

Scott Trinity and Union UMCs



The First Word

April 20, 2020

Governor urges caution as state will begin slow reopening May 4

Our churches will remain closed; seek guidance from Bishop, DS

COLUMBUS, Ohio—Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine and Ohio Department of Health Director Dr. Amy Acton held a news conference on the coronavirus outbreak at 2 p.m. Monday.

“We have to slowly go back in a way where when the hot spots occur, you can put them out immediately, and not have to dial back. We’re all working behind the scenes to make schools and businesses safer,” Acton said.

—Courtesy FOX 8 Columbus

I wanted to keep our congregations up to date on what is happening even as the state around us will begin a slow reopening of the state. We at Union and Scott Trinity churches will not

reopen for business as usual on May 4.

As your pastor, I am tasked with the tough decisions faced during this unprecedented time as well as balancing our shared desire to once again worship together in person with the overall health and safety of our members. With that said, in the upcoming weeks I will be in regular contact with Rev. Ocke, our District Superintendent; church leadership; and local and state health officials as to when we will open our doors to do worship, business and fellowship once more.

This is not a decision I take lightly nor one I had ever imagined being asked to make in my lifetime. Yet,

here is where we find ourselves.

I want to remind you of the words I have shared often from the pulpit, “The church is ever so much more than what happens within the four walls of our building.”

Our churches are vital and important members of our respective communities. As such and now more than ever, we need to find ways in which we can be the church for our friends and neighbors while still maintaining our social distance for our safety and theirs.

We have been forced into a new “normal” and have embraced this as best we know how. Where we worship does not change WHO we worship! Our God is greater than any virus and



our faith is strong wherever
we may worship. Amen.

A unique way to worship in a new & unique time:

The Zoom Online meeting allows us to worship online, by phone

This free service will allow us to continue to “gather” in worship each and every Sunday until we can join together in person. For those able and who desire, the Zoom app can be downloaded to your phone and allows for both video and audio of our worship experience. For those who do not have computers, smartphones or tablets, do not be discouraged! You can also call a phone number to listen in and participate in the worship experience. Just call the number and enter a code and you can listen in and even offer up your announcements and prayer concerns for all to hear. Please note: long distance charges will apply if you call in by phone.

Here is all the information. **NOTE** these links and numbers will remain the same each week!

Sunday morning: Worship Live!

Time: 10 am Sunday

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/611622324>

Meeting ID: 611 622 324

By phone:

+13126266799,,611622324# US (Chicago)

+16465588656,,611622324# US (New York)

Wednesday evening: Prayer Meetin'

Time: 6:30 pm Wednesday

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/142152604>

Meeting ID: 142 152 604

By phone:

+13126266799,,142152604# US (Chicago)

+16465588656,,142152604# US (New York)



WANTED: Your email addresses!



Send them to Pastor Steve at pwopen@yahoo.com

In this time of separation, being connected is more important than ever. As a means of getting information out in an accurate, timely and connected manner, we would appreciate your help in updating our email listing. Don't fret and rush to get Internet and e-mail just yet. If you just do not have an e-mail address just call Pastor Steve at 419-601-5293 and update your mailing address so we can send you our newsletter by Postal Service. We are missing a lot of contact information for a lot of people at Scott Trinity church and Steve really wants to be able to connect with you during this time.

Please send all your contact information by email or by phone to Pastor Steve:

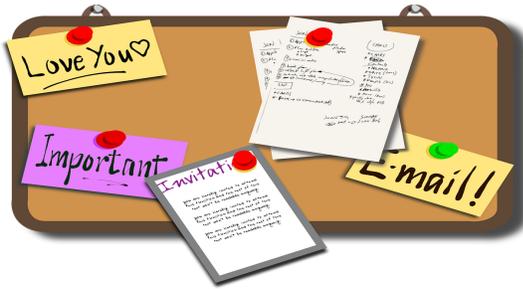
pwopen@yahoo.com

419-601-5293 (if no answer leave your information on voice mail)

Check out the STUMC Facebook pages or the website at

<http://scott-trinityumc.org/> for updates and important information.





A Note from Your Pastor

1 Peter 1:21-23

21 Through [Jesus] you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God. 22 Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart. 23 You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.

“What happens when you no longer feel at home in your own household? Where do you find your sense of identity and belonging?”

First Peter seeks to make the strange, familiar and the familiar, strange for believers who feel very much at home in the dominant culture. First Peter understands how becoming Christian is a process of becoming like Christ that involves not only spiritual transformation but identity formation.”

--by Janette Ok

And I also ask what happens when we are no longer ABLE to worship in our church homes?

I love the first verse in this passage from Paul’s letter; “your faith and hope are set on God.” God is and should always be our focus, our desire and in the longings of our hearts. When we are able to do that we then are able to better “love one another deeply from the heart.”

I must admit that part of me fully expected to see full-on rioting and looting in our country by now. I have rarely been more happy to be wrong! In fact, what I have seen is an overwhelming outpouring of love, encouragement and support of our fellow humans to each other. Neighbors and families have banded together to watch out for and provide for each other’s needs.

And while others are pouring their love toward the neighbor, we as Christians are called to take this one step further. We are called to seek God and love each other more wholly. We can still accomplish this while remaining apart. We can do this by sending special offerings to the church for supporting God’s Storehouse, the Methodist Children’s Home, shop and drop groceries on a member’s porch. The list goes on but what it shows is our ability and command to love, no matter where we are!



Why Choose Generosity in Times of Uncertainty and Fear?



by Joe Park | March 18, 2020

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There will always be a reason for someone to be afraid of something. It could be financial market volatility, political unrest, health scares, or social complexities. Sometimes all of those combined at once. These circumstances and realities come and go, and they affect us in different ways based on age, stage of life, or perspectives.

It is a very human thing to search for safety and security in the things that we believe we can control.

- If we work hard, we can get the promotion.
- If we save enough, we can weather any financial storm.
- If we invest enough, we can eventually retire.
- If we elect the right person, all our problems will be solved.

It would be great if our desires and intent always created the anticipated reality. But what about when it doesn't?

- What happens when we work hard but get passed over for the promotion?
- What happens when an unfortunate and unforeseen circumstance drains our resources?
- What happens when our investments aren't able to provide the lifestyle in retirement we desired?
- What happens when the person we hoped would solve our problems doesn't?

The truth is the longer you live, the less black and white life becomes. It's nowhere near as simple as a 10-step plan to anything. But there is one discipline that just about everyone agrees on—in and out of faith circles—and that is generosity matters.

Why Generosity?

- Generosity keeps us from placing ourselves at the center of our universe.



- Generosity invites us to shift our security from what we can keep to what we can give.
- Generosity compels those who have a little and those who have a lot to share.
- Generosity shapes our sense of community by causing us to come to grips with the persistent needs of others all around us.
- Generosity teaches us that what we have is a gift and is to be freely, openly, and liberally shared with others.

Generosity in Times of Uncertainty and Fear.

Humanity has an unhealthy obsession with control, power, and money. While the pursuit of these things isn't inherently evil, they can quickly replace our focus, purpose, and intent from God's Kingdom to the things of this world. The great paradox is that when we need to be the most generous is also the time when most are least likely to, in fact, be generous.

Generosity is a spiritual discipline, and spiritual disciplines are commitments made to implement and practice behaviors that align our actions with our faith commitments. If we are truly made in the image of God, then generosity is God's watermark.

So, in times of uncertainty and fear:

- Generosity teaches us that our security comes from God.
- Generosity connects us with the needs of others and our capacity to resolve those needs.
- Generosity squelches the knee jerk reaction to hold back and hold on.

- Generosity challenges us to place our security in eternal things.

Everyone Can be Generous.

- It can be as simple as a smile, a phone call, or a note of thanks.
- It can be sharing what we have to eat, to wear, or a place to stay.
- It can be shifting our time to be available to invest in others.
- It can be releasing financial resources to accelerate ministry impact.

During times of uncertainty, we need to be generous more than ever.

- It's when we must recognize we need to be shaped much more than we need to give. Yet it is in the act of being generous that we will be shaped and changed forever.
- It's when we must let go of any sense that our security is something we can manufacture. Instead, security must come from grounding ourselves in faith.
- It's when we must decide that action will override our initial sense to hoard. That's when our thinking and our living is changed forever.

So, What Can Church Leaders Do to Champion Generosity in Times of Uncertainty and Fear?

Pray.

It is the most powerful vehicle we have to constantly re-align ourselves around the principles of eternity. Equip and empower your people to do this together and individually. Consider sending out a ready-made daily devotional for individuals and families during this season of uncertainty. [A Generous Life](#), by Horizons



Stewardship and **Practicing Extravagant Generosity Devotional**, by Robert Schnase, are two excellent choices.

Communicate the mission of the local church and then do it again.

You can never say this enough. There is no substitute for the local church, but it's easy to get distracted by so many other things in the process. Don't neglect to employ visual assets such as photos and videos as part of your communication strategy. Consider providing regular messages from the pastor via audio, email, or video. (BombBomb.com is a great option for impromptu, ad hoc email videos that anyone can do.)

Quantify the impact.

When people see what they can accomplish through generosity, they will understand why they need to act now and in a way that makes a material difference. Consider ramping up your efforts via email and social media to visualize the impact your church is having even when you're not meeting.

Keep the focus on life change.

When you focus on people, the desire to act is exponentially higher. Consider highlighting a new story of impact every week. Consider highlighting the needs of your church and your community and inviting people in your church to meet those needs.

Challenge disciples to grow.

We don't grow when it's convenient. Rather, we grow when we are forced to. Uncertainty brings with it the energy

required to make a change in our daily thinking, routines, and lives. Create space in your ministry planning to invite people to stretch beyond what they presently believe is possible. Encourage your small groups and Sunday School classes to continue to meet via Zoom, Skype, Google Hangouts, Facetime, or other video meeting options.

Provide transformational experiences for those who are ready to practice extreme generosity.

Bring the ministry needs and opportunities to them by taking them to the front lines and describing how they can be a solution to a problem. Consider communicating with your financial leaders daily through a regular update on needs and impact. These people are deeply invested in your church and community. They want to help.

No Better Response.

There is no better response for the people of God in times of uncertainty and fear than to be generous. Make generosity part of your discipleship pathway. The Church is at its best when it is a force for good in the world. That begins with the leader and, as a result, will drip into every person in the pew.

When generosity is a spiritual experience rather than a financial reality, it becomes a catalyst for repositioning our lives around the things that really matter—people, life change, and impact. It will change you, your church, and your community forever.

