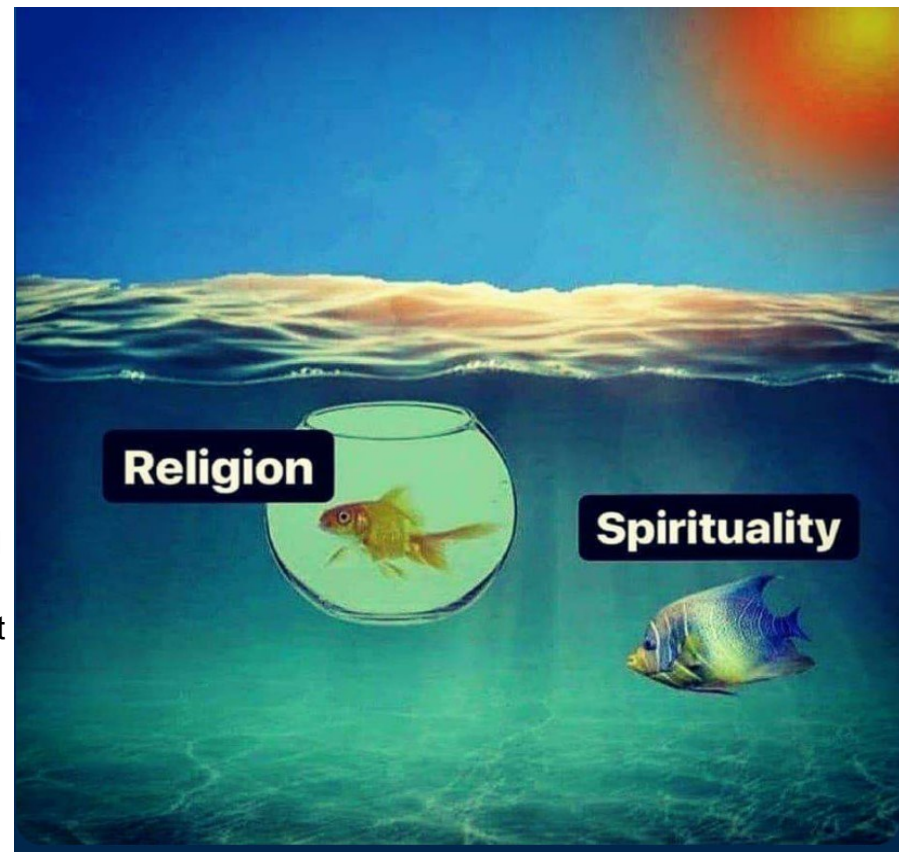


## *In the Ocean or in a Bowl?*

The meme attached to this article is one I had saved on my phone some time ago with the intention of using it someday. When I saw it posted by someone else this past Friday as I was scrolling through Facebook, I felt the time had come. It fits what I promised I would address in the wake of the past two sermons—what the Law of Human Nature or Moral Law really is (one not created by humankind), and why some religious folk object to it—using the thought of C.S. Lewis in chapters 1 and 2 of ***Mere Christianity*** as our guide. It also occurred to me that the meme points out different generational views on what it means to believe in God.

Let me begin by restating my definition of spirituality that I shared in my second sermon on July 5<sup>th</sup>. Spirituality is everything about us that you cannot see and touch. Our non-physical nature, in other words, is focused in two areas: 1) what we think about, or our rational capabilities (the mind); and 2) what we feel inside, or our emotional capabilities (the heart/gut). Both are necessary to stay balanced in life. I also stressed that spirituality, while it can entail a religious belief, is not the same as religious belief, and the meme points that out very clearly.



As followers of Christ and those in Christ, we feel God all around us through Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit. This is how younger generations understand their connection with God—one that is apart from any requirement to be a part of institutional Christianity. To see it from their point of view, a spiritual person does not feel the need to be a professed member of a physical church to be in a spiritual relationship with God. My 20 years of counseling and conversations as a chaplain in the military—a setting where most of my constituency were Gen Xs, Millennials, and the leading edge of Gen Z—taught me this reality.

What the younger generations need to see in us is what I have summarized in past sermons through Micah 6:8 (the prophetic requirements of God), Luke 6: 27-38 (love your enemies and do good to those who hate you), Matthew 22: 36-40 (the Great Commandment), and Matthew 7:12 (the Golden Rule). Nowhere in those passages are there any references to achieving social power or political gain. You will not find any teaching that defines Christianity with a partisan ideology, nor will you see any teaching that says Christians must achieve domination over perceived enemies. And you certainly will not see Jesus teaching us that we should only look out for ourselves, hate others, and hold on to unforgiveness.

If we get out of balance in our thoughts about God (over rationalize our faith and become calloused) or get too emotional in a situation (and think only of ourselves or our tribe), we lose our awareness of and relationship with the God revealed in Jesus the Christ. When that happens, our world view is skewed and out of focus, and we are in grave danger of constructing a religious ideology and ethic that separates us from our Creator and from Christ. Referring back to the meme, we become the fish in the bowl rather than the one in the ocean.

What leads to this separation between a relationship with God in Christ (spirituality) and a self-constructed human institution (religion)? It is when the evil “Ps” of **power**, **politics**, and **prejudice** are allowed into the hearts of otherwise spiritual folk—lay and clergy alike. We become encased in a religion of our own making—a figurative tomb—in order to obtain or maintain one or all those unholy elements. We lose the uncomfortable yet loving intimacy with our God that is all around us in favor of an insular human institution. The real tragedy of this trajectory is that we sacrifice our spirituality on the altar of Pride when constructing our own sense of politicized religion with its false idols and prophets. We then become what C.S. Lewis calls bad Christians and open ourselves up to being called hypocrites. This is what the younger generations witness and, by and large, reject. I see this in my own children; maybe you’ve seen it your children or grandchildren as well.

A pure examination of Christ’s gospel tells us that **unconditional love** (*agape*) and all the things it leads to (humility, mercy, forgiveness, redemption, etc.) is what being a disciple of Jesus Christ is all about—not power, politics, or prejudice. The ramifications of loving the God revealed in Jesus Christ first and foremost, and consequently loving our neighbors and enemies—and thus treating them in the same manner we want to be treated—are many fold, uncomfortable, and frankly, a bit scary, but that is our calling—to be disciples of Christ in the ocean of life that is outside the walls of our church building. That is the legacy we want to leave for our children and grandchildren.

--*Pastor Tom*





Thank you to everyone who donated to Hillcrest Transitional Housing during the Christmas Eve Service and following the fire on July 14th. Leticia is extremely thankful for all the assistance we have provided. Using the donated funds from Christmas, we were able to react quickly on July 15th to provide clothes and gift cards for clothes to Leticia and her 4 year old son, and to other residents affected by the fire. On August 3rd we provided additional gift cards for clothing Leticia still needed. We are also providing some funding for needed counseling for Leticia and Eithan. The Case Manager reports that the counseling has been extremely beneficial and is very thankful for our support.

Thank you,

Alice

Due to the spread of Covid-19, we have suspended all in person worship service until further notice. Our online service is available to view every Sunday at 10 on Facebook.com/LLCUMC or YOUTUBE

We will also be sending out a service bulletin so you can grab your Bible and a cup of coffee following along with our worship series. Many blessings to all of you.



The church office will remain open 7-12 Mon-Thursday. If you need any information, need to drop something off or just want to chat, please feel free. We will still have Joys and Concerns during our virtual service, so please email me and Pastor Tom will share at Sunday service. We know these times are difficult, but always remember we are in God's house and **always** here for you.





**On Going:** Les Case, Wade Davis, Roger Grable, Jean Horner, Richard Fuerst, Winnie Fuerst, Harvey Geary, Michael Hatfield, Linda Koleiny, Shane Miley, Nancy Rowe, Elaine West

**Strength and Healing:** Ken McDaniel

**Missions:** Kenyan G-Marc Project (Chics for Chicks), Hillcrest Transitional Housing, Harvester's Food Bank, Lazarus Ministries, Tarsney Lake Families, Congregation de Mellier, Heart and Soul Children's Learning Center

*Please contact the office to update or add prayer requests*



**Collecting Now  
through September 6th**



The Merida Foundation will give these glasses to the poor, visually impaired Mayan people living in the rural villages in the state of Yucatan.

Place your unused Rx and Reading eyeglasses in the basket found in our Connect Area

# 2020 ELECTRONICS / METALS RECYCLING

LAKE LOTAWANA COMMUNITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

28901 NE COLBERN ROAD LAKE LOTAWANA, MO 64086

**SAT, SEPT 12th 9:00 AM - Noon**

**Computers - TVs**

**Large & Small Appliances**

**Car/Boat Batteries & MORE**

We accept almost anything with a cord or battery. As small as a cell phone to as large as a refrigerator- and everything in between! It does not matter what condition it is in or if it works or not.

Our recycling vendor - Midwest Recycling Center will collect fees on some of the electronics and appliances.

- TVs & CRT monitors - \$5 to \$50 each [See fee schedule llcumc.org](http://llcumc.org)
- All computer equipment, accessories, and cables
- Medical, dental, and laboratory equipment - no biohazards!
- All telephones, cell phones, PDA's, digital cameras, and related items
- Batteries (except alkaline batteries)
- All appliances - small and large Items with freon - \$10.00 each
- AV equipment, speakers, etc.
- Lawn and garden equipment (gas and oil must be drained prior to drop off)

**DRIVE-THRU  
DROP-OFF**

**See complete list  
and fee schedule  
at [llcumc.org](http://llcumc.org)**



# August/September

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<b>16 Services</b> <b>Online 10:00</b>	17	18 SPRC Meeting 7:00	19	20	21	22
<b>23 Services</b> <b>Online 10:00</b>	24	25	26	27	28	29
<b>30 Services</b> <b>Online 10:00</b>	31	1	2	3	4	5
<b>6 Services</b> <b>Online 10:00</b>	7	8	9	10	11	12 Recycling Event 9:00-12:00