

**When the Center first began...82 years ago...
what we now use as the front office, was actually the Chapel.
There were several 2 ft. x 8 ft. benches on which both staff and visitors
were invited to sit upon as Sandy offered his understanding of Faith and the Reign of God.**

**Because Sandy's vision was so inclusive and so compassionate,
because his counseling was so effective,
because Elizabeth's management of the day to day affairs
of the Center was so wise...
and because of the Grace and Providence of God...
The Center found itself growing and in need of a larger
prayer and worship space...
and so the Wayside Chapel came to be built...
Now that story is worth a retelling...but I'll save that for another time...**

**What we read today is the Profession of Faith of the Wayside Chapel.
It was written by a group of people guided by Sandy
as an expression and an articulation,
of the Faith upon which the mission of
the whole Center was built.
And this profession of faith was first read at the Chapel's dedication in 1950.**

**This noble adventure,
to reach out to the broken, the lost, those questioning their faith,
those who feel they had lost their faith,
the alcoholic and the addicted not only continues to this day
but has grown in ways no one imagine 82 years ago...**

**So for today I'd like to spend a few minutes reflecting on the first
statement in the Profession**

Maybe in the years to come, we'll reflect upon the others....

The first statement reads:

**“We believe that God is Spirit and they that worship God
must worship in Spirit and Truth.”**

This statement seems to be based on the story of the Woman at the Well in the gospel of John. (John 4: 1-26)

This story contains the longest theological discussion that Jesus has with anyone in any of the 4 Gospels...

and it is surprise, surprise, with a woman!

During their conversation the woman acknowledges Jesus as a prophet

and then asks him where is the ‘true’ temple:

in Jerusalem or in her country: on Mt. Gerazim?

and Jesus’s response is: “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem....the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the father seeks such as these to worship him.

God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

(Sound familiar?)

Perhaps this statement brings to mind for you Pilate’s very famous question the night before Jesus was crucified:

“What is Truth”?

Wars have been fought,

people have been persecuted,

families have been torn apart

as people argue over that question: what is “Truth”.

We contemporary peoples often put our faith in science to tell what is true:

Is it true that eating too much fat is bad for our arteries?

Well...many scientific studies tell us it is true...

Is it true that Smoking causes lung cancer?

Well, a lot of studies tell us, it is!

Can I text and drive safely at the same time?

**No...studies show that texting and driving is at least as dangerous
as drinking and driving...**

**So, while we do know many true things because of science,
those are not the things Jesus was concerned about.**

**He didn't give up his life for things,
he gave his life for Truth with a capital "T",**

**Truth, with a capital T, is not so much a thing,
but the ground on which every-thing exists...**

**it is about the Essence, the Mystery, the Grace, the Power
that holds all of Life, all those true things together...**

Can we ever know the whole Truth, capital T and nothing but the truth in this life?

Personally, I doubt it..

Of course we can know many true things,

we can also deny many true things.

Some things we believe to be true

will be proven not to be true

as we get new information, new evidence, new data...

**but Truth, with a capital T, is so large, so mysterious,
so beyond our small limited, rationale capabilities...**

that our brain can only catch glimmers and glimpses

of the Holy Mystery of Life.

**Jesus taught us that Truth, with capital T is better known with our hearts
than with our minds...**

**That is why he told us to feed the hungry,
clothe the naked and comfort the lonely....**

**That's why told us not to judge others
because he knew that we would get caught up in trying to determine
if they were telling the truth about things....
and then we would get lost in our own stuff,
our own issues and ego agendas
our own preferences and view points...**

**Jesus invited us to open our hearts to
experience Truth, with capital T.
To receive the Mercy, the compassion, the Love of God
which often times seems illogical and undeserved
to our limited and rational, tit for tat minds...
but, perhaps that is exactly the point.**

**The Holy One doesn't do tit for tat.
The Holy One is abundantly gracious
over the top merciful
and outrageously compassionate.**

**The Holy Mystery of the Universe
is so head over heels in love with all of creation...and that includes us
that it is absolutely beyond our comprehension....
and that is why the Truth, capital T is best known by our heart.**

That is why we must be willing to speak about Truth, with a capital T gently and humbly...

**To worship God in Spirit and Truth is to recognize that God
is not definable nor containable.**

**It is to recognize that God is so much bigger than we can ever understand..
and that God does not play by our small rules and regulations,
no matter how laudable they might be.**

**Sixty four years ago, Sandy and Elizabeth and a whole cadre of like hearted people
decided to build a little chapel in the woods,
grounded on Earth and pointing to the heavens
where people could find comfort, solace and peace amidst the daily struggles of life.**

**They decided to place Hospitality and compassion ahead of doctrine and dogma
as they followed in the footsteps of the Master.**

**Did they think they had the final and last word of Truth, with a capital T...
well...I honestly can't answer that question...
but since they affirmed and promoted this Profession of Faith 64 years ago...**

**I suspect they knew a bit about humility,
a bit about mystery...
and a whole lot about Faith...
and for that...we ought to smile and say: Thank You! amen.**