

## CONSENT FORM

**TITLE OF STUDY:** “The Liturgy of Justice: Worship and Justice as Means of Grace in a United Methodist Congregation”

### PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

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### PURPOSE OF STUDY

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

The purpose of this study is to research how worshippers at North United Methodist Church (NUMC) experience worship and perceive the relationship between the congregation's worship and its social witness. Worship is defined as the congregation's intentional, communal acts that are a combination of ritual, prayer, and music, which often (but not always) include preaching. Acts of justice are defined as practices of compassion, justice, and peace for non-church members that are done formally as programs of the congregation and informally as individual acts of members. Since both worship and concern for social issues are key features of the congregation's identity and primary attracters for members and visitors, worshippers assume there is a connection between worship and social witness at North. This study will explore this phenomenon using focus groups, journals, and interviews as its tools.

The research will assist the researcher to develop ministries that maximize the church's ability to assist members in their spiritual growth and calling through the practices of worship and social witness. By understanding how the relationship between these two practices is envisioned and experienced by members, it will help us develop best practices for:

- \*providing more meaningful worship experiences;
- \*greater engagement and understanding of social witness programs;
- \*worshippers to understand and engage their callings to the works of mercy and justice;
- \*deeper examination of the congregation's life and ministries that will foster greater authenticity in its collective worship and work.

### STUDY PROCEDURES

You will participate in one or more of the following procedures. The following research procedures will be employed, with approximate time commitments indicated [ ] and types of recording data indicated ( ).

1. **Focus Groups**-- The focus groups will be led by the researcher or a member of the Worship and Arts Team of NUMC, who will be trained by the researcher to conduct the groups. [60-90 minutes] (video recording)
2. **Worship Journals**—Participants will keep a journal of their worship experiences over the course of the Easter season. The format for the journal will be provided by the researcher. Completed journals will be collected and analyzed by the researcher. [approximately 30 minutes per week] (hardcopy and/or electronic journals, e.g. Word Document).
3. **One-on-One Interviews**—Interviews may be conducted by the researcher as follow up to the focus groups and/or journals [90 minutes] (video recording or written notes by the interviewer)

### RISKS

All reasonable measures will be taken to minimize risk. However, there is a potential risk for participants to be criticized by other participants in a focus group. If a participant experiences or perceives that they experience an adverse effect from a procedure, the researcher will offer to meet with them privately or with a representative from the Worship and Arts Team. In addition, a participant has the right to address problems with the researcher with the Staff Parish Relations Committee. All conversations will be kept confidential. You may decline to answer any or

all questions in a focus group or interview or complete a journal. You may terminate your involvement at any time if you choose.

**BENEFITS**

The potential benefit for participants is spiritual growth through a better understanding of how the spiritual practices of worship and social witness impact one’s faith. In addition, there is the potential benefit of learning from and experiencing connection with other participants.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

Your responses and participation in the abovementioned procedures will be anonymous. Every effort will be made by the researcher to preserve your confidentiality including the following: Data will be kept on a computer and cloud which are two-step verification, password protected. Data will be retained for three years after the completion of the DMin. Thesis. Confidentiality will be protected by substituting personal names with letter/number designations so as to not indicate or imply the person's real name. From time to time for the purposes of editing and compiling data, the researcher will print data. Once the data has been analyzed and kept in an electronic document on the abovementioned computer, the printed copies will be shredded and thrown away. Participant data will be kept confidential except in cases where the researcher is legally obligated to report specific incidents. These incidents include, but may not be limited to, incidents of abuse and suicide risk.

**SHARING OF INFORMATION**

Information based on this research, including direct quotes, will be used in the DMin. A summary of the DMin project will be available to the congregation. If the project is published or a manuscript is published based on the project, the information gathered through this research study may appear in print publication.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

If you have questions at any time about this study, or you experience adverse effects as the result of participating in this study, you may contact the researcher at [dcushwood@northchurchindy.com](mailto:dcushwood@northchurchindy.com) or 317-966-2160. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, or if problems arise which you do not feel you can discuss with the researcher, please contact the Staff Parish Relations Committee chair.

**VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION**

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this study. If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form. After you sign the consent form, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Withdrawing from this study will not affect the relationship you have, if any, with the researcher. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

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**CONSENT**

I have read and I understand the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

(For youth participants) Parent/Guardian signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_