace?  
 What did they lay down to be sent as the Father sent the Son?

John 20: 24-29. Thomas doubted the disciple's Good News. Remember what Jesus said about sin and being sent as the Father sent the Son. "If you forgive the sins of any they are forgiven. If you retain the sins of any they are retained."

Did God send the Son to forgive sin, or retain?

What did the Disciples lay down to offer Thomas a place of Grace to experience Jesus?

What must Trinity UMC lay down to offer such Grace?

John 21:15-19. The temptation to return to normal is typical of people who have eyes to see the world but are blind to Jesus' Kingdom Ways. The suffering, fearful, mind finds solace by longing for the normalcy of the Good Ole Days. As we prepare to be delivered from this exile will we return to normal? Many, if not most, will. I, however, as tempted as I am, long to have a dialog that answers Jesus' question. "Do you love me more than these."

## **Tithes and Offerings:**

Thank you for your continued support of the Church budget. The last tithe deposit meet our weekly need to fulfill our operating budget!

Phil Robbins posted on Facebook that the Backpack Ministry needs our food offerings. Please watch for a message regarding specific hours to drop your offerings off at the Church.

Martha Spurlock graciously keeps our Prayer List. Please update her with information regarding the people you have placed on the list. Friends, prayer is not to tell God what is happening. Prayer lets God know we are paying attention and ask to hear and see His healing, saving, restoring presence in and through our lives. Sharing is Praise and Worship of His Holy Name!!!

## **Benediction**

I Believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord, who was born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, is seated at the. Right hand of the Father, and will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy catholic church, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the Resurrection the body, and life everlasting. Amen