

Holy Trinity Church—Downtown

MISSIONAL DISCIPLESHIP RENEWAL IN THE CITY

Lent 2012

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Dear Holy Trinity Church family member,

Since the beginning of Holy Trinity Church, we have wanted to see men and women grow in their love for Jesus Christ throughout Chicago. We know that the good news of Christ—The Gospel—is power to those who believe. You and I have tasted and experienced that life-changing power. The Scriptures declare that if we are in Christ, we are a new creation, the old has gone, behold, all things have become new!

I'm writing now to ask you join in a journey of discipleship and renewal. In anticipation of the season of Easter and the days leading up to it which are often called Lent, I invite you to a 40 day journey of deeper missional discipleship and renewal. The elements of this shared journey together are: [1] Easter prayer & invitation; [2] 40 Days of Meditation on the Life of Christ; and [3] a Lenten fast.

Easter prayer & invitation. In our calendar year, there is no greater celebration of our new life in Christ than Easter Sunday. We have resurrection hope! Compelled by Christ's love, we want others in the city, our neighbors, family and friends, to taste the goodness of God's grace. So, I have a simple challenge for you: *I invite you to enter a process of prayer with me and others to joyfully, prayerfully and actively invite 10 people in your life outside of Christian community to our Easter Celebration service on April 8, 2012.* Yes, ten. I know that sounds like a lot. And it is. Let me explain.

This is a simple challenge, but not a simple process. We all have multiple people in our lives with varying levels of closeness or comfort to discuss spiritual matters. For some of you, you might say, "It would take a miracle for *so-and-so* to attend church with me." Nevertheless, we believe that our confidence comes not in our own abilities, but by the power of the Holy Spirit through prayer and faith. We also believe we have the best news in the world. We want you to enter a discipleship process with us of stretching our prayer and faith to see what God might have in store in our midst to see Jesus Christ more fully experienced in the city. Wouldn't it be exciting to see God's Spirit move?!

Let me say a word about Easter. Easter, in some respects, is a peculiar holiday in the city's calendar. It is clearly a religious holiday, and actually many, many people are open to coming to church at Easter.

And while many in the city acknowledge the origins of Easter, the conventional sights and sounds regarding bunnies and eggs, are culturally sentimental at best. *Easter, we believe, is the best day of the year to invite someone outside of Christian community to church.* People in your life have more openness (versus other days!) to explore church on Easter. What they need is to be lovingly, confidently, and intentionally invited – after much prayer! You have an opportunity this spring to invite others to share in the celebration of Easter.

Because it is a prayerful process, we have provided some guidance in this booklet on how you might approach invitations in your life with prayer. You'll also find a **prayer card** where you can remind yourself daily of 10 people in your life you will be inviting. You won't think of everyone all at once. This is a process of prayer. We have worked hard to serve you during this season leading up to Easter.

40 Days of Meditation on the Life of Christ. I would like our community to know Jesus in a deeper way in the weeks leading to Easter. To that end, I encourage you to a journey through the Life of Jesus by daily meditations through the Gospels for forty days. The guide to this journey is later in **this booklet**. I am confident that your love for Christ will grow in preparation for Easter.

Lenten Fast. Also included in this packet is a **card** to guide you in a Lenten Fast. This is an exercise in spiritual discipline and self-awareness of unhealthy indulgences in our life during the season of Lent. This practice of self-denial is a response to God's grace, done so through history and even by Chicagoans today; it's a unique spiritual and cultural opportunity. The **card** also included in the packet that guides you in this further.

I am excited for what God is going to do. Not only in the small (and not so small!) miracles we will see in the weeks ahead, but in your own discipleship with Jesus Christ. We are convinced that through this process of the next 40 days, the Gospel will continue to deepen in your life and Christ-likeness will become more and more evident. This is my prayer for you these days leading up to Easter.

For our Risen Christ,

Jon Dennis Senior Pastor

Missional Discipleship Prayer

Week 1 (Feb. 19-Feb. 25, 2012)

Pray that God would widen my heart for the furthering of Christ's Kingdom.

ESV Isaiah 65:17 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.

ESV 2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

ESV Revelation 21:5 And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

ESV Matthew 9:37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; ³⁸ therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

Week 2 (Feb. 26-Mar. 3, 2012)

Pray for God to reveal people those who might be open to the Gospel and who you might invite to Easter Service.

Write down the three priority people in your life you would like to invite to invite.

Begin praying for them.

ESV Luke 2:10 And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people.

ESV Luke 19:10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

ESV Romans 5:8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

ESV Romans 10:15 And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"

Week 3 (Mar. 4-10, 2012)

Intentionally deepen your relationship with priority relationships.

Write down an additional seven people in your life for invitation.

^{ESV} Ephesians 2:1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience- ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ- by grace you have been saved- ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

^{ESV} Romans 10:8 But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim);

^{ESV} Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Week 4 (Mar. 11-Mar. 17, 2012)

Pray for all 10 people you would like to invite.

^{ESV} Luke 8:1 Soon afterward he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God.

^{ESV} Luke 9:6 And they departed and went through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.

^{ESV} Acts 13:32 And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers,

^{ESV} Acts 14:15 "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them.

Weeks 5-6 (Mar. 18-31, 2012)

Begin invitations to those on your list.

Continue in prayer.

^{ESV} Mark 3:14 And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach

^{ESV} Mark 6:12 So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent.

^{ESV} Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

^{ESV} Acts 5:42 And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

Week 7 (Apr. 1-7, 2012)

Continue invitations.

Follow up invitations with a phone call, lunch/coffee, meeting.

Continue in prayer.

^{ESV} Luke 4:18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed,

^{ESV} 1 Corinthians 9:22 To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. ^{ESV} 1 John 1:3 that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴ And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. ⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

Meditation on the Life of Christ

A forty day journey of Gospel reflection

Silence can be deafening at times—especially in those moments when you want to actually hear something. We all want to hear the voice of the living God deep in the vacuum—more than what decision we should make or a prediction of our personal futures—we long to hear the voice of the one who loves us beyond all measure.

You are invited during this season of Lent—the 40 days excluding Sunday's (when we celebrate resurrection)—to a spiritual journey of reflection on the life of Christ as recorded through the Gospel accounts. Rather than a comprehensive examination of the Gospel texts, this is a focused meditation on select snapshots of Jesus as we reflect on his question, "*Who do you say that I am?*"

The exercise is to enjoy a daily reflective reading through carefully selected texts in a 40 day plan that chronologically follow the life of Jesus Christ from birth to his death. The texts are fairly brief, and span all four Gospels through a variety of stories, parables, and teachings of Jesus. *Read through the passage a few times. One phrase is highlighted for meditation throughout the day. Repeat this phrase to yourself a few times. Write down the phrase on an index card and carry it with you as God's word to you for the day.*

Our goal here is not to look for personal application nor direction, but simply being with God in his presence and hearing of his love for you through meditation in his Word upon the life of Jesus Christ. It is our opportunity to slow down from all the hurried noise in our lives and hear the voice of God.

Meditation on the Life of Christ

Day 1—Wed., Feb. 22

- **John 1:1-5**→"In him was life, and the life was the light of men." (v.4)

Day 2—Thurs., Feb. 23

- **John 1:6-18**→"the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (v.14)

Day 3—Fri., Feb. 24

- **John 1:19-28**→"I am not the Christ." (v.20)

Day 4—Sat., Feb. 25

- **Matthew 3:13-17**→"This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." (v.17)

Day 5—Mon., Feb. 27

- **Matthew 4:1-11**→"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." (v.4)

Day 6—Tues., Feb. 28

- **Mark 1:14-20**→"Follow me" (v.17)

Day 7—Wed., Feb. 29

- **John 3:1-21**→"unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." (v.3)

Day 8—Thurs., Mar. 1

- **Mark 1:40-45**→" If you will, you can make me clean." (v.40)

Day 9—Fri., Mar. 2

- **Luke 5:27-32**→" Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick." (v.31)

Day 10—Sat., Mar. 3

- **Matthew 12:1-8**→"I desire mercy, and not sacrifice." (v.7)

Day 11—Mon., Mar. 5

- **Matthew 5:1-12**→" Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven" (v.12)

Day 12—Tues., Mar. 6

- **Luke 6:27-36**→" Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful." (v.36)

Day 13—Wed., Mar. 7

- **Matthew 6:1-4**→" your Father who sees in secret will reward you." (v.4)

Day 14—Thurs., Mar. 8

- **Matthew 6:25-34**→"do not be anxious" (v.25, 34)

Day 15—Fri., Mar. 9

- **Luke 7:11-17**→"God has visited his people." (v.16)

Day 16—Sat., Mar. 10

- **Luke 7:36-50**→"Your faith has saved you; go in peace." (v.50)

Day 17—Mon., Mar. 12

- **Mark 3:31-35**→" Whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother" (v.35)

Day 18—Tues., Mar. 13

- **Mark 4:1-20**→"He He who has ears to hear, let him hear." (v.9)

Day 19—Wed., Mar. 14

- **Matthew 13:44-46**→" The kingdom of heaven is like treasure. . ." (v.44)

Day 20—Thurs., Mar. 15

- **Mark 4:35-41**→" Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" (v.40)

Day 21—Fri., Mar. 16

- **Luke 8:40-56**→"Child, arise." (v.54)

Day 22—Sat., Mar. 17

- **John 6:1-14**→" There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?" (v.9)

Day 23—Mon., Mar. 19

- **John 6:16-24**→" It is I; do not be afraid." (v.20)

Day 24—Tues., Mar. 20

- **John 6:25-59**→"I am the bread of life." (v.35)

Day 25—Wed., Mar. 21

- **Matthew 16:13-20**→" But who do you say that I am?" (v.15)

Day 26—Thurs., Mar. 22

- **Matthew 16:21-28**→"For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." (v.25)

Day 27—Fri., Mar. 23

- **Mark 9:14-32**→" All things are possible for one who believes." (v.23)

Day 28—Sat., Mar. 24

- **Matthew 18:21-35**→" I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven." (v.22)

Day 29—Mon., Mar. 26

- **John 8:12**→"I am the light of the world." (v.12)

Day 30—Tues, Mar. 27

- **John 10:1-10**→"I am the door." (v.9)

Day 31—Wed., Mar. 28

- **John 10:11-21**→"I am the good shepherd." (v.11)

Day 32—Thurs., Mar. 29

- **John 11:1-44**→"I am the resurrection and the life." (v.25)

Day 33—Fri., Mar. 30

- **John 14:5-14**→"I am the way, and the truth, and the life." (v.6)

Day 34—Sat., Mar. 31

- **John 15:1-17**→"I am the true vine" (v.1)

Day 35—Mon., Apr. 2

- **Matthew 21:1-11**→"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" (v.9)

Day 36—Tues., Apr. 3

- **Luke 19:45-48**→" My house shall be a house of prayer" (v.46)

Day 37—Wed., Apr. 4

- **John 13:1-17**→" Do you understand what I have done to you?" (v.12)

Day 38—Thurs., Apr. 5

- **Mark 14:66-72**→"he broke down and wept." (v.72)

Day 39—Fri., Apr. 6

- **Matthew 27:45-56**→"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (v. 46)

Day 40—Sat., Apr. 7

- **Matthew 27:62-66**→"I will rise." (v.63)