



July 5th, 2020

Roadmap to Resilience IV

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 – There’s been a whole lot of chatter around us about masks lately, hasn’t there? It seems like as the guidelines and public health orders come down for us all to wear masks, there is push back from various quarters about whether to do so or not. All kinds of arguments are used to justify this push back: questioning the efficacy of wearing masks, questioning the possible harm to ourselves, questioning the reality of the coronavirus itself, and - at root - the insistence of “individual/personal freedom”. “I can do what I want! I can put myself at risk if I choose to.” What this perspective seems to forget, however, especially in the midst of a public health crisis, is that our health is bound to one another’s. If any one person gets sick, every other person - strangers or loved ones - that they are connected to, is at risk. There’s also an impact to the health system as a whole. There is no such thing as a solitary, unconnected individual. John Donne the 16th century poet put it like this, “No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main;” The apostle Paul captured the same idea even earlier, when he called Christians - in various letters - to our interconnectedness: “We are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.” (Romans 12:5) From a biblical perspective, could it be that wearing masks has nothing to do with our “rights” but everything to do with the mandate to love; to love one another, to love our neighbor as ourselves? And if we are truly all a part of the main, members one of another, what does it mean for the way we think of resilience? Could it be that our individual resilience - just like our health and wholeness - is tied up with the resilience of our community as a whole? And if so, what might we do to build - not just our own resilience - but our collective resilience? I invite you to hold these questions as we engage scripture and listen for the movement of God’s Spirit throughout our time of worship.

OPENING HYMN - “Come, Let Us Dream” W&S 3157

Listen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QNXEWRo8nTA>

1. *Come, let us dream God's dream again.
Come, one and all, let us ascend
the mountain top where those of old saw
God's new day on earth unfold.*
2. *The lame shall walk, the blind shall see,
the door swing wide, all prisoners free,
the lowly raised, the proud brought low.
This is God's dream: let justice flow.*
3. *When hatred ends and war shall cease,
so all may dwell in deepest peace,
then be assured the time is near
when perfect love casts out all fear.*

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

Could it be, O God, that you have been dreaming before time even began?
Could it be that from the beginning of beginnings,
your longing has been for all of creation's wholeness and flourishing,
and that we your people might come alongside you in that great possibility?
Plant your dream in our hearts, O God,
and let it grow deep and immovable roots.
Water it with your extravagant love and relentless grace,
that in us and through us
others might taste and see the fruit of your dream:
Extraordinary healing,
 of body, mind, and spirit;
Transformative relationships
 of forgiveness, reconciliation, and solidarity;
Abundance and fullness of life
 beginning with the last and the least.
We come to dream with you, O God, through this time of worship. May it be so in the name
of the One who enfleshed and lived your dream, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

SCRIPTURE - Psalm 72 (NRSV)

This week, we turn to Psalm 72. This psalm is thought to have been written for the coronation of a king, King Solomen, to be exact. I invite you to pay attention to the heart of this prayer for a king.

¹ Give the king your justice, O God,

and your righteousness to a king's son.
² May he judge your people with righteousness,
and your poor with justice.
³ May the mountains yield prosperity for the people,
and the hills, in righteousness.
⁴ May he defend the cause of the poor of the people,
give deliverance to the needy,
and crush the oppressor.
⁵ May he live while the sun endures,
and as long as the moon, throughout all generations.
⁶ May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass,
like showers that water the earth.
⁷ In his days may righteousness flourish
and peace abound, until the moon is no more.
⁸ May he have dominion from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth.
⁹ May his foes bow down before him,
and his enemies lick the dust.
¹⁰ May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles
render him tribute,
may the kings of Sheba and Seba
bring gifts.
¹¹ May all kings fall down before him,
all nations give him service.
¹² For he delivers the needy when they call,
the poor and those who have no helper.
¹³ He has pity on the weak and the needy,
and saves the lives of the needy.
¹⁴ From oppression and violence he redeems their life;
and precious is their blood in his sight.
¹⁵ Long may he live!
May gold of Sheba be given to him.
May prayer be made for him continually,
and blessings invoked for him all day long.

¹⁶ May there be abundance of grain in the land;
may it wave on the tops of the mountains;
may its fruit be like Lebanon;
and may people blossom in the cities
like the grass of the field.

¹⁷ May his name endure forever,
his fame continue as long as the sun.

May all nations be blessed in him;
may they pronounce him happy.

¹⁸ Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
who alone does wondrous things.

¹⁹ Blessed be his glorious name forever;
may his glory fill the whole earth.

Amen and Amen.

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

LISTEN-This weekend, we are celebrating this country's founding. It was on July 4th, almost 250 years ago that the Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence, parting ways forever from Great Britain and proclaiming the founding tenets of this country. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Beautiful words, important ideas, enduring values are captured in our founding, yet, as recent events have highlighted and any astute student of history would tell us, these have remained aspirational - a dream, if you would, rather than a description of reality.

Even as those words were written and signed, the records show that nearly 500,000 slaves were held in the colonies. We know that it was another 45 years and a steep fight before women gained the right to vote, and even longer for our black siblings. Ensuring that those "unalienable rights" are truly extended to every last person is still very much a work in progress, isn't it? And one of the key obstacles and stumbling blocks to the fulfillment of these dreams, I would submit, is our inability to hold our individual and collective wellbeing in creative and meaningful balance, especially when our collective wellbeing is measured by the health of the poor and needy. Here, in the land of the free and home of the brave, we have time and again favored the individual over the collective, and in so doing, have failed to join the

prayer of today's psalmist: that our leaders be defenders of the poor and needy, and that they hold the lives of the weak and needy - their blood - as precious. It is in this way that those called to be kings - leaders, if you would - demonstrated God's justice and God's righteousness in those ancient days. Other kings and nations would bow before such a king not because he wielded great military might, but because he would respond to the calls of the needy and stand resolutely with them.

While you and I aren't kings or national leaders, what do we hear for ourselves here? Might today's prayer prompt us to take a step back from our celebration of resilience and the building up of strength and spiritual grit in ourselves, and ask - how goes it with the poorest, weakest, and neediest members of our community? Are these siblings growing in resilience? Do they have what they need to do so? And how might we tie our resilience to theirs so that we might truly live into the truth of Paul's words as he talked about our shared body: "If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it." (2 Corinthians 12:26)?

Paul's image of the body not only seeks to illuminate and illustrate our interconnection in and through God, but our very obligation then to care, not just for ourselves, but for every part of the body, and especially for the most vulnerable. He names these as "the members of the body that seem to be weaker, less honorable, less respectable."

In the late 1960's, when the Catholic church was undergoing great reforms, a social teaching began to be articulated and then fully embraced. The teaching became known as "the preferential option for the poor." Put simply, it was the teaching that we who call ourselves Christians are obligated to stand in solidarity with the poor and vulnerable, not as an aside or an afterthought, but first and foremost. Why? Because that is what we see God doing throughout the Biblical witness, from beginning to end: demonstrating a preference towards, a special care to, powerless individuals and those marginalized by society. Taking this teaching to heart for a moment as we think about resilience, could it be that we might consider our growing resilience not just a blessing to keep to ourselves, but one that gives us greater capacity to reach out and work towards the resilience of our whole community? Might it also be that as we seek to build the resilience of others, that we will find our own strength and perseverance buoyed? In asking these questions, I hear the words of God's call to Abram, "...I will bless you...so that you will be a blessing..in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Genesis 12:2-3) We are blessed so that we might bless.

Friends, the road ahead of us is long and filled with challenges. Through it all, I pray that your vision will remain clear, seeing not only God's presence and grace all around you, but trusting that God's grace is sufficient at all times in all places. I pray that you will experience the truth of that in your bones, even as that grace is made concrete in the love, support, and care that we show one another. And I pray that you will keep your eyes on the prize, the prize of knowing Christ and of building God's kingdom here and now. In these ways, we find our resilience made strong. But may we never keep our resilience to ourselves, but allow it to be yet another launch pad towards fulfilling and enfleshing God's dream: "the lame shall walk, the blind shall see, the doors swing wide, all prisoners free, the lowly raised, the proud brought low. This is God's dream: let justice flow." (Come, Let Us Dream) May we walk the road ahead together, no one left behind. May we walk it through the power of the Holy Spirit. May we walk it confident of seeing a new day.

Listen to "We are the World" shared by Ysrael's high school alumni choir:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aioK23cpmu8&feature=youtu.be>

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 at work in yourself and in the world?

Concerns – Where are you yearning for God to be at work in yourself and 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 - “We Are Called” TFWS 2172

Listen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dh1q2ohVy5g>

1. Come! live in the light!
Shine with the joy and the love of the Lord!
We are called to be light for the kingdom,
to live in the freedom of the city of God!

2. Come! Open your heart!
Show your mercy to all those in fear!
We are called to be hope for the hopeless,
so all hatred and blindness will be no more!

Refrain: We are called to act with justice.
We are called to love tenderly.
We are called to serve one another, to walk
humbly with God.

3. Sing! Sing a new song!
Sing of that great day when all will be one!
God will reign and we'll walk with each
other as sisters
and brothers united in love!

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 12th - Isaiah 55:1-13

This week, please pray for:

- The unfolding conversation happening through “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.)
- Monday’s Dine & Connect Meal

- Healing and wholeness for Joyce, George, Geri, Verne, P. Bob, Alan.