



The Steeple

A Publication of St. Paul United Methodist Church
of Rosewood Heights, Illinois

MAY 2020



Greetings people of infinite worth!

It seems like a year since I have been able to see your faces in worship! I miss your smiles, hugs, and handshakes. I have been paying close attention to what Governor Pritzker has been reporting about our COVID-19 status. He has a tough job! He is taking his responsibility very seriously and I respect him for it. It is a delicate balance between public health and our economy. Let's keep him in our prayers as he makes vital decisions about how and when to open-up the state again. I pray also that our fellow Illinoisans will be wise, caring, and compassionate regarding how to care for our neighbors by wearing masks and maintaining appropriate distance.

I cannot speak for the governor or our Bishop, but it appears that we may be able to meet for worship starting in June. Please do not take this as Gospel; it is more about my hopes than my knowledge. Governor Pritzker has extended our shelter in place order until the end of May. Whether or not we will be able to meet in June depends largely on how well we have flattened the curve. If the medical experts determine that the incidence of new cases of the Coronavirus is dropping, we will likely see a return to normal (sort of).

Normal is an interesting word. I have heard it said that normal is only a setting on the dryer. In reality, normalcy is based on opinions concerning what has gone before. Sometimes when we first veer away from normal, we mourn the loss of what was. Later, we find ourselves celebrating the changes that happened because we moved away from normal. Life is funny like that. Joe and I had been attending exercise classes up until the gyms closed early in March. I was saddened because I could not meet with our friends to exercise anymore. In spite of my dismay, I have taken advantage of the beautiful weather and the extra free time by walking. My time walking is filled with joy because I see children out riding on their bikes. The trees are displaying their spring green foliage. I see elderly folks sitting in front of their homes just waiting to smile and wave at someone for that human contact they need. People are working in their yards, washing their cars, and others are just like me, walking. While I walk, I am reminded of God's promises coming true; spring is a reminder that God makes all things new again.

**May God bless and protect you and your loved ones,
Pastor Debra & Joe**

REFLECTIONS...



OUR CHURCH FAMILY & THANK YOUS!

- Thank you so much to Pastor Debra and the St. Paul UMC church family for the beautiful flowers sent to me for Administrative Professionals week in late April! They were very beautiful and I was able to take them home and enjoy them for many days. Ya'll are awesome and I love ministering here with you! God Bless! **-Lois Mitchell, Adm. Asst.**
- Our deepest sympathy goes out to each family that has recently lost a loved one. This includes the family of **Patsy McClaine**, former member, sister/sister-in-law of Debbie (Glenn) Bowman; the family of **Debbie Bourne**, mother/mother-in-law of Jimmy (Brienne) Bourne; and the family of **Lynn Unterbrink**, brother of Joyce Hutchens. **May all who are touched by a loss know God's comfort and peace now and in the days ahead.**



The 2020 Women Of Worship Spring Rummage Sale will have to be postponed until **2021!** This is sad, but we will now put all our efforts into the Fall Festival!

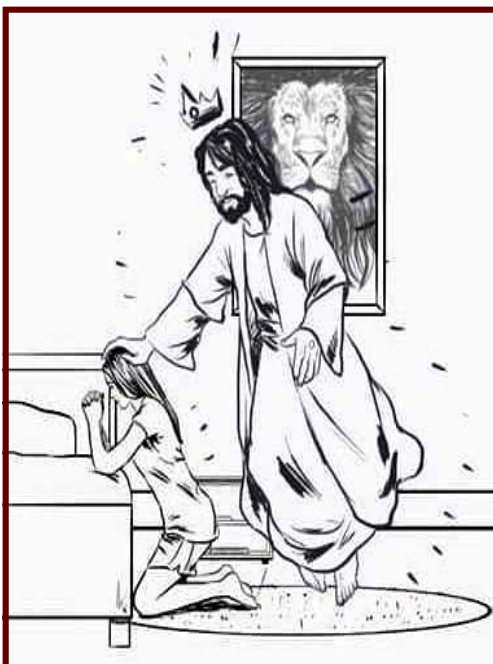
-Karen Martin, President

VBS 2020 JUNE 15-19

We are working on what VBS will look like this year... It may be mostly or all outside, it will be a different program than what we originally thought, and it will still be full of Jesus! Please watch for updates!



You have been so wonderful this year at filling in the flower chart, and we hope to see the **2 Sundays in MAY**, the one in **NOVEMBER**, and the one in **DECEMBER** completed soon! Cost is \$10. If you are interested please call the office.



TRUST in the LORD

with all your
HEART

and lean **NOT**
on your own
UNDERSTANDING

Prov. 3.5



The Lord Is My Portion

by Bill Gaultiere

It's ironic that the more we long for Jesus — to know him intimately, love him fully — the more we are deeply satisfied. Most things in life don't work that way. If for example you cultivate a craving for chocolate, you're likely to keep eating it and gain weight or get a stomach ache!



Craving becomes a big problem if what you're longing for is acceptance or self-worth, and you keep striving to achieve it. You can never accomplish enough. Never be attractive enough. Never keep all people happy with you. Many addictions and sadnesses come out of craving for things other than Jesus.

Is the Lord your Portion?

Many times the Psalmist says, "The Lord is my portion." For instance, he prays, "Whom have I in heaven but you, Lord, and earth has nothing I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever" (Psalm 73:26-26). In other words, "Lord Jesus, I wouldn't even want to be in heaven if you weren't there and this earth has nothing that satisfies me except you. My own strength and abilities often fail, but with you living in my heart, I have all the power I need and more joy than I can contain."

What if this prayer were really true of you and me? What would it be like to be the kind of person who continually thirsted for Jesus and found delight in him? Imagine if the way you do your work, relate to people, spend your free time, and even the things you think about were an expression of your love for Jesus. I'm not talking about perfection, but growing towards it, by God's grace, little-by-little.

You can find more Joy in Jesus!

To live by the words "The Lord is my portion" requires reprioritizing other pursuits and desires, including good ones. It also requires soul training. Longing for Jesus is the only way to participate in and naturally share with others "the life that is truly life" (1 Timothy 6:19). A wonderful way to cultivate this devotion to the Lord is to pray the Psalms. We can "take heart" from the Psalmist, praying his prayers to absorb his whole-hearted love for God.

A prayer for letting God be my Portion:

Dear Heavenly Father, When I am afraid, you are the strength of my heart. When I feel incomplete, you are my portion. Thank you, Lord, for being more than enough to satisfy my every need. Thank you for comforting me, loving me, and being my portion forever. In Jesus' name, Amen.

ALTAR FLOWER INFORMATION:

March 22: Sponsored by Jim & Jane Herndon in celebration of their 49th Wedding Anniversary!

March 29: Sponsored by Mike & Linda Scroggins in celebration of their 50th Wedding Anniversary!

April 4: Sponsored by Steve & Jean Kainz in memory of Eric Wood.

April 12: Sponsored by Tracy Franks in memory of Lute Taulbee for his Birthday.

April 19: Sponsored by Ann Hendricks & Karen Challandes - Happy Birthday Mom! (Leona)

April 26: Sponsored by Phyllis Hill, Larry Bryan, Betty Sitze, and Terry Sitze in memory of Jean, Stanley, and Milford Sitze.

May 3: Sponsored by Carleen Balzrairie in memory of her husband, Homer.

May 10: Sponsored by Harvey Birmingham, Shelley Heigert, Stacey Moore, and Jon Birmingham in loving memory of Shirley Birmingham.

May 17: Sponsored by Jayme Scroggins in memory of her parents, Jim & Eva Lee Nunn.

May 24: **STILL NEEDS A SPONSOR! ONLY \$10!**

May 31: **STILL NEEDS A SPONSOR! ONLY \$10!**

Thank you! And remember to pay your \$10 sponsorships as the dates come around!



Sundays from St. Paul in MAY 10:30 A.M. Services

INFORMATION: *Currently we are unable to meet in-person for our usual services at the usual times. But we are able to bring the message each Sunday to you on the Facebook Pages and the Website until we can meet in-person again. The Facebook Pages are: St. Paul United Methodist - East Alton, IL and AwakeningWorshipSTPUMC The Website is: stpaulwired.org - look under **Sermons** for the link.*

3rd: SERMON SERIES...Closer To The Heart! Message: Jesus The Shepherd!

Scripture: *John 10:1-10*. Theme: We trust the Good Shepherd to care for us.



10th: Mother's Day. Closer To The Heart! Message: Jesus The Cornerstone! Scripture: *1 Peter 2:2-10*. Theme: We build from the solid base of Jesus, our cornerstone.

17th: Closer To The Heart! Message: Jesus The Liberator! Scripture: *John 14:15-21*. Theme: We live, move, and have our being in the freedom of Jesus Christ.



24th: Memorial Sunday. Ascension and Heritage Sunday. Closer To The Heart! Message: Jesus The Example! Scripture: *Acts 1:6-14*. Theme: We are commanded to share the stories of Jesus to a hurting world.

31st: Message: Scripture: Theme:

Worship in the amphitheater will happen this summer! Watch for more info on this!



Our Annual Conference has been moved from the beginning of June to August 14-15, 2020. It will still be in Peoria.





ONLINE WORSHIP

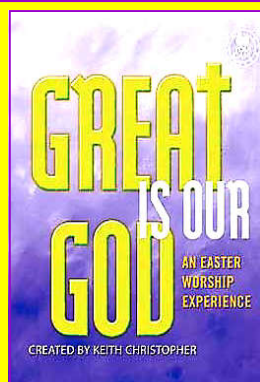
Many churches have taken the jump into online worship. Some pastors offer the message from their home office. Others live stream the entire service from the sanctuary. At St. Paul, we have taken a different option; we are pre-recording our parts of the services individually. Happily for us, we have a remarkably talented member who puts it all together. Let me say here that I am so proud and blessed to have this group of people who are going above and beyond to bring worship to our church family. Let me offer thanks to the group:

- **Editor** – Andrew Garrison
- **Scripture Reading** – Lois Mitchell
- **Contemporary Music** – Patterson Friese, Lauren McCann, Noël and Rachel Schiber, Steve Oertle, Lois Mitchell, Debra Hoertel
- **Children's Message** – Lauren McCann
- **Traditional Music** – Cheri Trusty
- **Sound Technicians** – Randy McLain, Mark Mayer

As group restrictions increased, we trimmed down the number of people involved in the production in order to comply with social distancing. But each of these people has gone above and beyond to help us make this jump into online worship. Thank you all!

Our worship services are available to view at 10:30 a.m. Sundays. The link will appear on Facebook. When you click on the link, it will open up a new screen, and you will be able to view the services. If you would like to view the services at a different time, you may go directly to our church website, locate the **Sermons** tab, and the link will be there as well. Our church website is: www.stpaulwired.org. The worship services will be available anytime from the website.

Don't forget to invite your family and friends who do not normally attend worship at St. Paul to watch the services online. In this way, we can invite others into the love of Christ.



2020 EASTER CANTATA

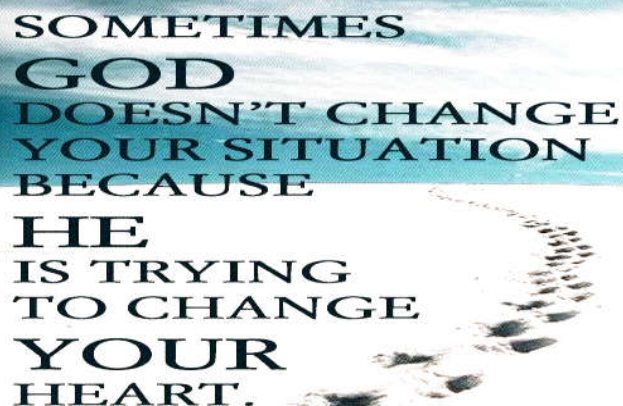
No, we did not get to
present the Easter
Cantata on Palm

Sunday as planned, but

we are an Easter people who celebrate
Easter every Sunday we gather. Once we
can be together again, we will do this!

WATCH FOR IT!

SOMETIMES
GOD
DOESN'T CHANGE
YOUR SITUATION
BECAUSE
HE
IS TRYING
TO CHANGE
YOUR
HEART.





01-May Kennedy Scroggins
 03-May Bowen Ayres
 03-May Brian Eyster
 03-May Sharon Fulks
 04-May Zack Toner
 05-May Sydney Martin
 05-May Keri Whaley
 06-May Mike Tappy
 07-May Alex Barnes
 07-May Ian Napp
 07-May Jeff White
 08-May Brayden Decker
 08-May Bruce Hatten
 08-May Trudy Lehnen
 08-May Joy Virgin
 09-May Jackie Beth Burt
 10-May Brandon Bentley
 10-May Katie Ford
 10-May Bob Hinkle Sr.
 10-May Jake Toner
 11-May Minnie Tindall
 12-May Aaron Bottorff
 12-May Liam Cincoski
 12-May Nelba Goodman
 12-May Heather Hendricks
 12-May Connie Hickerson

12-May Laura Mae White
 13-May Troy Cameron
 13-May Ethan Martin
 13-May Aaron Rich
 13-May Shelby Whaley
 13-May Tana Yankovich
 15-May Joshua Giddings
 15-May Wyatt Parker
 16-May Paul Bowman
 16-May Adelyn Spurgeon
 17-May Debbie Bacus
 17-May Jeremy Nairn
 17-May Bobbi Ortegren
 17-May John Uzzell
 19-May Kylie Winchester
 20-May Barbara Baggett
 21-May Ray Babcock Jr.
 21-May Jocelyn Toner
 22-May Tyler Babcock
 22-May Ridgely Hubbard
 24-May Marjorie Hall
 24-May Ryan Spurgeon

MAY BIRTHDAYS

“Before you were born, I set you apart for a special work!”

25-May Tiffany Nairn
 26-May Kelly McPheters
 26-May Brendan Palmer
 27-May Betty Campbell
 27-May Brandy Lusicic
 27-May Lana Mortland
 28-May DJ Lusicic Jr.
 29-May Gina Brown
 29-May Laurie Griffin
 29-May Richard Huebner
 30-May Steve Dawson
 30-May Sarah Gebhardt
 30-May Sam Griffin
 31-May Jessica Braun



MAY ANNIVERSARIES



01-May Mark & Sandy Scroggins
 02-May Jim & Connie Hickerson
 05-May Rick & Meghan Sparling III
 12-May Chris & Kellie Greer
 15-May Bob & Betsy Blacklock
 17-May Brian & Trista Liedtke
 19-May Troy & Kristin Cameron

21-May Tom & Karen Martin
 22-May Jimmy & Brianne Bourne
 25-May Bruce & Karen Hatten
 26-May Keith & Mandy Armon
 27-May Brennen & Samantha Hermens
 27-May Steve & Jean Kainz

It is time to **UPDATE** our Church Directory for 2020!

The church office will be updating the Church Directory for 2020! Please be sure to contact the church office if you have had a **change of address, phone number, or email address since the last printing!** The 2020 Church Directory will be available as soon as possible after we get back to coming to church again! Thank you!



APRIL Stewardship

Budget Offering:	through 4/30/2020	\$19108.00
Designated Giving:	through 4/30/2020	\$638.00
	Capital Improvements	215.00
	Loose Change	21.00
	Flowers	0.00
	Upper Room	2.00
	Hickerson Scholarship	20.00
	Helping Hands	300.00
	Memorials	30.00
	UMCOR	50.00
Easter Offering		255.00
Capital Campaign		200.00
Total:		\$20201.00

**DEAR GOD,
THANK YOU FOR ANOTHER DAY.
PLEASE WATCH OVER MY
FAMILY AND FRIENDS.
THANK YOU!
AMEN.**

**DEADLINE FOR
JUNE 2020
STEEPLE,
Wednesday,
MAY 20th!**



MONTHLY LOOSE CHANGE PROJECT

May's Loose Change Project goes to the **Liberian Mission** of the Methodist Church. After 20 years of civil war the church has been rebuilding. This will help support pastors in the churches...many who only earn \$1 per month in salary. May God bless and multiply your gifts!



Just a quick reminder... during this time when our in-person services and activities are on hold, please know that our bills are not. *If you are able* to send your tithes / offerings, you can send it through the US Mail, through Bill Pay with your bank, through our website Online Giving, and by handing it to us at the door to the building. If you plan to bring it by here, please, call first to make sure we're here.

Thank you so much!

Also, for 2020, any **Undesignated Easter Offering** received will be divided 50/50 between our **Helping Hands** account and **UMCOR**. You may also designate your offering to a mission or ministry of your own choosing. You may still give an Easter Offering if you wish to do so!



MORE IMPORTANT INFORMATION!!

DON'T FEAR THE ZOOM

By now, many of us have heard about Zoom meetings. What is a Zoom meeting? It is a meeting that takes place over the internet using a particular program. Zoom is the name of the computer program that allows people to “meet” together without actually being in the same room. It makes use of your computer/laptop camera and microphone. In a Zoom meeting, we can see one another and hear each other talking even though we are in different locations.

Using Zoom is quite easy. The first step would be to download the program on your computer. It is free to meeting participants. The host, or the one who is organizing the meeting, has the option to use the free version of Zoom, or pay a nominal monthly fee to use it. The host schedules a time for the meeting and sends an online invitation to everyone who is invited. A few minutes before the meeting starts, the guests follow the link from the invitation. It is important for the guests to be able to use their camera and microphone on their computer/laptop. When the host admits the guests, the entire group can see and hear each other. It reminds me of the opening sequence from the TV show, The Brady Bunch. Everybody is visible in their little square of the screen.

I have been to numerous meetings using an online program. I have met with Bishop Beard, our District Superintendent, my Clergy Women's group, and Joe & I had our Easter “family gathering” online. Meeting online is not the perfect answer, but when distance, or weather, or pandemic throw a wrench into face to face meetings, online meetings are a great option.

For those who are reading this article from your email, here is the link to download Zoom onto your device. <https://zoom.us/download>. If you are reading this from a paper copy, you can type the link into your browser. Either way, follow the directions and you will be ready to go. I anticipate that we will have Bible studies and perhaps other meetings using Zoom.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

As we consider a return to group worship, there are several issues we need to prayerfully and carefully consider. We cannot go back to “business as usual” when doing so might endanger our more vulnerable members. Here are some considerations for best practices as we go forward. I don't have answers for them all; our response as a church will depend on what Governor Pritzker and Bishop Beard recommend.

Seating – If social distancing requirements continue, we will need to discuss options. Perhaps blocking off every other row of pews to keep people further apart.

Please, turn to page 9



Passing the Peace – Do we dispense with this tradition, or find another way to greet one another? We were getting extremely creative just before COVID-19 pressed pause on our in-person services. Waving to one another from our seats may be the best option.

Greeters – Will we have greeters/ushers? How will their task change?

Communion – We must change the way we offer communion. How exactly we proceed depends upon social distancing rules. However, the method of intinction, in which I tear off a piece of bread, give it to the recipient, and he or she dips it into the cup cannot continue. We will in all likelihood use the individual plastic communion cups and pieces of bread. Or we could use the pre-packaged individual cup and wafer packets. We will continue to consider our options.

Vacation Bible School – VBS has always been a time of large, fun gatherings; what do we do this year? How do we keep our children safe and still offer them a fun time to learn about Jesus? Our VBS director, Jamie Gwaltney, and I have been in conversation about if/how to offer VBS this year. We are poised to hold VBS if restrictions are lifted enough to make it possible. We are considering holding it outdoors and having only pre-wrapped snacks and drinks. This is still in the planning stage. We are awaiting direction from the powers that be.

Offering – Passing the offering plate may no longer a safe option. No one wants to be the last person to hold the plate. We could put greater emphasis on mailing our offerings or online giving or bill pay from a bank / credit union. Another option would be to have a box or basket in which people place their offerings as they enter the sanctuary. Maybe all of these things.

Sanitizing the church – Our Custodian, Joe Hanfelder, has been hard at work to sanitize door handles and other frequently touched surfaces. Naturally, we will want to continue this practice for the foreseeable future. Will we need to install hand sanitizer stations like they have in hospitals?

This list of things to consider is not exhaustive; in fact it is only a beginning. Some of the changes will be greeted with dismay. In truth, I am already dismayed as I consider some of them. We will be entering into another world when we begin to meet in-person again. Perhaps it is a good time for us all to remember that worshiping Jesus is not about our preferences, comfort, or wants. It is not about our favorite music or sitting in the same pew we have always occupied. While our greeting time has always been a source of warmth and joy for me and for many, we will need to drastically change or even eliminate it. Worship is not about us, and it never was. Worship time is when we gather to praise God, to ask forgiveness for our sins, and to give thanks for our blessings. Worship is a reminder of the great God whom we serve. Lamenting the changes is okay. Lamenting is Biblical; an entire book is dedicated to it. If you glance through the Psalms, you will find examples of lamenting everywhere. It is okay to be sad, but let's not get stuck there. Instead let's go forward with courage. Let's be open and curious about how we can worship together while still caring for one another and especially our most vulnerable. That's what Jesus was all about.



AND MORE IMPORTANT INFORMATION!!

CONNECTING TO OUR NON-TECHIE FRIENDS

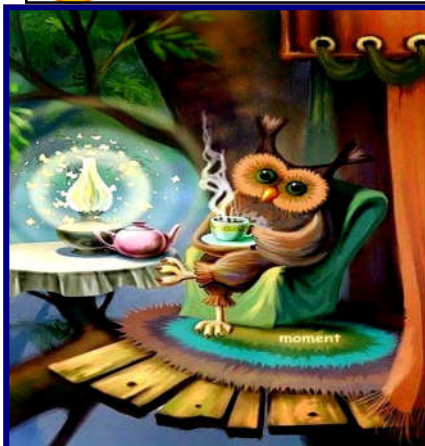
To our friends who either do not have computers, or are not tech savvy let me say this, **I miss you!** In the many phone calls I have made in recent weeks, I have heard about feelings of fear and loneliness that have crept into people's lives. Many are bored with isolation and long to embrace their loved ones. The irony is this, that their loved ones love them too much to embrace them, because to do so would put them at risk. What a strange world we live in, where keeping our distance is a sign of love and a desire to protect. In many of the phone conversations, people are feeling supported by the love and care their family and friends have lavished on them. Despite the loneliness, they feel blessed and well-cared for.

For those who have not been able to view our worship services on-line, please know that you are all on my mind and in my heart. I hope you have been able to access televised or radio worship services that have blessed you. As your pastor, I want you to contact me if you have prayer needs or just need to talk. Sometimes a phone call can help to calm loneliness. My cell phone number is: **618-406-5244**. Please feel free to contact me. I am in prayer for your safety and well-being.

Many people have **DVD players** in their homes, even if they do not have a computer. Very often our TV's have built-in DVD players. It is possible for us to record our services onto a DVD and distribute them to members who would be interested in viewing the services in that way. Call me or the church office if this would be helpful.

Here is my prayer for you and for our world:

Lord God, show your compassion for the whole human family that in in turmoil and fear. Hear our cry and listen to our prayer. Come to our aid as the coronavirus spreads globally. Heal those who are sick; support and protect their families and friends from being infected. Grant us your spirit of love and self-discipline so that our medical experts may come together, working to control and eliminate the virus. Heal our self-centeredness and indifference that makes us worry only when the virus threatens us personally. Strengthen and encourage those in public health services and in the medical profession: caregivers, nurses, attendants, doctors, all who commit themselves to caring for the sick and their families. Inspire, give insight and hope to all researchers focused on developing a vaccine. Sustain all workers and business owners who suffer loss of livelihood due to shut-downs, quarantines, and other restrictions. Protect and guard all those who must travel. Guide the leaders of the nations that they speak the truth, halt the spread of misinformation and act with justice so that all your family may know healing. Heal our world, heal our bodies, strengthen our hearts and our minds, and in the midst of turmoil, give us hope and peace. Hold in your gentle embrace all who have lost loved ones to this illness. Comfort and heal those who are presently suffering. **We pray this all in Jesus' name. Amen.**




**KEEP
CALM**
and
**MAKE
TEA**

How cool is it that the same God that created mountains, oceans, and galaxies looked at you and thought the world needed one of you too.

Hope is the ability to hear the music of tomorrow,
faith is the courage to dance to it today

**TALKING ABOUT
OUR PROBLEMS
IS OUR GREATEST
ADDICTION. BREAK
THE HABIT. TALK
ABOUT YOUR JOYS.**

**My God is the lighthouse
in the midst of my
terrible storm.**



I am safe.

The phrase
"do not be afraid"
 is written in the Bible
 365 times. That's a daily
 reminder from God to live
 every day being fearless ♥

Instead of focusing so much on a To Do List, I'm starting a To Be List.

Things I Want To Be:

Happy
 Calm
 Loving
 Healthy
 Awesome



SOMETIMES GOD WILL PUT A GOLIATH IN YOUR LIFE, FOR YOU TO FIND THE DAVID WITHIN YOU.

TOBYMAC #SPEAKLIFE