



June 28th, 2020
Roadmap to Resilience III

Twin Towers United Methodist Church

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WORSHIP GUIDE

Before you begin your time of worship, find a comfortable place to be and gather whatever you might need: your Bible, some paper or a notebook, something to write with, your computer/connected device (if you intend to listen to music online), etc. Feel free to adapt this worship guide in any way that makes best sense to you and those you might be gathered with. (Consider inviting someone – a friend, a family member – to worship with you.) Commit to spending the next hour with God.

PRELUDE: Listen and sing along to a song or hymn that blesses your spirit!

WELCOME – Today, if my math is correct, is the 102nd day that you and I have been sheltering in place! Isn't that something? It's important to pause for a moment and just celebrate making it to this moment. It's no small feat and it has not been easy. Some of us have come through deep wells of loneliness, valleys filled with fear and anxiety, steep hills of boredom or overwhelm. We have lost things along the way: long planned for and much anticipated family gatherings, anniversary trips to beautiful places, countless moments with loved ones, counted on dates for medical concerns, summer opportunities, our routines, habits, rituals, and so much more. To say nothing of the lost jobs, lost stability, lost homes, and of course, the lost lives - whether from the coronavirus or from police brutality. Surely there must be space given for our grief of what's been lost. So while "re-opening" is now underway, we might join the psalmist from our scripture today and ask, "How long?" How long will it be until we might feel safe and free again? How long until we can greet one another with hugs and warm embraces? How long until we can worship in our buildings and as one body? How long? Today, I invite you to hold tenderly the feelings wrapped up in that question: feelings of impatience and longing, of anger and helplessness, of hope and persistence, as we consider another aspect of spiritual resilience: perseverance.

OPENING HYMN - "It is Well with My Soul" UMH 377

Listen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FexGqNDBK3g>

*1. When peace, like a river,
attendeth my way,
when sorrows like sea billows roll;
whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.*

*Refrain:
It is well (it is well)
with my soul (with my soul),
it is well, it is well with my soul.*

2. *Though Satan should buffet,
though trials should come,
let this blest assurance control,
that Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
and hath shed his own blood for my soul.*

3. *My sin, oh, the bliss
of this glorious thought!
My sin, not in part but the whole,
is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!*

4. *And, Lord, haste the day when my faith
shall be sight,
the clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
the trump shall resound, and the Lord shall
descend,
even so, it is well with my soul.*

OPENING PRAYER – *You are invited to take a deep breath as you pray:*

As we gather to worship, surrounded by this community of faith,
we dare, O God, to rest in the assurance that “it is well with our soul”.
We dare to let down our guard, our tensions, our anxiety, our laments,
for just a moment,
and trust that your grace is sufficient and present,
here,
now.

We ask that your peace,
your peace that passes all understanding,
your peace that, like a river, does attendeth our way,
flow between us, and around us, and through us now.
May your grace and your peace so fill and nourish us
through this time, Steadfast God,
that we might enter the new week before us
with newfound courage, hope, and perseverance.

We pray this in the name and way of the one who walks with us, holds our hands, and guides
our feet, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

SCRIPTURE - **Psalm 13** (NRSV)

*Today’s lectionary psalm, Psalm 13, is yet another prayer attributed to King David. In just
the first 2 verses, the psalmist asks four times, “How long?” as he pleads for and demands
an answer from God. As you read the scripture, I invite you to recall a time when you
persevered through a difficult time.*

¹ How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?
² How long must I bear pain in my soul,
and have sorrow in my heart all day long?
How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?
³ Consider and answer me, O Lord my God!
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death,
⁴ and my enemy will say, “I have prevailed”;
my foes will rejoice because I am shaken.
⁵ But I trusted in your steadfast love;
my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.
⁶ I will sing to the Lord,
because he has dealt bountifully with me.

This is the Word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God!**

REFLECT -

A few weeks after the pandemic broke, our District Superintendent, Staci Current, began convening weekly zoom calls for the clergy in our district. There must be close to 40 of us. These Tuesday evening calls have become a forum for us to share prayer, resources and best practices, voice struggles and questions, and mutually support and encourage one another. DS Staci ends every call by telling us that she loves us, and then she says: “Please remember, this is not a sprint. It is a marathon. There’s yet a ways ahead of us. Take good care of yourselves.”

Running the 100 meter dash is fundamentally a different thing than running 26.2 miles, isn’t it? It requires different training, different sets of muscles, I’d imagine, and most certainly a very different attitude and mindset. After all, the world record for the 100 meter dash is 9.58 seconds, whereas it is 2 hours, 1 minute, and 39 seconds for the marathon. That’s a significant difference in time! And so what I think DS Staci is counseling us to is to pace ourselves, to take the long view, to not give everything we’ve got all at once, to not burn out, to persist and to persevere. Those are wise words for us pastors, don’t you think, especially through these unpredictable and trying times? But might they also be wise words for us all? And not just through this season of sheltering in place, but for much of life?

Today’s psalm brings home that life can get hard sometimes. It can get lonely sometimes. It can be filled with pain and sorrow and hardship. This psalm brings home how sometimes it might even feel like God has forgotten us, turned away Their face from us. This psalm makes real how sometimes it feels like we’re hanging on by the thinnest of threads, and like “the sleep

of death” has drawn near. This psalm gives voice to the suffering of when we feel like people are against us, out to get us, waiting for us to fail. “How long?” the psalmist cries out again and again and again. It is in and through times like these that persistence and perseverance are called forth, that we must run, not a sprint, but a marathon. Yet the abrupt ending of the psalm in which we find the psalmist turning from his lament to “singing to the Lord” might not feel like we’re given much insight into how we might best do that. Is it a matter of just gritting our teeth and bearing it in some form of patience? Can anything support our run of perseverance? I wonder how you have fueled your perseverance through difficult times?

I want to offer a few possibilities:

It occurs to me that we are still in the season of Pentecost and we might do well to remember that we have a mighty and powerful resource at hand in the Holy Spirit. It was just a month ago that we celebrated Her dramatic coming on that first Pentecost, and reminded of how bold, how courageous, how open and risk-taking it made Peter and the other disciples. But we might also add that the Holy Spirit brought a holy persistence to the disciples also, a persistence that fueled them through all sorts of difficult obstacles as they built the beloved community and sought to be faithful to sharing the love of God in Jesus. It was a persistence that enabled them to be problem-solvers, creative innovators, and adaptors to new circumstances. We witness that same holy persistence in Paul who was tenacious and dogged through prison sentences, jail time, shipwrecks, beatings, and more. Nothing seemed to deter Paul from pressing onwards. So I want to invite you to hold on to the breath prayer of this season: Come, Holy Spirit, come! It’s the simplest of reminders that we do not have to, nor should we try to “get through” on our own. May it be a prayer not just for a day, but for all of our days.

Speaking of Paul: There’s a beautiful passage in Paul’s letter to the Philippians when his passion for Jesus and Jesus’ call comes into full view. It is a perfect illustration of the root meaning of perseverance, or “one who sees through to the end.” Paul writes, “Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord...I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead...this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal, to reach the end of the race, for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.” Paul perseveres through all circumstances, he saw through to the end, because he was clear what was at the end: Jesus and resurrection life! What lies at the end of the marathon for you, Friends?

Are you clear about the goal you are pressing on towards...beyond the current trouble, beyond the present hardship? Does knowing Jesus and living into the fullness of resurrection life fuel your perseverance? Does the hope and promise of God's kingdom revealed, here and now, call you to press on?

I close today with an African American spiritual. Given the context in which spirituals came about - the 250 years of slavery, followed by more than a century of segregation and Jim Crow laws - I think the call to perseverance is somehow woven into every note and beat of spirituals. It is no wonder that so many became the soundtrack for the civil rights movement. Like the psalmist, spirituals call the singer and listener, to look to and trust in God's steadfast love, God's generosity, and like Paul, to keep on pressing towards the goal. As you listen, I invite you to make it your prayer that we all - all, together, in mutual solidarity - might keep on walking, talking, and marching towards freedom land!

Listen to "Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around" here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uJ6mhRZ8LjM>

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE – *Spend time in prayer. What did you hear for yourself through today's scripture and reflection? Talk to God about it. Then lift up the joys and concerns that are in your heart. You might write them down, speak them aloud, or pray them in silence.*

Joys –Where are you witnessing God's persistence and perseverance in yourself and in the world?

Concerns – Where are you yearning for God's persistence and perseverance...for yourself and for the world?

I would be honored to pray with you and for you.

Please send a note via text, mail, or email or give me a call if I can do so.

SHARING OUR GIFTS– *How might you offer yourself and all that you have to God this week? How are you being invited to practice generosity? Spend a moment listening for God's direction.*

You are invited to contribute financially towards the purpose and ministry of TTUMC. We are a congregation committed to being conduits of God's healing in our neighborhood and

beyond, and in so doing, impact the last and the least. You can contribute by mailing in a check, dropping off cash, or giving online via PayPal (visit www.twintowersumc.org). Take a moment and do that now.

CLOSING HYMN - “Guide My Feet” TFWS 2208

Listen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z-WVIppNBls>

Guide my feet, Lord, while I run this race.
Guide my feet, Lord, while I run this race.
Guide my feet, Lord, while I run this race,
for I don’t want to run this race in vain.

Hold my hand...
Stand by me...

BENEDICTION - *(May) Christ dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:17-19)*

NOW GO AND PASS CHRIST’S PEACE!

You are invited to spend the next stretch reaching out. Pick up our directory and consider calling someone you don’t yet know well or someone who might not know others. It doesn’t need to be complicated. Perhaps something as simple as, “Hi! I’m calling to say ‘hello’. How have you been?”



If you are on Facebook, please like and follow our page:

<https://www.facebook.com/ttuncAlameda/>

Scripture for Sunday, July 5th - Psalm 72

This week, please pray for:

- The upcoming “Love Thy Neighbor: Partnering for Racial Justice” Workshops - that the Holy Spirit would work in each of our hearts, bring people together, and enable a powerful, transformative conversation to unfold. (July 5, 12, 19 @ 2:00 p.m.)
- Upcoming Dine & Connect meal (July 6th).