

Worship Today

Worship is essential to the life of the congregation and to me, but today it looks, sounds, and feels very different than what I am used to experiencing as a congregant and as a presider. I believe that's pretty obvious considering that the world has changed so drastically in such a short amount of time. This year, and especially these last several months, worship looks different than it ever has before. Today I can worship as never before. The variety of how and what people are doing for worship out there is fascinating to me and a testament to the essential nature of worship. We are called to worship in all times and in all places, but today's world is so very different. It might not ever be the same. Worship is indeed always in constant transition, and now, it has had to develop and adapt to the times in the fastest way possible to best worship God, and to serve God's people who are looking and hoping to worship.

Worship today looks so different digitally, in empty sanctuaries, or at homes produced through amateur or professional lenses with software and hardware which sometimes works and sometimes doesn't. Worship today sounds so different when there aren't a bunch of others singing with me. It sounds different through speakers, or through computer microphones, or on the television, or through earbuds, or really good headphones. It feels different in too many ways to name here. It's just plain different and it's hard to worship in this digital way. I have not always been the biggest fan of worshipping in this way, resisting it in many ways up until now; however, I think it's important that we continue to adapt and do a new thing to give glory to God in today's world. So right now, digital is the way, until a new way reveals itself, or we are able to gather again. And even when we can't gather in person as of yet, and when we aren't sure what we are doing all the time, we still worship God every week as best as we are able. I trust deeply that God hears our songs, our prayers, our words, our hopes, our laments, no matter how we worship or when we worship God. The call is simply for us to worship today, for today is definitely different, than yesterday.

I have been reminded often of the wandering Israelites in this time. Shortly after their deliverance by God to freedom from slavery, the Israelites wandered around in the desert for forty years. I've barely made it forty days in the wilderness, but they were able to make a life in places where they weren't comfortable. They wandered around looking for this promised home, but kept having to set up tents and make camps, when they couldn't find this promised return to some sort of normal. Even though there were so many mistakes made by God's people, even though they complained most of the way, even though it wasn't ideal for them, God continued to be faithful to them the whole way. God's enduring faithfulness to them inspired them to build an altar to worship God wherever they happened to be, wilderness or promised land.

The same is true today. May we build an altar and worship God today where we are right now. Obviously today, that's in a lot of different places. Worship God today at home or in an empty (*hopefully full soon!*) sanctuary. Worship God today after you read this, whenever that might be. Worship God by yourself in quiet prayer or with your family who are not able to sit still today. Read the Bible today, pray some prayers today, sing a new song to God today. Worship God today in your Sunday's best, or in your dirty or clean work clothes. Worship God in your pajamas today. Worship God today in person live

through Zoom, or on Facebook or YouTube later today. Worship God on Sunday, or on Saturday, or on Tuesday at midnight when you can't sleep. Wherever we are today in our wanderings, God will continue to be faithful, always inviting us to reconnect as we worship and praise God. And when we connect again to each other, however that happens and whenever that might be, God is praised. For today, yesterday, and tomorrow is a day that the Lord has made, let us be glad and rejoice in it, as best as we can. Amen.

—Pastor Matt